

Ways to adapt your house to reduce your risk of falls:

Remove all throw rugs from the house.

The throw rug changes the height the person needs to lift their foot when walking and many people do not adjust, catch their toe and fall. Taping down the rug may not help. Use the bathroom rug only when bathing.

When choosing carpet, thinner is better.

Thin carpet feels similar to walking on a hard floor. Thick plush carpet causes ankles to wobble making older adults feel unsteady.

Remove all electrical cords from walkways.

Eliminates the chance you will catch your feet and fall.

Storage of frequently used items is ideal at waist level.

If that is not possible, bending over is better than reaching over your head.

Turn lights on when walking up and down stairs and down long hallways.

This ensures that you have the most available light so you can focus on walking and not where you are going. Many people fall at night (in the dark), because they are not aware of their upright position. Relying on night-lights it is not enough.

Install tap lights or "the clapper" at the bedside.

Many people fall trying to reach for the lamp switch during the night. These devices decrease that risk. Allow time for you eyes to adjust before moving to turn on the main light.

When you go to the bathroom at night turn on the bedroom light.

This ensures that you have the most available light so you can focus on walking and not your destination.

Place microwave on counter-top not overhead.

You do not want to lift hot or heavy items over your head.

Make sure your stairs have a sturdy handrail or two.

This provides support and gives reassurance.

Do not use a stepladder or stepstool.

Have family member lower frequently used objects. If you must have a stepladder, make sure it is anti-slip and has a sturdy handrail.

Place handrails beside toilet and in the bathtub.

This gives a permanent and sturdy fixture to use. The towel rack and toilet paper holder are not suitable and will break eventually. It may be advisable to seek professional help with the positioning of the handrails.

If a raised toilet seat is required, ensure it has handles.

The handles assist so you can push and you don't need to pull to stand up.

If a tub bench is required, make sure it has a back.

It gives you more support and eliminates the fear of falling backwards.

Make sure you have non-slip strips in your shower or bath.

Have an extra towel handy to drop in the tub to dry the bottom of your feet.

Check chair and bed height.

The ideal height of a chair or bed is when your knees are one inch lower than your hips when sitting. Having armrests on the chair assists so you can push and you don't need to pull to stand up.

All shoes should have non-slip soles with patterned tread.

Dress shoes can be found with non-slip soles. Many falls occur due to poorly fitted shoes. We recommend wearing shoes in the home to increase balance.

Keep your eyeglasses at your bedside at night.

They will then be available when you need to get up at night.