

Home Safety Checklist for Older Adults

Most of us plan to remain in our home and community as we age. But most housing was not built with aging in mind. In fact, more than half of all falls among adults age 65 and older occur in the home. Is your home “aging-in-place ready”?

This checklist indicates which activities may be completed without professional assistance, and which activities require the support of housing and/or health care professionals.

+	Consulting a health professional such as an occupational or physical therapist is recommended to help you ensure these changes will work best for you.
C	Consulting a contractor, remodeler, or other housing professional is recommended to ensure proper installation.
DIY	This item can be completed by older adults independently or with assistance from a caregiver, family member, neighbor, or other trusted helping hand.

Moving Safely Through the Home

- ☐ Remove clutter from the floor and increase storage for such items **DIY**
- ☐ Keep pet accessories out of walkways and put a bell on your pet’s collar **DIY**
- ☐ Securely clip or tape cords to walls or floors **DIY**
- ☐ Remove or secure throw rugs **DIY**
- ☐ move furniture that is not used for balance from walking pathways **DIY**
- ☐ Mark uneven thresholds with contrasting tape or paint **DIY**
- ☐ Replace burnt-out bulbs and use bright, non-glare lightbulbs throughout the home **DIY**
- ☐ Use nightlights to light the path from bedroom to bathroom **DIY**
- ☐ Replace knob-style door handles with lever-style handles **C**

Using the Bathroom

- ☐ Place adhesive anti-slip treads on shower and bathtub floors **DIY**
- ☐ Use a shower seat and an adjustable-height hand-held shower head to support bathing **+** **C**
- ☐ Decide if your toilet height is right for you; if not, discuss ways to raise it with a health professional **+**
- ☐ Securely install grab bars in and around tubs, showers, and by toilets **+** **C**

Using the Bedroom and Getting Dressed

- ☐ Place a sturdy chair in your bedroom to use when getting dressed **DIY**
- ☐ Keep frequently used items like glasses, TV remotes, and lamps within close reach of the bed **DIY**

Cooking and Kitchen Use

- ☐ Move frequently used items to easy-to-reach places that are between shoulder and hip height to avoid reaching for items **DIY**
- ☐ When necessary, use a sturdy step stool with a safety bar to hold onto to safely reach items **DIY**
- ☐ Place a sturdy counter-height chair in your kitchen so you can sit while preparing food **DIY**
- ☐ Increase task lighting to support kitchen activities on counters **C (or DIY for stick on lights)**
- ☐ Install pull out drawers to replace low cabinets to avoid bending down **C**
- ☐ Replace knob-style faucet handles with easier to use lever-style handles **C**
- ☐ Replace knob-style drawer pulls with “D handle pulls” that are easier to grasp **C**

Using the Stairs

- ☐ Keep items off stairs **DIY**
- ☐ Add anti-skid strips with color-contrast to the edges of steps **DIY**
- ☐ Install secure handrails on both sides of stairways **+ C**
- ☐ Install light switches at the top and bottom of stairwells **C**
- ☐ Tightly secure carpeting **C**

General Safety

- ☐ Set hot water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or below to save money and prevent scalding **DIY**
- ☐ Install and maintain smoke detectors and CO alarms; check with your local fire department if you need help with installment or changing batteries **DIY**
- ☐ Install a security peephole on exterior doors at an easy-to-use height **C**

Higher Budget Changes

(All require housing contractor/professional)

- Incorporate a zero-step shower or install a walk-in tub, shower bench, and textured tiles that reduce slips
- Widen hallways and doorways to accommodate an assistive mobility device
- Install counter tops of various heights with rounded corners to accommodate different users
- Install pull-down shelving or lower cabinet heights for ease of use
- Ensure no or low thresholds between rooms to reduce trip hazards, or mark thresholds with contrasting colored tape or paint
- Install ramps, stair lifts, and/or elevators to enhance mobility throughout the home as needs change over time