

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.