



Simple no-cost and low-cost changes you can recommend to your clients to prevent falls

According to the AARP, 71% of people over the age of 45 prefer to stay in their homes as they age rather than moving to long-term care. However as we age it is common to experience declines in our abilities. This can cause us to fall and possibly sustain severe or fatal injuries.

Following is a list of safety precautions that can reduce the risk of falls and thereby increase the ability to stay living at home:

Pathways

- Move furniture to create clear walking paths
- De-clutter walking areas, stairs and landings
- Fix broken and uneven steps, and loose handrails
- Keep exterior stairs and walkways clear
- Keep rock salt by each door in the winter
- Install a shelf and hooks inside the door for keys, coats, handbags, etc.

Living Room

- Make sure your lounge chair is easy to get out of
- Change glass table tops to wood so they are easier to see and less fragile

Kitchen

- Move often-used items to lower cabinets to reduce need for a stool
- Use a stool with a high, sturdy handrail (do not step on a chair or cupboard shelf)
- Replace heavy dishes and pots with lighter ones
- Create a sitting area for food preparation

Bathroom

- Use non-slip mats or self-sticking strips in tub/shower floor
- Keep soap, shampoo and towel in easy reach from tub/shower
- Don't use towel bars for support – install sturdy grab bars
- Remove bath rugs

Bedroom

- Keep cane/walker next to bed at night, with flat slip-on shoes (avoid slippers)
- Keep a telephone, lamp, flashlight and eyeglasses within easy reach of bed
- Make sure bed is a comfortable height for getting in and out
- Keep a portable toilet or urinal near bed if you have difficulty making it to the bathroom
- Sit down when dressing



All Rooms

- Tape down all electrical cords
- Apply non-slip mats or double-sticky tape to backs of throw rugs
- Repair carpet and flooring that is loose, torn or curling up
- Clean up spills and leaks immediately
- Put night lights in bedroom, hallway and bathroom (also stairs and kitchen if needed)

Other Tips

- Wear flat, sturdy, non-slip shoes both inside and outside
- Exercise regularly to improve strength, balance and coordination
- Ask your doctor for alternatives to medications that cause dizziness or drowsiness
- Have your eyes checked regularly
- Keep emergency numbers in large print near each phone
- Get a medical alert device
- If you live alone have someone check on you daily