



# Fall-Proof Your House

## CHALLENGE

Reduce the risk for falls and injuries at home

## Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Fall-Proof Your House."
2. Create a plan to make your home safer to prevent falls.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



Time to take the dogs out. That's how it all started for country-music star Carrie Underwood.

She put a leash on her two dogs, Ace and Penny. Then she stepped outside her home near Nashville, Tennessee. It was part of the nightly routine before heading to bed.

But that night in November 2017, was anything but routine. Underwood missed a step and tripped. Clinging to the dog leashes in one hand, she reached out to break the fall with her other hand. And that's when it happened.

The fall broke her wrist and injured her face. She needed surgery and a metal plate to repair her wrist. Cuts on her face required more than 40 stitches around her mouth. Underwood took an extended break from performing after that to recover. She warned her fans she might not look the same even after she fully recovered.

Yet, the fall didn't keep her down. Five months later, she sang *Cry Pretty* at the Academy of Country Music Awards. She received a standing ovation.

"It's crazy how a freak random accident can change your life," Underwood wrote on her blog after the fall.

Ever taken a fall at home? It happens. When you're young and healthy, you might bounce back from a fall-related injury like Underwood. A fall when you're older can cause serious injuries that take longer to heal. Not every fall can be prevented. But there are many things you can do to make your home safer.

How much do you know about the risks of falling? Take the quiz to find out:

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1.   More than 800,000 people a year end up in the hospital because of a fall.
2.   About 1 in 5 falls result in a serious injury like a broken bone.
3.   Falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injury.
4.   About 40 percent of all nursing home admissions occur after a fall.
5.   Half of all accidental deaths at home are caused by a fall.



How did you do? If you answered any of these statements incorrectly, you could benefit from learning more about how to fall-proof your home. An estimated 8 million people a year end up in the hospital because of a fall.<sup>4</sup> Not all falls are preventable, but taking action to make your home safer will reduce your risk for a fall or injury.

Answers: 1. False. 2. True. 3. True. 4. True. 5. True

## Watch Your Step

**Nobody plans to lose their balance and fall. It just happens.**

One minute you're carrying groceries up the stairs, and the next minute you're sprawled out on the ground.

You get in a hurry. Something catches you off balance, and you stumble your way to the floor. It can happen anywhere.

You might not even realize it, but your home may have potential hazards that increase the risk for falling such as:

- A slick or wet floor
- Clutter (toys, clothes, tools, etc.)
- An uneven driveway
- Furniture, rugs, or electrical cords
- Missing or broken handrails on stairs
- Poor lighting for halls, rooms, or walkways
- Pets or children playing
- A slippery tub or shower floor
- Tripping hazards in the yard (potholes, yard debris, mud, ice, etc.)

There's all kinds of things in and around your home that could be a fall risk, so watch your step. Fall risk is greatest for older people.<sup>1</sup> But Underwood's recent fall is a reminder that it can happen to anybody.