

## CAREGIVING CHECKLIST

### Preventing Falls

Consider these safety improvements to make your and your loved one's home as slip-free as possible. Inspect the inside and outside of the house, and check off the items that are complete and the ones you still need to do.

#### To Do

##### All Rooms

- Install carpet with short, dense pile.
- Secure rugs with double-sided carpet tape.
- Use non-skid, no-wax flooring.
- Make thresholds even with floor.
- Arrange furniture so you can easily get around it.
- Reposition electrical and extension cords out of the way.
- Keep exits and hallways open.
- Use stable chairs with armrests to help you get up.
- Provide bright, evenly distributed light.
- Use lampshades that reduce glare.
- Put light switches and electrical outlets within easy reach.
- Use nightlights.
- Don't leave anything on the floor that might cause you to trip.

##### Stairs

- Install handrails on both sides of stairways at the best height for you.
- Make sure steps are even and in good shape.
- Check that carpet adheres firmly along stairs; repair or replace worn carpet.
- Choose a carpet that doesn't hide step edges or create illusions such as steps that appear deeper than they are.
- Remove rugs at the top or bottom of stairways and secure all other rugs firmly to the floor.
- Use good lighting (at least 60-watt bulbs) in stairways; install on-off switches at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Make sure stairs are clear of all objects.
- Watch out for a single step—people often trip when there is only one step.

##### Kitchen

- Choose sturdy step stools, preferably with handrails, and throw away broken stepstools.
- Clean spills immediately to avoid slipping. Walk on floors only after cleaning solutions have dried thoroughly.
- Do away with floor wax.
- Don't stand on the countertops.

## Bathroom

- Use rubber bathmats or strips in bathtubs and showers.
- Install at least two grab bars in the shower/bath.
- Clean up water from the floor.
- Secure bathroom rugs to the floor.
- Use raised toilet seats and install handrails within reach.
- Always use a night-light.

## Outside

- Brightly light all paths and stoops.
- Install handrails along any flight of outdoor steps.
- Spread sand or salt on icy walkways.
- Keep steps, sidewalks, decks, and porches clear of newspapers, sticks, rocks, wet leaves, and other debris.
- Repair broken or uneven pavement on walkways and driveways.
- Remove roots that protrude from the ground.
- Clean spills immediately, especially oily ones on concrete or asphalt.

## Tips

- Use non-skid contrasting tape, rubber stair treads, or coated, skid-resistant treatment on non-carpeted stairs; apply tape to dry, clean surfaces at one-inch intervals; use three long strips of tape on each step.
- Take your time and pay attention when you're on the stairs.
- Be especially careful when you carry large loads.
- Don't wear shoes you can slip in.

## Be especially careful when you

- can't reach the handrails.
- can't grasp them properly because they're an awkward shape.
- encounter uneven steps, obstacles on the steps, or non-skid treads that are too small.
- find floor wax, surfaces in poor repair, worn tread surfaces, or poorly secured floor coverings on your floors.
- experience distractions around you.