

Falls Prevention

Being active can help prevent falls

Activities like walking and weight training can improve your balance and strength, helping to keep you from tripping or falling. Some falls can cause serious health problems, so preventing accidents is key.

You should always check with your doctor or provider before beginning a new exercise or training program.

What's really at risk?

Falls can lead to bruises, pulled muscles and broken bones. That might not seem like a big problem, until you know what's really at risk. Research shows getting hurt in a fall is more common than having a stroke. Being hurt in a fall can make it hard to do things like take a bath or go for a walk. Falls can also be serious. Out of every five people who break a hip, one person will move to a nursing home within one year.

Preventing falls may help you avoid a nursing home and live a longer healthier life.¹



There's good news!

Research also shows that if you avoid broken bones, you're likely to have less chronic pain as you get older. You'll also be able to get around more easily by yourself. Talk to your doctor about steps you can take to reduce the chance you will fall or break a bone - or keep from falling again.

Ten tips to prevent trips and falls

1. **Make sure you can see where you're going.** This might seem simple, but some people fall because they can't see well. Have your vision checked every year. Take reading glasses off before you take one step. Make sure areas are well-lit, and walk carefully if it's dark.
2. **Get moving.** Better balance and more strength come with exercise. Do weight-bearing exercises such as walking, weight training, dancing, or climbing stairs regularly to maintain healthy bones and muscles.
3. **Get screened.** Talk to your doctor about a bone density test to help catch bone loss early. Review your diet with your doctor to ensure you're getting enough calcium and take a calcium supplement if your doctor recommends it.
4. **Wear rubber-soled or nonslip footwear** that's comfortable, sturdy, and fits correctly. Keep laces tightly tied, and if you have trouble tying laces, look for shoes with Velcro®.
5. **Arrange your furniture so that it does not block walkways.** Be sure that sofas and chairs are high enough so you can easily sit down and get up.
6. **Install handrails on both sides of stairwells.** Be sure they are firmly fastened in place.²
7. **Improve lighting in your home.** Place night-lights in hallways and bathrooms to guide your steps in the dark. Add brighter lighting to areas that are dark or dim.
8. **Review medications** each year with your doctor or pharmacist to learn about any potential side effects that could lead to a fall.
9. **Install grab bars** next to the toilet and in the shower to improve your stability on slick or wet surfaces.³
10. **Reduce or remove tripping hazards.** Keep your floors free of papers, books, shoes, and clothing that could easily entangle your feet. Tape down or move any electrical or telephone cords. Remove area rugs or check that they have a nonslip backing on the bottom.⁴

— Sources

- ¹ <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/healthy-aging/in-depth/fall-prevention/art-20047358> 
- ² <http://www.cdc.gov/features/olderamericans/> 
- ³ <http://www.nsc.org/learn/safety-knowledge/Pages/safety-at-home-falls.aspx> 
- ⁴ <http://www.biodex.com/physical-medicine/blog/why-preventing-slips-trips-and-falls-among-older-adults-important> 