

How To Prevent Falls at Home

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Presentation Overview

- ▶ Why Focus on Falls?
- ▶ Tips for Preventing Falls
- ▶ Resources for you!

How Serious Are Falls?

- ▶ Falls are the second leading cause of unintentional or accidental injury worldwide
- ▶ Adults 65 and older suffer the greatest number of falls
- ▶ The main injury we see at UNC Trauma Center in Chapel Hill, NC is accidental falls
- ▶ Falls can cause long term side effects that reduce an individual's ability to be independent

Falls Are Preventable!

- ▶ Older adults are more likely to fall than other adults because of normal changes caused by aging such as balance and vision
- ▶ Falls do happen, but they are preventable
- ▶ You can reduce your chances of falling by making some changes in your home and daily routines

Fall Message

#1 Exercise Regularly.

- Exercise builds strength and improves your coordination and balance.
- Tai Chi is an exercise that has been proven to help reduce fall risk.
- Ask your doctor about the best physical exercise for you.



What are some things you've heard regarding exercise and what it does for older adults?

Fall Message

#2

Take your time.

- Get out of chairs slowly.
- Sit a moment before you get out of your bed.
- Stand and get your balance before you walk.
- Be aware of your surroundings.



**What's the strangest thing you've ever tripped over in your home?
If you haven't tripped, what have you heard about tripping?**

Fall Message

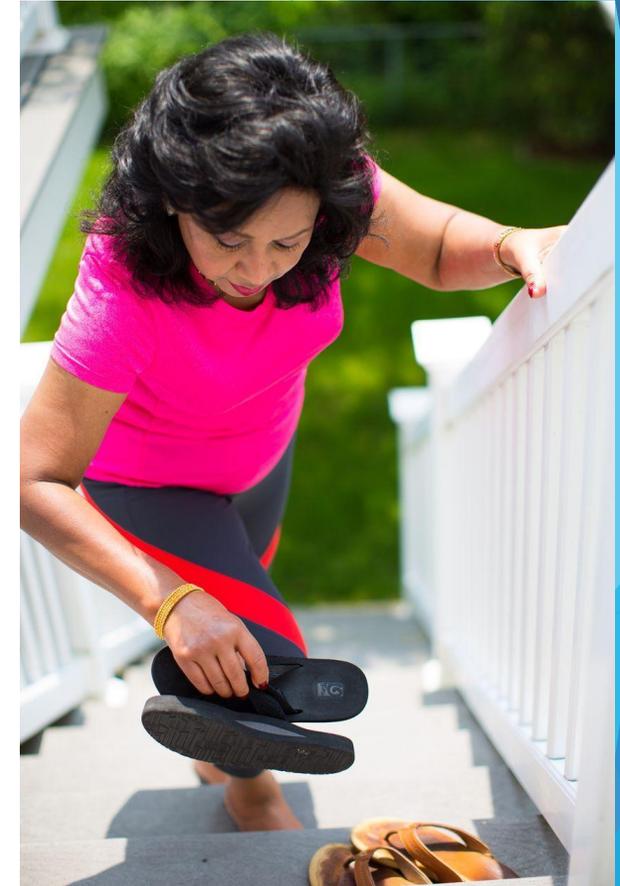
#3

Keep walking areas & stairs clear

Be sure to remove:

- electrical cords
- shoes
- clothing
- books & magazines
- other clutter.

**What can you do to keep the stairs clean?
Who can help you with this?**



Fall Message

#4

Improve the lighting around your home

- Use night lights to light the path between your bedroom and bathroom.
- Turn on the lights before using the stairs.
- See an eye specialist once a year.

For those of you who have motion sensors, please share some things you like about it.



Fall Message

#5

Use non-slip mats in the bathtub.

