

Preventing a fall – The home hazard checklist





The shorter, colder days can lead to an increased chance of the person you love taking a fall, which could have a dramatic impact on their life. According to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), 'Falls are the single biggest cause of accidental injuries in the home, and sadly the largest cause of accidental death among over-65s in the UK.'

Falls don't have to happen though, many are preventable with just a few tweaks to home life to make things a little safer. Our home hazards checklist was written in conjunction with our team of Occupational Therapists. It includes tips and advice to help you work out the fall risk of someone you care for and suggests ways in which you can support them.



Begin by looking at where they live

1: ARE THEIR WALKWAYS CLEAR?

Removing trip hazards and clutter from their floors is an easy way to help reduce their falling risk.

Remove loose rugs and mats

These may make the room look nice but are very easy to catch a foot on and lead to someone taking a tumble

Make sure cables are tidied away

This includes things like extension cables that may be awkwardly stretched across the room

Remove clutter from the floor

This could be anything from shoes that have been abandoned to a pile of magazines that have slipped and spread out

Watch out for holiday decorations

The colder months are a prime time for holiday decorations to go up and, while lovely, they can cause serious hazards in the home. Work with your loved one to get the best placement for them that won't cause an issue



2: IF THEY USE MOBILITY EQUIPMENT, IS IT RIGHT FOR THEIR ENVIRONMENT?

Having the right mobility equipment can be a great way to help someone get around with more ease, but problems can arise if their environment isn't set up properly to accommodate it.

Can they reach it when they're in bed or sat in a chair?

It's a good idea to make sure that the area around their bed or favourite chair is set up in a way that allows their mobility aid to be within easy reach

Is it set to the right height?

Many mobility aids, such as walking sticks, walking frames, and rollators, are height adjustable, so it's important to double-check that the handle height is set to the correct height for your loved one

Can they actually manoeuvre their mobility aid around the house?

If it's a wheeled mobility aid, does it catch on anything? Are they able to get their mobility aid through doorways with ease? Are the walkways wide enough to get the mobility aid through without it catching on anything?

3: WHAT IS THE LIGHTING LIKE?

Is it bright enough for them to see where they're going once the sun has gone down and the curtains or blinds are closed?

Is there a lamp close to where they like to sit or sleep?

Can it be turned out without them having to get up and walk towards it?

Is there sufficient light in the hallway or corridor?

Make sure that all the bulbs are working and see if they are the type of bulbs that need to 'warm up', if so, you may need to swap these out for LED bulbs (where possible)

Would it be worth getting motion sensor lighting?

If they're prone to getting up at night but dislike switching on lights as they're worried about waking others, motion sensor lighting could be just the thing to help them see where they're going. It's designed to come on only when motion is detected, so there's no need for them to fumble with finding switches in the dark



What are they like in themselves?

4: DO THEY MOVE AROUND REGULARLY?

We all know that movement and exercise are good for us, and this remains true when it comes to reducing a person's fall risk.

Try to encourage them to get up regularly and move around

Whether that's to make themselves a drink, go to the toilet, get something to eat, it all helps

Consider getting them an activity tracker

It could be a great way to remind them to move. Alternatively, you could set reminders on their mobile phone (if they have one) to move around at regular intervals

5: HAVE THEY HAD THEIR EYES TESTED RECENTLY?

It's advised that we get our eyes tested at least once every two years (more if recommended by the optician). Difficulties with their vision could greatly increase their risk of falling as they're unable to see potential hazards around them.

Has their vision deteriorated?

It can be unnerving for people to admit that their vision isn't what it was, but if you notice them struggling to see things, it's worth getting them to go get themselves checked out

Do they remember when they last had an eye test?

If they can't remember, it's a good idea to get them booked in for one just in case



6: HAVE THEY BEEN FALLING MORE OFTEN?

This could be a sign of an undiagnosed medical condition or a potential issue with their medication.

