

4. Has your eyesight diminished? Do you have trouble seeing depth or seeing at night?
Yes ____ No ____
Problems with eyesight can make it difficult to see things you can trip over. Get your eyes tested by an optometrist or an ophthalmologist to see if you need glasses or a new prescription. Place nightlights throughout your house. For depth of field problems, place tape or paint a line at the edge of stairs so you can see the edge when walking.
5. Have you experienced hearing loss?
Yes ____ No ____
Hearing is closely associated with balance. Get your hearing tested by your health care provider or by an audiologist. Wear a hearing aid as needed.
6. Do you have foot ulcers, bunions, hammertoes or callouses that hurt or cause you to adjust your steps?
Yes ____ No ____
Painful foot problems can cause you to walk slowly and differently, increasing your chance of falling. If you have reduced feeling in your feet, make sure to watch your step and be aware of foot placement. Attend a footcare clinic or ask your doctor to treat your feet problems.
7. Do you feel unsteady on your feet? Do you shuffle when you walk?
Yes ____ No ____
A strong stride and good balance are key to preventing falls. Consider using a cane or other assistive device to help you feel steadier. Your doctor can help you decide which device is best for you. You can also ask your doctor to give you a balance assessment or recommend physical therapy. Carry a cordless phone with you so you don't have to rush to answer the phone and so you can call for help if you do have a fall.
8. Do you feel weaker than you used to? Do you have less strength in your arms and legs?
Yes ____ No ____
Arm and leg weakness can make it harder for you to navigate your environment. You can build muscle strength by exercising regularly. Join an exercise class or learn exercises that you can do at home.

9. Do you experience incontinence?
Yes ____ No ____
Incontinence can increase your chances of falling if you are anxious and rush to get to the bathroom. Check with your doctor about incontinence treatments. If nighttime incontinence is an issue, consider getting a bedside commode. Make sure the path to your bathroom is well lit and free from clutter.
10. Do you feel dizzy when you stand up?
Yes ____ No ____
Dizziness increases your chance of falling because it causes disorientation and even fainting. Dizziness can have many causes so you should ask your doctor to test you for postural hypotension. Take time to stabilize yourself before changing positions.
11. Do you take four or more medications? Do you take high blood pressure medications?
Yes ____ No ____
Certain medications can increase your chance of falling because of side effects such as dizziness, confusion and low blood pressure. Have your doctor or pharmacist review all of your medications and dosages. Make sure you understand the medication you are on and how to take them correctly.
12. Do you take sleeping pills regularly?
Yes ____ No ____
Sleeping pills can cause dizziness, confusion and a "hang-over" feeling that increase your chance of falling. Meet with your doctor to discuss sleeping tips. Avoid drinking alcohol while taking sleeping pills.
13. Do you ever wear high heels?
Yes ____ No ____
High heels are more likely to get caught in the carpet and in holes. They are also unsteady. Well-fitting shoes with low, flat, and wide heels provide the sturdiest footing. Shoes should also have non-skid soles.
14. Do your clothes (dresses, robes, etc) have long cords or ties?
Yes ____ No ____
Shorten ties and cords to prevent tripping on them.
15. Do you ever wear socks only, or slippers without rubber soles?
Yes ____ No ____
Slippers and socks with rubber tread bottoms are more likely to prevent slipping.



Home Fall Prevention Checklist for your Home

Falls can trip up people of all ages, but according to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, most falls happen in the home to people age 65 and older during everyday activities. Eight out of 10 of those killed by falls are over age 65 and falls are the leading cause of injury-related death among the very elderly, those over age 80. Falls are also the leading cause of injury and hospital admission for older adults.

Making living areas safer may reduce the risk of falling.

Use this checklist to spot possible fall hazards which may be present in your home. Check YES or NO to answer each question. Then go back over the list and take action to correct those items which may need attention.

Keep this checklist as a reminder of safe practices, and use it periodically to re-check your home.

THANK YOU for completing the Fall Prevention Checklist.

We hope you will use the recommendations to reduce your chance of falling. Risk factors may change over time so please consider reviewing the checklist again in the future.

Our sincere thanks to the Minnesota Safety Council for their permission to use this checklist.



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Bathroom Checklist

1. Is the path from the bedroom to the bathroom dark?
Yes ____ No ____
Nightlights can be helpful in lighting the way to the bathroom.
2. Are towel racks or objects other than grab bars used to balance or grab onto while getting in or out of the bathtub/shower?
Yes ____ No ____
Towel racks may not be mounted well enough to support a person's weight. Install grab bars in the appropriate places.
3. Is it difficult to stand during a shower?
Yes ____ No ____
A shower seat allows people to shower without getting tired of standing or risking a fall.
4. Is the shower floor and/ or bathtub slippery?
Yes ____ No ____
Install non-skid strips or a non-slip mat.
5. Is there any water on the floor after a bath/shower? Are there leaks from the tub/shower?
Yes ____ No ____
Patch leaks with caulk or other appropriate materials. Wipe up water immediately to prevent slipping. Use a bath mat with a slip resistant backing.
6. Do you have to reach or turn around to get towels, shampoo and soap?
Yes ____ No ____
7. Is it difficult to get on and off the toilet?
Yes ____ No ____
It may be helpful to raise the seat and/or install handrails. Replace the toilet with a higher toilet and/or install handrails.

Bedroom Checklist

1. Is there a long reach from the bed to a light?
Yes ____ No ____
Moving the lamp closer to the bed or attaching a light to the headboard reduces the chances of falling.
2. Do you have to get out of bed or reach far to get to the telephone?
Yes ____ No ____
A longer phone extension cord or a cordless phone within easy reach of the bed can reduce the chances of falling.
3. Do you have to get out of bed or reach far to get eyeglasses?
Yes ____ No ____
Store eyeglasses within easy reach of the bed.

