

# Tips to Prevent Falls and Injuries

Some factors, such as poor hearing or eyesight, loss of muscle mass, balance problems, or even side effects from medications may increase fall risk. **Try the following tips to help prevent falls, make your home safer, and know what to do if you fall.**



## Stay physically active.

Find an exercise routine that works for you. Moving your body often helps you stay strong, flexible, and steady on your feet.



## Have your vision and hearing tested.

Changes in vision or hearing can raise your risk of falling. Wear your glasses or contacts. If you use a hearing aid, make sure it fits well and wear it everyday.



## Know your medications.

Medications have possible side effects, which can lead to a fall. Ask your provider or pharmacist about side effects and let them know if any medicine makes you feel off balance.



## Avoid or limit alcohol.

Drinking alcohol can affect your balance and coordination, making falls more likely. Falls can lead to broken bones.



## Use an assistive device.

Using a cane or walker the right way can help you stay steady and avoid falls. A physical or occupational therapist can help you choose the best device for your needs and show you how to use it safely and confidently.



## Tell a health team member about falls.

There are many reasons why someone might fall. The most important step is tell someone on your care team. Falls are not a normal part of aging, and can be prevented with the right support.



## Choose the right footwear.

Wearing the right shoes helps protect you from slipping and falling. Choose shoes with rubber soles, low heels, and backs that fully support your feet. Avoid walking in socks, flip-flops, or slippers without backs.



## Get enough sleep.

When you are tired, your body might react more slowly and your balance may be off, making a fall more likely. Getting enough rest helps you stay alert, steady, and safe throughout the day.



## Avoid going outside in bad weather.

If going outside feels unsafe, many places can bring prescriptions and groceries to your door, making it easier to stay safe at home.

**More information on the back.**



### Keep your pets safe too.

Pets can sometimes get under your feet, especially when they're excited or moving quickly. Be mindful of where your pet is when you're walking, and consider training them to stay out of your path. Using night lights and keeping floors clear of toys can also help prevent trips and falls.



### Stand up slowly to stay steady.

After lying down or sitting for a while, your blood pressure can drop, which may cause dizziness or an unsteady feeling. Before standing, move your ankles up and down and in circles to get your blood flowing. Then, stand up slowly to stay balanced.



### Make your bathroom safer.

A shower chair can help you stay safe if you are unsteady while showering. If stepping over the side of the tub is hard, a tub bench lets you sit and slide in easily. To make your bathroom even safer, consider installing grab bars in the shower, tub, and near the toilet. These changes can help prevent slips and falls, especially when floors are wet.



### Keep help within reach.

Always keep a phone, call button, or alert device nearby in case you need help or have a fall and cannot get help unsafely. You can also use voice-activated tools like Alexa or Google Home to call for help without needing to move. Having quick access to help gives you peace of mind.



### Pick up your feet when walking.

Dragging your feet can increase the risk of tripping on rugs, cords, and uneven surfaces. Lift your feet with each step.



### Avoid using progressive eyeglasses on stairs.

Progressive or multi-focal eyeglasses can make the ground look blurry. You can drop your chin for a better view of the ground. Use single focal glasses on stairs or uneven ground.



### Keep your eyes up, not on your phone.

Looking down at your phone while walking can cause you to miss seeing obstacles. Stay alert and keep your focus on where you are going.

## Home Checklist

- Check outdoor steps. Make sure steps to porches, decks, or garages are even and secure.
- Clear walkways. Remove clutter from stairs, hallways, and walking paths.
- Install grab bars in the shower, tub, and near the toilet.
- Install handrails. Use sturdy handrails on both sides of all stairs.
- Light your path. Keep a light near your bed and use nightlights to see at night.
- Secure rugs. Remove loose rugs or use non-slip mats or double-sided tape underneath.
- Store items within reach. Keep everyday items on lower shelves to avoid climbing or stretching.
- Tidy cords. Tape down cords and wires to prevent tripping.