

# Home safety tips to minimize the risk of falling



As we get older, items in our home that used to be virtually harmless start to pose a greater risk. Carpets, stairs, floors – even pets can be dangerous. The good news is that many falls can be prevented.

Visit each room in your home.

Look at the space objectively and ask yourself: Is this safe? Would that make me trip?

What can I do to the room so I don't have to worry about falling?

Look at the common safety issues and solutions below.

## Overall safety issues

### All areas of my home are well lit

- Improve lighting with light-sensitive nightlights and/or motion detector lights that turn on automatically

### My floor coverings are in good repair

- Repair torn/worn carpeting and linoleum
- Secure throw rugs with double-sided tape or no-slip rug pads. Or remove the throw rugs entirely.
- Replace shag carpet with low pile

### The main walking areas are free of obstacles

- Rearrange furniture to allow a clear path
- Keep plants, tables, etc., along walls or in corners
- Clean up clutter

### All my phone and electric cords are out of the way

- Remove all cords from walkways

## Bedroom

### The room is set up to help avoid stumbles

- Create a safe path around the room by rearranging furniture
- Clean up shoes, clothing, and other clutter
- Keep bedding tucked in

### My light can be turned on & off without getting up out of bed

- Place a lamp or nightlight within reach of the bed
- Install a nightlight

## Bathroom

### **My tub, shower and toilet have sturdy grab bars**

- Install grab bars next to your tub, shower, and toilet. (Towel racks don't count—they can pull out of the wall.) *(Continued on the back)*

### **The floor of my bathroom, my tub, and/or my shower have non-slip surfaces**

- Place non-slip mats or strips in the tub or on the shower floor
- Add two-sided carpet tape to keep a bathroom rug in place

### **My shower is designed to reduce risk of falls**

- Add a sturdy shower seat
- Add a hand-held shower head with hose

### **My toilet is at a comfortable height**

- Consider installing an elevated toilet seat

### **I have nightlights in the bathroom to help me see**

- Get a light-sensitive nightlight that turns on automatically

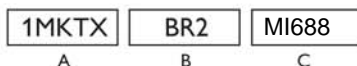
## Kitchen

### **The floor is designed to reduce the risk of tripping**

- Place a rubber mat in front of the sink
- Repair rough flooring

### **The items I use most often are easy to reach**

- Move the items you use most often to lower cabinets and drawers
- Use a step stool to reach items in high cabinets



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Consult an occupational or physical therapist to assure correct positioning of safety equipment.

## Indoor stairways

### **All my stairways have handrails on both sides**

- Install handrails for both hands—even on short sets of steps

### **The steps are slip-resistant and in good repair**

- Attach carpet securely; repair any holes
- If steps are bare wood, add slip-resistant pads

### **Visibility is good on all my stairways and landings**

- Install motion detector lighting
- Install light switches at both top and bottom of stairs
- Add contrasting paint or glow-in-the-dark tape to edges of stairs to make them easier to see

### **The stairway is kept clear**

- Patrol your stairs regularly to make sure all objects are removed at all times

## Outside

### **My walkways are well lit**

- Install improved lighting
- Add motion and/or light-detection lights that turn on automatically

### **My stairs and walkways have non-slip surfaces**

- Paint steps with a non-slip coating
- Arrange for regular removal of leaves and snow
- Repair broken stairs
- Add handrails to all stairs

### **The walkways are clear of clutter and hazards**

- Move objects from the pathway
- Trim any shrubs or branches that hang into the walkway

## Still want some added security?

Consider having a back-up plan by becoming a Lifeline subscriber. Help is always at hand. For more information, call:

**University of Michigan Visiting Care  
Lifeline Program (734) 477-7229**