Book an appointment with their GP

This is so they can get checked out and see if there's a physical reason for their falls

Suggest a medication review

If they've not had a medication review recently, getting it reviewed with their GP could help flag up any medications that may need to be changed



Watch and see how they do certain tasks

Doing this can help you to identify where they might be struggling, whether that's how they make a cup of tea, prepare a meal, or even how they get up out of a chair.

7: ARE THEY FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO STAND FOR LONG PERIODS?

If they are, this could leave them liable to fall if they get tired. There are things that can be done to help support them as they go about their day.

Do they find it difficult to stand and prepare food or drink?

Using a perching stool can give them a place to rest while going about these tasks, so they're not having to stand up for the whole time

Are they worried about falling in the shower?

By using a shower stool or shower seat, they can get clean without having to stand up, meaning there's far less risk of them falling due to overbalancing or simply getting tired

8: DO THEY FIND IT CHALLENGING CARRYING THINGS FROM ONE ROOM TO ANOTHER?

Carrying things, such as hot drinks or food, from one room to another may feel a little challenging if they're at all unsteady on their feet. It may leave them worried about dropping things and making a mess.

Could a trolley help support them?

A tea trolley can be a really useful way to safely transport things from one place to another, running less risk of spills or things being dropped

Do they use a wheeled walking frame?

If so, you may want to consider seeing if a caddy can be attached to it to help them carry items with them without having to worry about what to do with their mobility aid



9: DO THEY TEND TO GET UP IN THE NIGHT?

The combination of tiredness and little to no light could increase their risk of falling and hurting themselves.

Would they benefit from a motion light?

Motion lights can be incredibly helpful for someone who gets up regularly on a night time. They come on when motion is detected and shine a light to help people see where they're going without having to switch on a main light. Many can be attached to bed frames, walls, or some can be plugged in to the mains

Do they struggle to get out of bed?

If they do, it might be worth considering getting a bed rail that they can use to help them get in and out of bed

10: ARE THEY ANXIOUS ABOUT FALLING?

Sometimes, these anxieties can lead them to become more prone to falling as their worries make them less likely to move regularly. It can be difficult to work through these anxieties, but there are things available that could help.

Is their footwear suitable?

This includes inside their home as well as out. Do they have slippers with non-slip soles? Do their outdoor shoes have grip? Is their footwear in good condition?

Do they worry about getting help in the event of a fall?

If so, it may be worth getting them a fall detector that will summon help at the push of a button or even if the detector senses a drop in gravity (depending on which device you choose). Alternatively, they may prefer a pendant alarm system that can notify people that they need assistance



How we can help



Combi-Reacher - 813mm
Product Code:
L61554



Ultra Narrow Walking Frame with Wheels - Medium
Product Code:
N73223



Bright Led Striplight With Movement Sensor
Product Code:
P11115



Guardian III GPS Watch
Product Code:
S10027



PU Moulded Perching Stool (with Arms + Padded Back)
Product Code:
L35580



Economy Shower Stool
Product Code:
L97718



Nymas Matt Black Straight Grab Rail - 620mm
Product Code:
S03102



Folding EasyFit Bed Rail
Product Code:
P42809



Nuvo Adjustable Bath Step
Product Code:
M11077



Bellavita Bath Lift - Blue
Product Code:
Q12461



Window Pull - 910mm
Product Code:
F22144



Economy Drop Down Rail With Leg
Product Code:
M48465



Where to turn for support

If you're at all concerned and think that your loved one may be at a high risk of falling, gently encourage them to speak to their GP for support and to give them a check over. This could help to highlight issues so they can be tackled before becoming a problem.

Here at Healthcare Pro, we offer a Home Living Consultation Service where a qualified Occupational Therapist will help to identify ways to help the person you care for remain safe and independent at home for longer.

[You can find out more about this service here.](#)

RESOURCES

<https://www.rospa.com/home-safety/advice/falls-prevention/fall-fighter>

<https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/falls-risk-assessment/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls/>

