

Staying Steady: Fall Prevention Tips for Older Adults

Falls are the leading cause of injury among older adults, but most are preventable. A few simple changes at home and in daily routines can make a big difference. Here's what to know.

Why It Matters

One in four adults over 65 falls each year, and falls are a top reason for emergency room visits and loss of independence in this age group. The good news: research consistently shows that prevention works.

Home Safety Checklist

- **Clear the walkways.** Remove loose rugs, tangled cords, and clutter from hallways and stairs.
- **Light it up.** Add nightlights in bedrooms, hallways, and bathrooms. Make sure light switches are easy to reach from the bed.
- **Secure the bathroom.** Install grab bars near the toilet and in the shower or tub. Use a non-slip bath mat.
- **Fix the flooring.** Repair loose floorboards or carpet edges. Tape down or remove rugs that curl at the edges.
- **Use handrails.** Make sure both sides of the stairs have sturdy, secure railings.
- **Keep essentials within reach.** Store frequently used items at waist height to avoid climbing or bending awkwardly.

Take Care of the Body

- **Get moving.** Regular exercise — especially balance and strength activities like walking, tai chi, or chair yoga — helps maintain stability.
- **Review medications.** Some prescriptions, or combinations of them, can cause dizziness or drowsiness. Ask a doctor or pharmacist for a periodic review.
- **Check vision and hearing.** Annual eye exams and hearing checks help catch changes that affect balance and awareness.
- **Watch blood pressure.** Standing up too quickly can cause a drop in blood pressure and lightheadedness. Encourage rising slowly from sitting or lying down.
- **Wear supportive footwear.** Well-fitting shoes with non-skid soles are safer than slippers or socks alone.

Everyday Habits That Help

- Use a cane or walker if one has been recommended — consistently, not just "when needed."

- Keep a phone or medical alert device within reach at all times.
- Turn on lights before walking through a room, rather than navigating in the dark.
- Take stairs one at a time, using the handrail.
- Ask for help carrying heavy or bulky items that block the view of the floor.

A Quick Note for Caregivers and Family

A friendly check-in can go a long way. Ask about recent near-falls (even minor stumbles are worth mentioning), and offer to help with a simple home safety walkthrough. Small, judgment-free conversations often open the door to safety changes that might otherwise be resisted.

A special thank you to Matter of Balance for providing these tips. A Matter of Balance is the most widely implemented fall prevention program across the country. An evidence-based, field-tested program, A Matter of Balance has been shown to be highly effective in reducing the fear of falling and increasing activity levels among older adults. [MOB](#)

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