

Balance & Fall Prevention in Older Adults

If you or someone you know has fallen, you're not alone. More than one in three people age 65 years or older falls each year. The risk of falling and fall-related problems rises with age—but they can be prevented.

Four Steps to lowering your risk for falls.

1 Talk to Your Provider

Talk to your provider about falls and your medications

Speak Up

- If you feel unsteady when standing or walking, or if you're afraid you might fall – Your provider may suggest physical therapy, a walking aid or other steps to help prevent falls.
- If you have fallen – A fall can alert your provider to a new medical problem, problems with your medications or eyesight that can be corrected.
- About your medications – A doctor or pharmacist should review medications to see if any might increase your risk of falling, as many medications are associated with dizziness or drowsiness.

2 Check Your Eyes & Feet

Ensure you update your eyeglasses and wear proper shoes

See Your Eye Provider Annually

Ask your eye provider to check your eyes at least once a year and update lenses as needed. Poor vision can impair balance and lead to an increased risk of falls and fractures. Also, have your healthcare provider check your feet once a year and discuss proper footwear. Wear shoes with a non-slip sole in your home rather than socks or slippers.

3 Keep Your Body Moving

Exercise regularly

Improve Your Leg Strength and Balance

Exercise can make your muscles stronger, your joints more flexible, and improve your balance and gait. At home, stay active by doing simple stretch exercises 2-3 times a week. Doing activities like getting together with friends, walking outside, gardening or tai chi helps you stay healthy. Ask your doctor or healthcare provider about the best type of exercise program for you.

4 Make Your Home Safe

Complete the Home Fall Prevention Checklist

Fall Prevention Checklist

Make sure your space is hazard free. Check off these tasks to decrease your risk of falling at home.

Stay Connected – Carry a phone or alert system with you at all times so you can contact emergency services if needed in the event of a fall



Consistent physical activity has been shown to reduce the risk of falling and fall-related injuries

FLOORS

Do you have throw rugs on the floor?

- Remove the rugs, or use double-sided tape or a non-slip backing so the rugs won't slip.

Do you have to walk over or around wires or cords (like lamp, telephone or extension cords)?

- Coil or tape cords and wires next to the wall so you can't trip over them.

Are there papers, shoes, books, clothing or other objects on the floor?

- Pick up things that are on the floor. Keep a clear walking path.

KITCHEN

Are the things you use often on high shelves?

- Keep dishes and food you use often on the lower shelves. Avoid reaching over your head.

Is your step stool sturdy?

- If you must use a step stool, get one with a bar to hold on to. Never use a chair as a step stool.

BEDROOMS

Is the light near the bed hard to reach?

- Place a lamp close to the bed where it's easy to reach.

Is the path from your bed to the bathroom dark?

- Put in a nightlight so you can see where you're walking.

Do you have a stable chair in your bedroom?

- Use a chair to get dressed. Ensure it has armrests and your feet can touch the ground.

BATHROOMS

Is the tub or shower floor slippery?

- Put a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips in the bathtub and on shower floors.

Do you need some support when you get in and out of the tub or up from the toilet?

- Have grab bars put in next to and inside the tub, and next to the toilet.