

Fall prevention

Falls are one of the most common public health concerns among older adults.

- Older people
- eyesight, hearing, reflexes
- health conditions: diabetes, heart disease, nerve issues
- rushing movements
- cognitive impairments
- loss of muscle mass
- medications
- safety in the home or community



What is the role OT

Falls are multifactorial and are influenced by conditions within the person, environment, and interaction between the two. OT is skilled at evaluating and addressing the influences of the person and the environment in which they perform activities, roles, and routines.

Occupational therapist looks at the intrinsic and extrinsic factors related to falls. Intrinsic factors include weakness, impaired cognition, sensory impairment, fear of falling, and impaired balance. Extrinsic factors in the environment include stairs, the need for equipment, and the ergonomic setup of the home or environment.

How to prevent falls at home and how OT will help

- remove clutter in your home and walk carefully when there are potential hazards, i.e., throw rugs or pets.
- don't stand on a chair or similar items to get an object you cannot reach. As for help, use a sturdy stool with a handrail
- do not use towel bars sink edges for the support they could come off the wall
- have a night light in the bedroom and bathroom
- wipe spills off the floor and use a rubber bathmat to prevent the bathroom floor from getting wet/
- stay activities and maintain overall strength, endurance, and balance
- know limitations if there is a task you cannot do easily; do not risk a fall.
- suggest furniture arrangement that provides plenty of room to walk. If you hold onto furniture for balance, the therapist may advise whether it's heavy enough and suggest an alternative. I recommend removing throw rugs or having them secured to the floor
- review the entire home and be sure you can safely get items you use regularly. Help create a plan for accessing things. Give an adaptive device such as a sa reacher
- recommend installing railing and grab bars throughout the home in locations appropriate to you. Use nonslip strips or a rubber mat on the bathtub/shower floor
- evaluate the lighting throughout the home and suggest adding light to unsafe areas or routine work.
- ensure you can safely bend to clean spills; how adapted ways to do so
- increase physical conditioning
- recomemdnw ays to safely continue things you enjoy.



Assistive devices



- mobility aids: walkers, canes,--> unsteady gait
- environment: railings on stairs, bathroom grab bars, raised toilet, and shower bar
- Wear correct shoes, avoid flip-flops, slippers, or shoes with slick soles.



What to do if you fall

How to get up from the ground after you fall by yourself:

1. stay calm
2. check your body
3. if injured, call for help
4. if not injured, locate a sturdy piece of furniture

The recovery from the fall:

- step 1: roll to your side
- step 2: crawl over to a chair or sturdy object
- step 3: from a kneeling position, put your arms up onto the seat of the chair
- step 4: bring one knee forward and place that foot on the floor
- step 5: push up with your arms and legs and pivot your bottom around
- step 6: sit down and rest

Home safety checklist

 **Home Safety Checklist**

There are more than 2.4 million fall related injuries every year. Many individuals lose their independence due to an injury sustained during a fall. Oftentimes, falls are due to hazards in the home that are easy to fix. This checklist will assist you in identifying and fixing hazards found around the house:

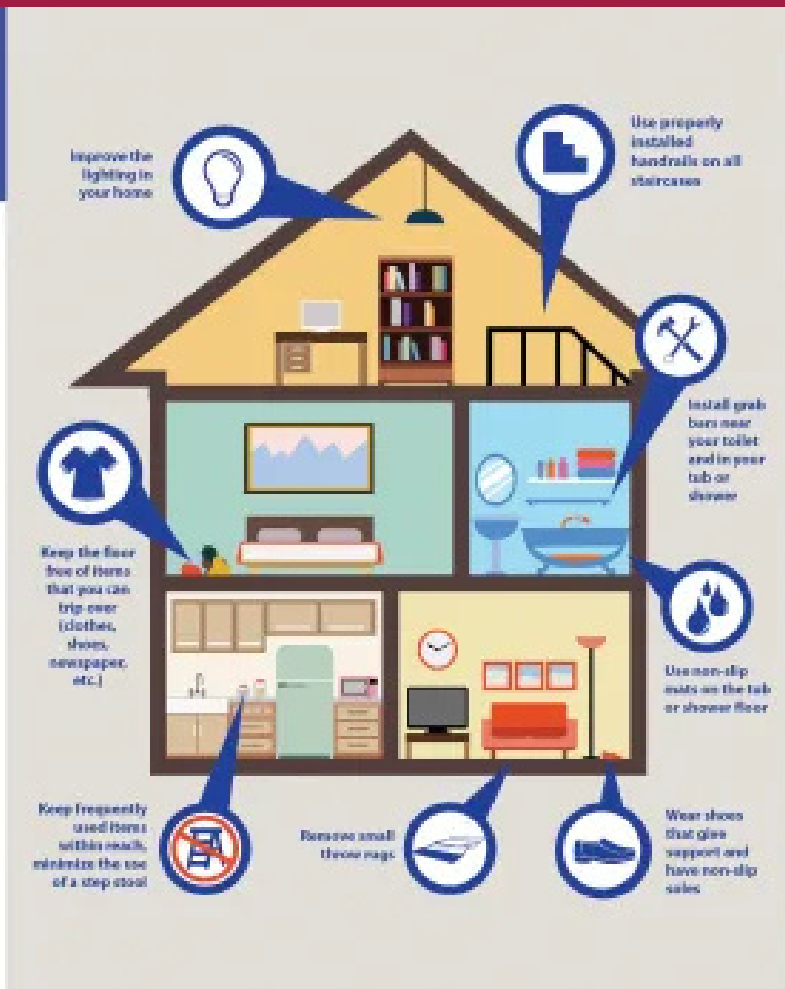
Check as you go

FLOORS:

- Throw Rugs & Carpets – Replace torn carpet, remove all throw rugs or tack down throw rugs with double sided tape or use non-skid rugs.
- Cluttered Walkways – Rearrange furniture so your path is clear. Remove all clutter and obstacles from walkway. Make sure you have plenty of room to maneuver your walker/cane.
- Cords – Remove all cords from walkway OR tape/secure cords to one side of the walkway.

BATHROOM:

- Slippery Surfaces – Use a non-slip bath mat on the floor of the tub or shower.
- Grab Bars – Install a grab bar next to the toilet and inside the tub or shower for support.



- STAIRS:**
- Remove obstacles from stairway.
 - Sufficient lighting – Have a friend or family member replace burned out light bulbs and utilize a nightlight. Consider having an electrician put an overhead light at the top and bottom of the stairs.
 - Handrails – Secure loose handrails or install a new hand rail.
 - Replace any torn carpet.
 - Utilize colored adhesive tape to clearly mark steps.
- LIGHTING:**
- Replace light bulbs.
 - Use nightlights.
 - Leave lights on in high traffic areas.
- HARD TO REACH ITEMS:**
- Place commonly used items at waist level.
 - Avoid using a step stool.
- CHAIRS:**
- Avoid chairs that rock and/or wheel.
 - Use chairs with armrests.
 - Make sure your feet can touch the ground.

To recover from a fall, please watch the video on our YouTube!

Click here for the video:

<https://youtu.be/gXuUtkxV8AY>

References

<https://www.occupationaltherapy.com/articles/assessing-and-preventing-falls-at-5500>

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<https://research.aota.org/ajot/article/66/3/284/5642/Systematic-Review-of-the-Effect-of-Home>