

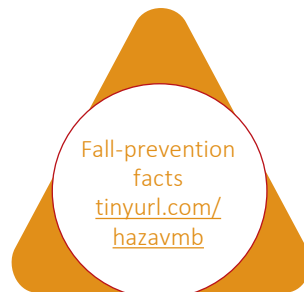
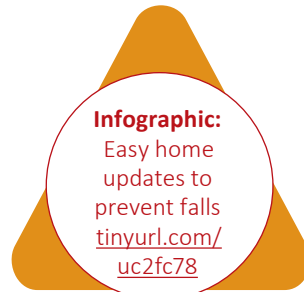


9 Ways to Fall-Proof Your Home

The good news is that making simple changes at home can cut your risk of falling. In one recent study, researchers found that small changes to fall-proof homes could prevent an estimated 400,000 falls per year.² That could be you or someone you care about.

Take a look around your house and yard. What's in the way that could cause a fall? Is there something you can change or modify to prevent tripping? Research shows that taking steps to make your home safer can make a difference.³ Here are some things you can do to fall-proof your home:

- 1. Clean up clutter.** Instead of walking around that pile of toys or stack of mail, clean them up. Recycle. Organize. Donate. Hire a professional if you need help to organize and get rid of clutter.
- 2. Rearrange.** Take a look at where you walk in your home. Halls, bedrooms, kitchen, doorways, garage, and other living spaces. You may need to rearrange furniture or electronic devices and cords. Maybe you need to put your pet's food bowl, kennel, or other supplies in another area. Or you may want to tape down or remove throw rugs. Rearrange to clear a path for walking safely.
- 3. Improve bathroom safety.** Here's a simple way to fall-proof your bathroom. Add grab bars on the walls above the tub or in the shower, and next to the toilet. Slip-proof mats for the tub and bathroom floor can help, too.
- 4. Make stairs safer.** Every flight of stairs should have a secure handrail and good lighting. Make repairs to any steps that are loose, weak, or have loose carpeting.
- 5. Brighten up.** Low or dim lighting can lead to falls, so brighten things up. Make sure the primary areas where you walk are well lit. Install night lights. Use lamps. And keep flashlights handy to find your way in the dark without falling.



- 6. Maintain outdoor areas.** Take care of your yard. Keep sidewalks and driveways clear. Be prepared to remove snow and ice. If your driveway or sidewalk is damaged or uneven, repair it.
- 7. Repair damaged flooring.** Don't wait for that creaky board, frayed carpeting, or loose floorboard to become a problem. Repair it as soon as possible. Always clean up spills right away.
- 8. Use a step ladder.** Need something on a shelf too high to reach? Don't stand on a pile of boxes or overextend your reach because it's faster. Use a step ladder. Or rearrange those items so they're not so hard to reach.
- 9. Wear shoes with a rubber sole.** Slippers, socks, or shoes with a slick-flat sole increase your risk for a fall, especially on slick surfaces like bathroom tiles or wood floors.

Taking steps to fall-proof your home will help prevent accidents that could cause serious injury or worse. If you're at risk for falling, using a walker or cane and doing balance exercises can help, too. It's worth a little bit of time and effort to stay safe and on your feet.

References

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