

# Home Safety Tips for Caregivers

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We work hard keeping our loved ones safe and healthy. We monitor diet and medications and activities as best we can. Something that is sometimes overlooked is basic home safety. Falls are the leading cause of injury deaths among people over 65. Over half of falls happen due to hazards in the home. Fortunately, performing a home safety check can help prevent accidents and falls. The following are some suggestions from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for keeping your home safe.

**FLOORS:** Be sure there is a clear walkway through each room. Move furniture around so the path is clear. Remove throw rugs and keep clutter (books, papers, blankets, etc.) off the floor. Be sure there are no cords or wires from lamps, phones, etc. across the walkway.

**STAIRS AND STEPS:** Always keep stairs clear of any objects such as shoes, books, etc. Fix broken or uneven steps. Be sure there is ample lighting above the stairs at the top and the bottom. Furthermore, install a light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs so you never have to walk stairs in the dark. If there is carpet on the stairs, make sure it is firmly attached. Lastly, install handrails on both sides of the stairs. Be sure that they are as long as the stairs and are very secure.

**KITCHEN:** Rearrange your cupboards so that the things you use the most are at waist level, where they are easy to reach. If you need to use a step stool, use one that is stable and has a bar to hold on to. Never use a chair as a step stool.

**BATHROOMS:** The floor of the shower or bathtub should have a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips to keep it from being slippery. Install grab bars inside the tub and next to the toilet.

**BEDROOMS:** Place lamps within reach on either side of the bed and make sure they are easy to turn on and off. Make sure there is a clear path from the bed to the bathroom. Consider using a nightlight in the bedroom and bathroom. In addition to making your home safe, consider these other tips to help prevent falls:

- Regular exercise makes you stronger and improves coordination and balance.
- Have your pharmacist or doctor check all the medicines you take (including over the counter) as some may make you sleepy or dizzy.
- Check your vision yearly. Poor vision can increase your risk of falling.
- Get up slowly after you sit or lie down. Count to 10 before walking.

- Always wear shoes, outside and inside the house as well.
- Use bright bulbs in all rooms of your house. Having uniform lighting in each room is safest.
- Hang lightweight curtains or shades to reduce glare.
- Paint a contrasting color on the top of all steps so you can see the stairs better.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have created a checklist that you can use to ensure your home is safe. Access the checklist online:

[https://www.cdc.gov/steady/pdf/check\\_for\\_safety\\_brochure-a.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/steady/pdf/check_for_safety_brochure-a.pdf) Or you can call your Aging and Disability Resource Center for more information.

May 2021, GWAAR