

Catch Yourself

Simple Steps to Prevent Falls

Your risk of falling **increases** when you have:

- fallen before
- balance problems
- chronic diseases like arthritis
- depression
- hazards in the home
- a lot of medications
- memory problems
- muscle weakness
- problems walking
- vision problems

Reduce your risk of falling and stay independent, healthy, and strong by following the steps below:

1. Get a fall risk assessment

- Talk with your doctor about your fall risk, especially if you have any of the conditions listed above.

2. Review your medications

- Bring all your medications, vitamins, and supplements to your pharmacist or health professional at least once a year and when there are changes in your health.
- Ask about side effects and interactions, especially if you take 4 or more medications.

3. Have your vision checked

- Have your vision and eyeglass prescriptions checked every year by an eye doctor.

4. Engage in regular physical activity

- Ask your doctor about the best types of activities for you and make a plan that fits with what you like and what you are able to do.
- Doing strength and balance exercises using your lower body can build your strength, improve your balance and coordination, and reduce your risk of falling.

5. Assess your home and make changes for safety

- Use a home safety checklist or talk with a professional (such as an occupational therapist) to look for things inside your home that make you more likely to fall.
- Change your home to make it safer - reduce clutter; improve lighting in rooms, hallways, and stairwells; and install handrails and grab bars.





How you decorate your home reflects your personality and sense of style. In addition to making you feel comfortable, the things in your home can increase your safety or make it more likely that you could fall.

Making changes to your home – also known as home modifications – can make activities easier, improve your health and wellness, and reduce your chances of falling. These changes can include removing hazards, adding supports such as handrails, or changing how or where you do activities. Below are some suggestions to make your home safer:

1. Keep pathways clear

Keep stairs and walkways clear by removing objects that you could trip over. Add storage for things that are usually on the floor, such as shoes or papers.

2. Be aware of uneven surfaces

Look out for changes in the level of flooring, such as in doorways or in between carpeting and tile. Remove throw rugs or use a rug gripper underneath to secure them to the floor. If you can move a rug easily with your foot, you could slip on it.

3. Keep frequently used items close by

Reaching up high or bending down low can cause you to lose balance. For example - in the kitchen, make sure that cooking supplies and other items that you use often are easy to reach.

4. Light your way

Install bright lights, have switches at both ends of stairways, and use night lights to light the path from your bedroom to bathroom. Light switches that glow are easier to see in the dark.

5. Add supports in the bathroom

Bathrooms can be dangerous, especially when things are wet. Put grab bars near the toilet and in the shower. Non-skid strips in the bathtub can keep you from slipping.

6. Stay safe on the stairs

Consider installing handrails on both sides of the stairs. If you already have handrails, be sure you use them. Check that they are properly installed and not loose.

As your abilities change over the years, your home should provide you and your loved ones with the support you need to do your daily activities and the things that you enjoy.



If you need to hire someone to make the changes, consider taking these steps:

- ✓ **Get recommendations** from friends who have made changes or contact the resources below
- ✓ **Hire a licensed and bonded contractor/remodeler.** Be specific about work to be done in advance
- ✓ **Ask for a written agreement** with a small down payment. Make the final payment only after the project is completed
- ✓ **Check the local Better Business Bureau** for for a specific provider's reliability and performance record

RESOURCES

California Department of Consumer Affairs Contractors State License Board

Educational materials about hiring contractors and the construction process

Database of licensed contractors; can check status of a contractor's license, file a complaint

www.cslb.ca.gov | (800) 321-CSLB (2752)

Eldercare Locator

Free one-stop referral resource for aging-related services in each community

www.eldercare.gov | (800) 677-1116

Fall Prevention Center of Excellence, University of Southern California

Information and resources on falls and how to reduce fall risks

www.stopfalls.org | www.homemods.org

Jewish Family Service-Los Angeles, Home Secure

Home modifications for adults age 62+ in Los Angeles, Burbank, Culver City, Beverly Hills

www.jfsla.org | (323) 937-5855

Los Angeles Housing Department, Handyworker Program

Home repair services for income-eligible older persons living in the city of Los Angeles

<http://lahd.lacity.org/lahdinternet> | (213) 808-8803

Los Angeles Housing Rights Center

Handles landlord/tenant disputes and provides information on the Fair Housing Act

(213) 387-8400

Mexican American Opportunity Foundation, Home Secure, Handyworker

Safety devices and home modifications for adults age 62+ in the city of Los Angeles

Minor home repairs for adults age 62+ who own their homes

www.maof.org | (323) 313-1631 (Home Secure) | (323) 267-4333 (Handyworker)

Rebuilding Together Southern California

Home modifications and repairs to make homes safer for income-eligible home owners

www.RTSocal.org | (949) 278-2911

Additional sources for safety devices and supplies:

Pharmacies, Durable Medical Equipment Suppliers and Home Improvement Stores

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