



HEALTH

Regular simple exercise like walking or swimming can help build muscle strength and improve balance, which can prevent falls. Eating nutritious foods protects bones, joints and muscles and gives strength and stamina. Some prescription medications can increase risk of falling by causing dizziness, drowsiness or numbness. Talk with your primary care doctor and pharmacist about your prescriptions and fall risk. Good vision is crucial to prevent falls and is one reason why it's important to have an annual eye exam throughout your life and to use prescription eyewear as directed.

SEASONAL SAFETY

The hectic pace of the changing seasons may cause people to unknowingly let their guard down, making them more susceptible to bone, joint, and muscle-related injuries. Whether staying at home or vacationing in inclement-weather, you can prevent injuries by being more cautious and celebrating in moderation

GUIDELINES FOR PREVENTING

Falls

This is where you go to get better.



HOME



Floor Avoid use of unsecured throw rugs. Keep halls and walkways clear. Check carpets and rugs for rips and loose threads. If throw rugs are used, secure them to the floor with tape or tacks. Clean up wet or slippery hazards as soon as possible. Keep floors clear of electrical cords.



Lighting Install extra lighting at the top and bottom of staircases. Keep light switches or lamps within easy reach of the bed and use them when getting up at night. Install a night light along the route between the bedroom and bathroom. Install outdoor motion-detector lights so they turn on automatically when stepping outside at night.



Stairs Check that handrails are in good repair, are not loose and do not move when used. Install handrails on both sides of the stairway. Fix any broken steps. Do not store items on stairways.



Furniture Arrange furniture to create a clear pathway between rooms.



Kitchen Keep frequently used items where they can be reached without bending or reaching. Invest in a sturdy step stool with a hand rail to access out-of-reach items.



Bathroom Have professionally installed handrails in the tub. Use a raised toilet seat or toilet seat with arm rests. Use a non-slip mat or non-skid adhesive strips on the shower/bathtub floor.

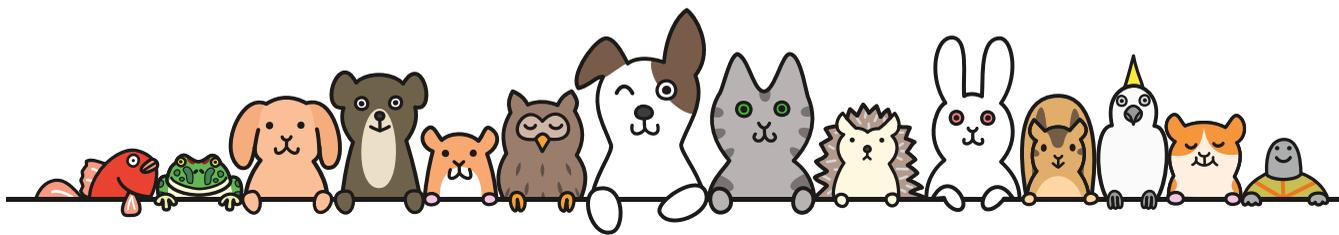


Bedroom Sleep on a bed that is easy to get into and out of. Look into options to raise or lower your bed as necessary.



HABITS

Move slowly when first rising from bed or chair; getting up suddenly may cause unsteadiness or dizziness. Observe and use caution at curb inclines and ramps. Keep one hand free for balance while walking, even if that means an extra trip upstairs or to the car. Don't multi-task, such as talking on the phone or taking off a coat, while walking or climbing stairs. Wear shoes or slippers that fit well and have nonskid soles, even when at home. When getting out of a car, swing both legs out, place both feet on the ground and use hands for support. When going out alone, carry a cell phone. Have a plan for who to call in the event of a fall.



PETS

Don't step over pets on the floor and rather make them move. Keep pet toys and supplies out of walkways. Check the area to see where pets are before walking, especially on steps and near doorways. Put a collar with a bell on a pet so their presence can be known when nearby. Ask for assistance if walking a pet that is large or powerful enough to push or pull and cause unsteadiness. Keep water and food bowls out of walkways and clean up spills immediately.