Tips for Preventing Falls

Outdoors

- ❍ Repair cracks and abrupt edges of sidewalks and driveways.
- ❍ Install handrails on stairs and steps.
- ❍ Remove high doorway thresholds.
- ❍ Trim shrubbery along the pathway to the home.
- ❍ Keep walk areas clear of clutter, rocks and tools.
- ❍ Keep walk areas clear of snow and ice.
- ❍ Install adequate lighting by doorways and along walkways leading to doors.

All Living Spaces

- ❍ Use a change in color to denote changes in surface types or levels.
- ❍ Secure rugs with nonskid tape as well as carpet edges.
- ❍ Avoid throw rugs.
- ❍ Remove oversized furniture and objects.
- ❍ Have at least one phone extension in each level of the home and post emergency numbers at each phone.
- ❍ Add electrical outlets.
- ❍ Reduce clutter.
- ❍ Check lighting for adequate illumination and glare control.
- ❍ Maintain nightlights or motion-sensitive lighting throughout the home.
- ❍ Use contrast in paint, furniture and carpet colors.
- ❍ Install electronic emergency response system if needed.

Bathrooms

- ❍ Install grab bars on walls around the tub and beside the toilet, strong enough to hold your weight.
- ❍ Add nonskid mats or strips to bathtubs.
- ❍ Mount liquid soap dispenser on the bathtub wall.
- ❍ Install a portable, hand-held shower head.
- ❍ Add a padded bath or shower seat.

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- ❍ Install a raised toilet seat if needed.
- ❍ Use nonskid mats or carpet on floor surfaces that may get wet.

Kitchen

- ❍ Keep commonly used items within easy reach.
- ❍ Use a sturdy step stool when you need something from a high shelf.
- ❍ Make sure appliance cords are out of the way.
- ❍ Avoid using floor polish or wax in order to reduce slick surfaces.

Living, Dining and Family Rooms

- ❍ Keep electrical and telephone cords out of the way.
- ❍ Arrange furniture so that you can easily move around it (especially low coffee tables).
- ❍ Make sure chairs and couches are easy to get in and out of.
- ❍ Remove caster wheels from furniture.
- ❍ Use television remote control and cordless phone.
- ❍ Avoid long sleeves and loose clothing while cooking.
- ❍ Use an easy-to-use microwave instead of a stove or oven.
- ❍ Have stove controls easily accessible.
- ❍ Keep pot handles turned to the back of the stove.

Bedroom

- ❍ Put in a bedside light with a switch that is easy to turn on and off (or a touch lamp).
- ❍ Have a nightlight.
- ❍ Locate telephone within reach of bed.
- ❍ Adjust height of bed to make it easy to get in and out of.
- ❍ Have a firm chair, with arms, to sit and dress.

Stairways, Hallways and Pathways

- ❍ Keep free of clutter.
- ❍ Make sure carpet is secured and get rid of throw rugs.
- ❍ Install tightly fastened handrails running the entire length and along both sides of stairs.
- ❍ Handrails should be 34 inches high and have a diameter of about 1.5 inches.
- ❍ Apply brightly colored tape to the face of the steps to make them more visible.
- ❍ Optimal stair dimensions are 7.2 inch riser heights with either an 11 or 12 inch tread width.
- ❍ Have adequate lighting in stairways, hallways, and pathways, with light switches placed at each end.

Tips extracted from the Colorado State University Extension