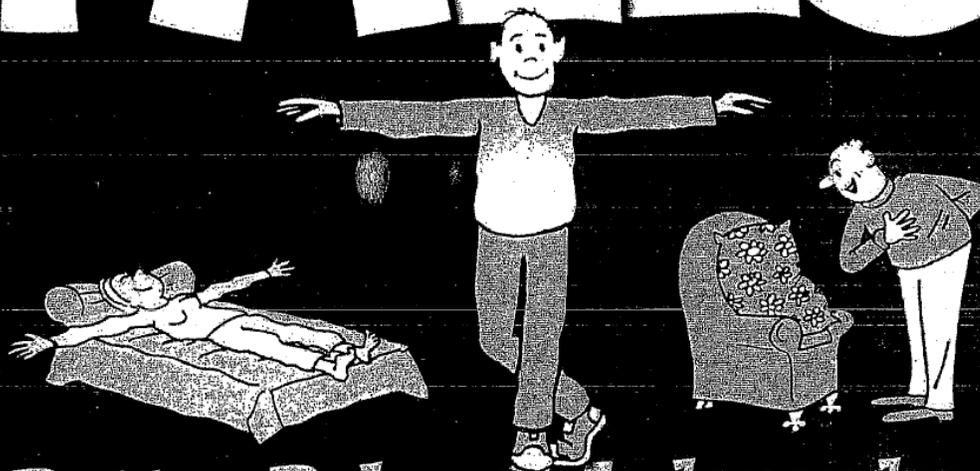


HOW TO PREVENT

FALLS

NEW
EDITION,
FULLY
REVISED &
UPDATED!



***Better Balance, Independence
and Energy in 6 Simple Steps***

The easy-to-use 6 Step Balance System® helps seniors avoid injuries and fears associated with falling. Featuring dozens of illustrations and fun exercises, including slumping into your chair and dancing with your pillow!

By Betty Perkins-Carpenter, Ph.D.

As seen on CNN and in *People Magazine*

With an endorsement by Nobel Laureate Dr. Linus Pauling

Fall-Proofing Your Home: Checklist

Lighting

Yes

No

Can you turn on a light without having to walk into a dark room? You should always turn on lights before going into a room, even if you are going in for a moment.

Do you move slowly when lighting is dim, giving your eyes time to adjust between well-lit and dark areas?

Do you replace burnt-out bulbs immediately?

Do you have night lights in your hallways, bedrooms, stairwells and living areas?

Nightlights are inexpensive and invaluable for visibility at night, particularly in stairwells, hallways, bathrooms and bedrooms.

Do you keep a flashlight by your bed?

Be sure to check the battery frequently.

Are there lights and light switches installed at both the top and bottom of the stairways?

Is the lighting bright but not creating glare?

Do you wear sunglasses during bright days or around ice and snow to reduce blinding glare?

Fall-Proofing Your Home: Checklist

Walkways

Yes

No

Do you use non-skid wax, or no wax at all, on polished floors?

Are walkways kept clear of things that could trip you, such as cords, low furniture and toys?

Tape cords to the floor or wall. Tie up extra cord with a rubber band, or coil it up inside an empty toilet paper tube.

Do you immediately replace breaks in linoleum, broken floorboards, or flooring that is buckling?

Do you clean up spills on floors immediately?

Do you arrange your furniture in each room so that a clear and wide walking lane is left open?

Make wide turns when you are walking around corners.

Does your favorite chair have arm rests that are long enough to help you get up and sit down?

Are your chairs and tables stable enough to support your weight if you lean on them?

Are your outdoor stairs and walkways free from cracks, dips and holes?

Fall-Proofing Your Home: Checklist

Stairways

Yes

No

Can you clearly see the outline of each step as you go both up and down? Each step can be marked with brightly colored adhesive tape strips. Don't use shag carpets, deep-piled carpets or carpets with busy patterns on stairs.

Do all stairways have securely-fixed handrails on both sides? Rails should extend beyond the top and bottom steps and the ends should turn in. If you should start to fall, do not let go of the railing; hang on!

Does your hand wrap easily and completely around the rail? Rails should be round and anchored one to two inches away from walls.

Are all carpets and runners well-fastened down? Use double-sided tape or carpet tacks. Repair holes in carpeting. Get rid of frayed rugs.

Do stairs have even surfaces (no metal strips or rubber mats to trip you up)?

Are stairs kept free of clutter?

Can you reach the things you use most often without using a step-stool?

