Fall Prevention at Home

Here are some tips to use in your home to help prevent falls.

Throughout the home
- Remove throw rugs so you do not trip on them.
- Replace or remove carpet that is torn or has turned-up edges. Avoid thick carpet. Shoes may catch on these and cause you to stumble or fall.
- Move furniture or other things that may block pathways.
- Be sure you have good lighting throughout your home.
- Use night lights or leave some lights on in the house to help you see at night or when you come home in the evening.
- Use switches that glow in the dark, so they can be seen more easily.
- Keep electrical cords and small things out of your path.
- Use your cane or walker rather than using furniture to give you support when walking.

Stairs
- Mount sturdy handrails to help with going up and down stairs. They should extend beyond the top and bottom stair.
- Improve the visibility on your stairs. Have good lighting on the stairs. Non-skid surfaces can be applied to wood stairs to prevent sliding.
- Paint a bright colored line on the edge of each step so they are more easily seen, especially if you have poor vision.

In the bathroom
- Place non-skid decals or a mat in the tub or shower.
- Install grab bars around the toilet and in the shower or bathtub. Towel bars are to hold towels, and they will break if you use them as grab bars.
- Use a tub seat and an elevated toilet seat.
- Leave the bathroom door unlocked so it can be opened if you do fall.

In the bedroom
- Avoid wearing long nightgowns or robes. These can cause you to trip.
- Avoid wearing loose shoes that cause you to scuff or shuffle your feet as you walk. Wear shoes or slippers that fit well and stay securely on your feet.
In the kitchen

- Have commonly used items at counter level or within easy reach.
- Do not climb or reach to high shelves.
- If you use a step stool, use a stable step stool with a handrail.

Other tips

- Be careful that you do not trip over your pet. Be aware of where you pet is when you are moving around.
- Use caution when sitting down. Before sitting down on a chair, make sure the backs of your legs are touching the seat of the chair behind you.
- Keep a telephone close by or consider carrying a portable phone.
- Take your time. Get in the habit of moving at speeds that are safe for your energy level and ability. Do not rush to answer the phone or door.
- Ask for help when getting up from bed, a chair or the toilet if you feel at all shaky, weak, dizzy or lightheaded.

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

For more health information, contact the Library for Health Information at 614-293-3707 or e-mail health-info@osu.edu.

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