4. Are there telephone, light, or television cords running along the floor on the walkways?
Yes ____ No ____
Cords are a tripping hazard. Arrange furniture so outlets are available for lamps and appliances without the use of extension cords. If extension cords must be used, tape cords and wires to the wall or have an electrician install additional outlets.
5. Is there clutter (clothes, shoes, books, etc.) on the floor?
Yes ____ No ____
Remove clutter from walkways to reduce chances of tripping.
6. Is it common to get up many times during the night to use the bathroom?
Yes ____ No ____
The hallway to the bathroom should be lit with a nightlight and free from clutter. You may want to consider placing a portable commode near the bed to eliminate nighttime trips to the bathroom.

Living Areas Checklist

1. Do carpets, rugs, and floor coverings have frayed corners or rolled-up edges?
Yes ____ No ____
Remove damaged floor coverings or secure them well with double-sided tape, nails, etc. Remove damaged floor coverings or secure them well with double-sided tape, nails, etc. It's important to have a flat, sturdy walkway.
2. Are there throw rugs in walkways?
Yes ____ No ____
The best thing to do is to remove throw rugs. The next best thing is to use a non-slip liner or put double-sided tape on them so they don't slip.
3. Are chairs and couches low to the ground?
Yes ____ No ____
Higher chairs and armrests are helpful in easing into a sitting position.
4. Do you have to get up to answer the phone?
Yes ____ No ____
Keep a phone close by to eliminate the need to get up quickly to answer the phone. Long phone cords or cordless phones are helpful. It's also important to keep a phone close to the floor in order to call for help in the event of a fall.
5. Do you have emergency numbers available by all phones?
Yes ____ No ____
Be sure that the numbers for emergencies, including physician and family members are available at all phone locations.

6. Do you have to walk over or around cords or wires (extension cords, lamp cords, telephone cords)?
Yes ____ No ____
Cords are a tripping hazard. Arrange furniture so outlets are available for lamps and appliances without the use of extension cords. If extension cords must be used, tape cords and wires to the wall or have an electrician install additional outlets.

7. Are there newspapers, boxes, shoes, etc. on the floor?
Yes ____ No ____
Remove clutter from walkways to avoid tripping.
8. Do you need to walk around furniture to get through the living area?
Yes ____ No ____
It's best to have a straight path, clear of furniture. Rearrange furniture to provide for obstacle-free walking.
9. Do you have to reach up to pull cords to lights or ceiling fans?
Yes ____ No ____
Install longer cords or link ceiling lights/fans to a light switch on the wall to eliminate the need to look up and reach up.

Kitchen Checklist

1. Are there floor mats or rugs in the kitchen?
Yes ____ No ____
Remove throw rugs or secure them to the floor (with a non-slip liner or double-sided tape). You may want to purchase rugs with slip-resistant backing.
2. Do you have to reach far, bend over, or climb on a stool to get commonly-used kitchen items and foods?
Yes ____ No ____
Rearrange cupboards and drawers so that items used most often are waist high. Use a sturdy step stool with a bar to hold onto to reach items stored above the head. Never use a chair as a step stool.
3. Is there liquid, food, grease, or other clutter on the floor?
Yes ____ No ____
Sweep often and wipe up liquid immediately to reduce the chances of slipping.

Hallways and Stairs Checklist

1. Is it dark in the stairwell?
Yes ____ No ____
It's important to have a light installed in the stairway with a light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs. Use the maximum wattage bulb recommended for the fixture. Install nightlights.
2. Are handrails loosely attached to the wall?
Yes ____ No ____
Handrails should be sturdy and there should be a handrail on both sides of the stairs.
3. Do the floor coverings have frayed corners or rolled up edges?
Yes ____ No ____
Secure floor coverings tightly with double-faced adhesive tape or nails.

Porch, Yard, Outdoors Checklist

1. Is the path from the garage to the house dark or poorly lit?
Yes ____ No ____
Install a path of lights or overhead light that will help reduce the chance of falling. Sensor lights ("motion lights") mounted on the house or garage are helpful too because they turn on and off automatically.
2. Are there cracks or buckles on the sidewalks, walking paths?
Yes ____ No ____
Repair sidewalks and paths so that they are even. Flat, even surfaces help reduce the chances of falling.
3. Are there hoses, weeds, or other obstacles on the walkways?
Yes ____ No ____
Remove clutter and keep walkways weeded to eliminate tripping hazards.
4. Are there icy steps or walkways?
Yes ____ No ____
Shovel immediately after a storm and/or apply salt or sand on ice to reduce the chance of slipping.

Personal Risk Factors Checklist

1. Have you fallen before? Were you injured when you fell?
Yes ____ No ____
People who have fallen before are more likely to fall again. Think about the factors that led to your last fall. Take action to reduce those factors. Consider using a personal emergency response service to help you if you fall again.
2. Have you stopped doing any daily activities because you're afraid of falling? Do you avoid exercise because you're afraid of falling?
Yes ____ No ____
Fear of falling can be helpful if it causes you to take reasonable precautions, but it can be harmful when it causes you to avoid exercise and other daily activities that keep you active, strong and healthy. Start slowly to build your confidence in exercise and daily activities. Start with chair exercises, then move to standing exercises then moving exercises. If you are afraid of exercising alone, consider joining a group or class.
3. Has your hand strength decreased?
Yes ____ No ____
Decreased hand strength can put you at greater risk for falling because you may have difficulty catching yourself or carrying objects safely. Avoid carrying things in your hands when walking. Put them in a pocket or purse instead. You may benefit from strength training for your hands. Talk to your health care provider about recommended exercises.