Fall-Proofing Your Home: Checklist

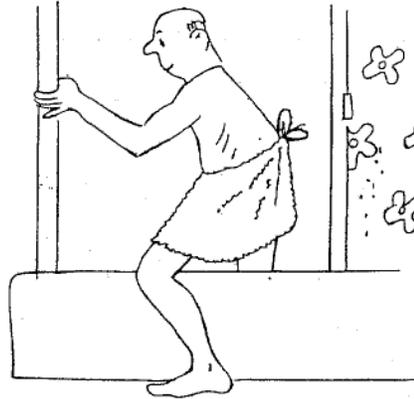
Bathroom

Yes

no

Do the tub and shower have rubber mats, non-skid strips or non-skid surfaces?

Do you have a grab bar on the wall or side of the tub/shower? If balance or weakness is a problem, you should use a bath seat.



Can you get on and off the toilet easily?

If not, you should install a raised toilet seat and fix a grab bar into the wall next to the toilet. Or, install a grab bar that fastens onto the back of the toilet seat.

Do you always test the tub or shower water to make sure it is not too hot, so that you do not make a quick, reactive movement and lose your balance?

If you splash water or suds from the tub onto the floor, do you wipe it up right away?

As an added precaution, do you dry yourself off before getting out of the tub or shower?

Fall-Proofing Your Home: Checklist

General

Yes

No

Do you take time to find your balance when you sit up after lying down, or stand up after sitting?

Do you wear rubber-soled, low-heeled shoes? Do your slippers fit well and have soles that provide traction? Keep the bottom of your shoes clean. Avoid walking in stocking feet or in socks.

If you feel dizzy from time to time, do you use a cane, walking stick, or walker?

Do you watch for slippery pavement when walking outdoors and entering/leaving cars and buses?

When walking on slippery or uneven surfaces, lean forward slightly, relax your knees and take shorter steps, or shuffle your steps to keep your center of balance under you.

When carrying packages, do you make sure they don't block your view? Divide large loads into smaller ones, leaving one hand free.

When you get out of a car, do you test the ground for wetness or iciness before standing up and walking? Don't hurry — be wary!

Do you avoid rushing to answer the phone/doorbell?

Fall-Proofing Your Home: Checklist

Other Safety Tips

Always use a step-stool, never a chair, when you have to reach high places.

When coming down extremely narrow steps, feel the back of your leg against the step so you won't slip off. Put your whole foot down and concentrate on each movement as you descend the stairs.

Climb down those steps carefully, especially the last step!

It is extremely important to be aware of the last step! It is very easy to *think* you are on the last step but, if you are not paying attention, you may still be on the second or third step from the bottom. Do not talk to anyone while walking down the steps. And if someone calls to you while descending steps, ***DO NOT*** turn your head to respond. Wait until you reach the bottom. In your own home, count and memorize the number of steps to be negotiated.

When you visit friends, be alert to possible hazards since you are in an unfamiliar environment. You might consider alerting friends to any problems that they are unaware of in their homes. Be especially careful of entrances with steps and elevations in split-level homes. Use a railing whenever available

Curbs can be dangerous

Curbs can be dangerous. Some are poorly identified, broken, very high and sometimes badly illuminated. Be alert as you enter and exit areas that have curbs. It is so easy to be talking to a friend and not be alert to danger.

Fall-Proofing Your Home: Checklist

Other Safety Tips

(continued from previous page)

Carts in a supermarket can also be a problem. DO NOT WALK BACKWARD even 1, 2, or 3 feet to reach for that can of tuna fish you forgot; it is too easy to lose your balance and fall backward. Take the extra few minutes to go around the aisle.

***Do not walk
backward***

Never, never stand on a chair when you change a light bulb or to reach a high shelf or cabinet. If you must reach a high shelf, purchase a sturdy stepladder.

Have your vision tested regularly. If you have your vision corrected and need new glasses, be very careful until your eyes adjust to the new prescription. Also have your hearing tested regularly. Even the simple task of removing ear wax can improve your balance.

Use caution in getting up too quickly after eating, lying down or resting. Low blood pressure may cause dizziness at these times.

***Don't stand up
too quickly***

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about the side effects of the drugs you are taking and how they may affect your coordination or balance.

Limit your intake of alcohol. Even a little alcohol can further disturb already impaired balance and reflexes.

Fall-Proofing Your Home: Checklist Other Safety Tips

(continued from previous page)

Make sure that the nighttime temperature in your home is not lower than 65°F. Prolonged exposure to cold temperatures may cause your body temperature to drop, leading to dizziness and falling. Older people cannot tolerate cold as well as younger people can.

Maintain a regular program of activity

Maintain a regular program of activity. Many people enjoy walking, swimming and exercise. Mild weight-bearing activities may reduce the loss of bone from osteoporosis. It is important, however, to check with your doctor or physical therapist to plan a suitable exercise program.

