

Each year, more than 11,000,000 people over the age of 65 will fall. Some will have bruises and aching muscles for a few days and go on to recovery without any further problems. Others will have fractures or broken bones that may require hospitalization and rehabilitation.

Simple modifications around the home and a commonsense approach to safety can prevent 30-40% of falls or make them less life-threatening.

Stairs

- Provide enough light to see steps clearly.
- Remove clutter.
- Cover stairs with tightly woven carpet or non-slip treads.
- Install sturdy handrails on both sides of the stairway.

Bathroom

- Keep a night light on.
- Use rugs with nonskid backing.
- Install handrails in the bathtub and toilet areas.
- Place a rubber mat or nonskid strips on the bathtub/shower floor.
- Leave the door unlocked, so it can be opened from both sides.

Kitchen

- Avoid climbing and reaching to high shelves.
- Use a stable step stool with handrails.
- Arrange storage at counter level.
- Clean up spills as soon as they happen.
- Don't wax floors.

Living Area

- Arrange furniture to provide an open pathway between rooms.
- Remove low tables, footrests and other items from the pathway.
- Keep electrical and telephone cords out of the pathway.

Bedroom

- Remove throw rugs, extension cords, and other clutter.
- Install night-light.
- Use a normal height bed. Before leaving your bed, sit on the edge for a time to make sure you are not dizzy.

Footwear

- Wear low-heeled shoes with nonskid soles.
- Avoid shoes with thick heavy soles.
- Tied shoes with a fairly snug fit are safest.