

Home Safety Checklist

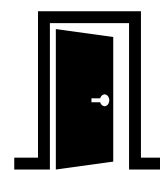


Most seniors want to live at home as long as they can. However, as we age, staying at home can be increasingly difficult. Therefore, seniors may need to make changes to their lifestyle to stay independent for as long as their medical condition allows. It is important to consider that falls are the leading cause of injuries among senior citizens. Falls can lead to hospitalizations which can greatly impact seniors' quality of life.

If you or someone you know is elderly and living at home alone, please consider these basic home safety tips to ensure you or they can live safely at home as long as possible. Tour the home and observe the below potential causes of injury so you can prevent them before they happen.

Inside the Home:

- Check for slippery floors.
- Is the room temperature inside the home too hot or too cold? Avoid using space heaters.
- Is the furniture positioned in a way that it allows easy access to doors and windows? Plan to rearrange furniture to reduce clutter and prevent a fall.
- Check that drawers, doors, and windows can open and shut with ease.
- Are there carpets? Look out for holes, snags, and edges that may need to be secured.
- Check that windows and door locks are secure and work properly to prevent home break-ins.
- Check the setting of the water heater to avoid scalding hot water.
- Make sure that stairwells have a clear path, sturdy handrails, and adequate lighting. Look out for uneven steps to reduce the threat of a fall. Also avoid the need to carry items up and down stairs.
- Is there a fireplace? Make sure the chimney is clean and schedule regular maintenance.
- Make sure smoke detectors are working properly and that batteries are being replaced regularly. Consider installing carbon monoxide detectors.
- Schedule a reminder to change clock settings during daylight saving time.



In the Bedroom:

- If possible, remove unnecessary furniture from walking areas and bedrooms.
- Make sure that there is either a light switch or a lamp within reach of the bed. Lighting in all areas of the home should be adequate.
- Make sure that all cords around the home are not in walkways.
- Remove any unnecessary clutter to prevent potential trip hazards. Store items away in an easy to access location if they aren't immediately needed.
- Make sure there is a phone within reach of the bed in case of emergencies. Phones should be user friendly for elderly users.



In the Bathroom:

- Make sure that bathroom rugs are secure and do not slip when stepped on.
- Make sure there are handrails near the bath and toilet. If not, consider adding to the bathroom for additional support. Also consider a shower chair for added stability.
- Make sure to have a non-skid decal inside the bathtub or shower.



In the Kitchen:

- Make sure fire extinguishers work properly and are easily accessible.
- Make sure that all pet dishes and toys are put away and out of the walking areas.
- Make sure that dishes and food is stored at a safe to reach height. Look out for items that can be re-arranged for easy access. Avoid using stepstools to reach for items in the kitchen as this can lead to an unnecessary fall.
- Make sure the food stored in the pantry and the refrigerator are not expired.
- Make sure that potholders are easily accessible, that any kettles have a functioning whistle to indicate the water is boiling, and that all flammable materials are stored away from the surface of the stove to prevent accidental fire.



Outside the Home:

- Are walking paths clear and smooth with no trip hazards?
- Is there an easier way to check the mail or collect the newspaper? Look out for potential trip hazards. Consider planning for days with bad weather.
- Are stair railings secure?
- Is there adequate lighting outside the home at night or in the early morning or evening? Look out for light bulbs that may need to be replaced. Solar powered and motion detection lights might be good options to evaluate; these are a cost-effective way to improve outdoor pathway visibility.
- Make sure that bathroom rugs are secure and do not slip when stepped on.
- Make sure there are handrails near the bath and toilet. If not, consider adding to the bathroom for additional support. Also consider a shower chair for added stability.
- Make sure to have a non-skid decal inside the bathtub or shower.



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