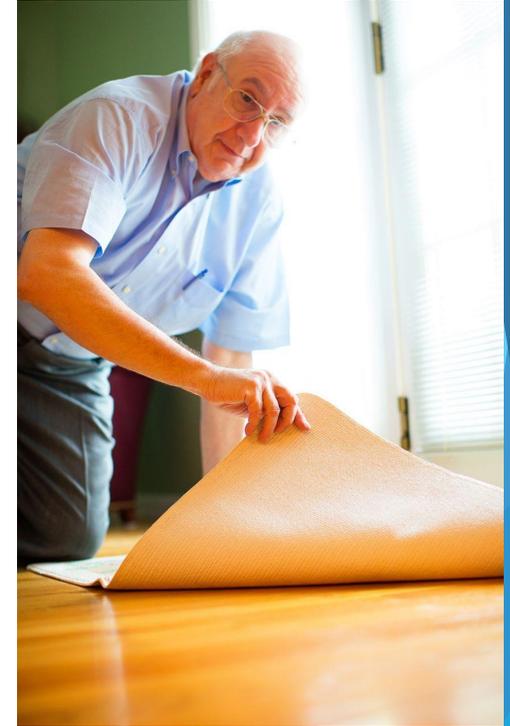
- Use non-slip mats on shower floors.
- Have grab bars installed on the wall in the tub and shower and next to the toilet.
- Wipe up spills immediately.

What kinds of things have you already done to improve the safety of your bathroom?



Be aware of uneven surfaces around the home

- Throw rugs must have rubber, non-skid backing.
- Smooth out wrinkles and folds in carpeting.
- Be aware of uneven sidewalks and pavement outdoors.
- Ask a friend to clear ice and snow from stairs and walkways.



What have you heard about making your flooring safer at home?

Fall Message

#7 Stairways should be well lit.

- Stairways should be well lit from both top and bottom.
- Have easy-to-grip handrails installed along the full length of both sides of the stairs.

What fall messages help make stairways safer?

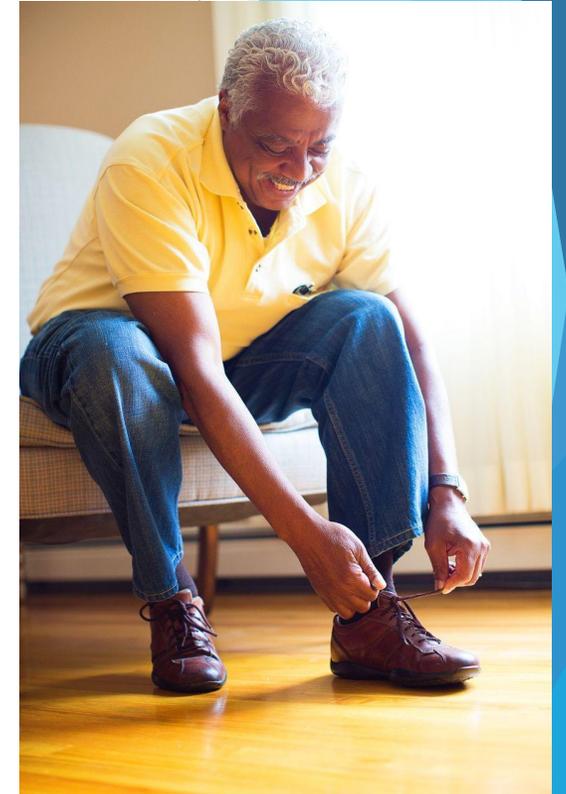


Wear sturdy, well-fitting shoes

- Low-heeled shoes with non-slip soles are the best.
- These are safer than high heels, thick-soled athletic shoes, slippers, or stocking feet.

What are some things you can do to keep yourself safe while walking?

What's the worst thing that could happen if you don't wear safe footwear?



Talk to Your Doctor!

- ▶ Your primary care physician and other medical providers can help you to prevent falls
- ▶ Certain medications can cause dizziness or sleepiness or multiple meds can cause reactions that increase falls risk
- ▶ Carry a list of medications with you to all your medical appointments and have the provider review the list
- ▶ Talk to your doctor about your risk for falls and what you can do to prevent them. They may be able to refer you to a community-based program for falls prevention

Resources for You!

- ▶ [Healthy Aging NC Website](#) - Can help you locate falls prevention programs in your area
- ▶ [North Carolina Falls Prevention Coalition](#) - Can help you find falls prevention program information and many falls prevention resources.
- ▶ [Tar Heel Trauma Injury Prevention Website](#) - Falls prevention resource from UNC Trauma Center.
- ▶ [RoadWise RX Website](#) - Website that allows you to enter your medications and tells you how they may affect your driving

For Questions & More Information

Call Lindsay Bailey at 984-974-2437 or email Lindsay.bailey@unchealth.unc.edu



Tar Heel Trauma

References

- ▶ World Health Organization
- ▶ UNC Trauma Center Registry
- ▶ National Fire Prevention Association