fending off falls

Creating the Right Environment

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Summary:**

External factors can contribute to the risk of falling as you age. In this session, we addressed common reasons why people might fall at home and in the community, tips for creating the right environment to help lower your fall risk, and how to practice getting up from the ground whether from fall recovery, playing with children or pets, or just because its feels confident to practice.

*“Gravity is a contributing factor in nearly 73% of all accidents involving falling objects.”* – Dave Barry, American Author, Humor Columnist

# NOTES:

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# Fall Hazard Home Checklist

| **HOME HAZARD AREA** | **Yes** | **No** | **Notes / Suggested corrections** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ENTRYWAYS** |  |  |  |
| Bright lights (ideally motion-activated or on a timer) are outside doors and along entry paths. |  |  |  |
| Outside walkways are cleared of debris and foliage. |  |  |  |
| Steps have a sturdy, well-secured handrail. |  |  |  |
| Any surface height changes at the threshold for entrances, including patio doors, are either leveled or identified with bright paint of tape. |  |  |  |
| Entryways into the home remain dry. Secured floor mats are available for wiping wet or dirty shoes. |  |  |  |
| Indoor entryway lights are bright. |  |  |  |
| Places are available to immediately store umbrellas, packages etc. without setting them on the floor. |  |  |  |
| Floors are not slippery. |  |  |  |
| Nightlights illuminate area. |  |  |  |
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| **LIVING ROOM** |  |  |  |
| Flooring is not slippery, and carpet or rugs are well secured with no tears or loose stitching. |  |  |  |
| Furniture and items of décor are arranged so it is easy to maneuver around the room and to-and-from the seating area. |  |  |  |
| Pathways allow for easy vacuuming, dusting, and cleaning without risk of tripping of losing balance while reaching. |  |  |  |
| Chairs and couches are a height easy to sit down in and get up from. |  |  |  |
| All lighting is easy to reach and turn on. |  |  |  |
| Curtains or blinds are easy to reach and operate for changes in sunlight and glare throughout the day. |  |  |  |
| All electric cords are close to the walls and not trip hazards. |  |  |  |
| Clutter is picked up regularly and walking paths are clear. |  |  |  |
| Flashlight is easily available. |  |  |  |
| Nightlights illuminate pathways. |  |  |  |
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| **DINING ROOM** |  |  |  |
| Dining table and chairs are sturdy, and the chairs easily fit under the table for a clear walkway. |  |  |  |
| Other furniture is placed along the edge of room, out of the path to the table. |  |  |  |
| Dining lighting is bright. |  |  |  |
| Floors and tabletop are clear of clutter. |  |  |  |
| Flooring is non-slippery. |  |  |  |
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| **KITCHEN** |  |  |  |
| Overhead lighting and task lighting is bright. |  |  |  |
| Flooring is non-slip. |  |  |  |
| Non-slip, water-absorbing mat is placed in front of the sink. |  |  |  |
| Kitchen chairs or counter stools are sturdy, offer good back support and are easy to get in and out of. |  |  |  |
| Frequently used items, especially heavier ones, are stored within easy reach between hip and eye level. |  |  |  |
| Towels or rags are easily available to wipe up kitchen spills or splashes from the sink, water dispenser or ice maker. |  |  |  |
| Cleaning supplies to wipe grease spills off flooring is readily available |  |  |  |
| Flashlight is easily available. |  |  |  |
| Nightlights are along paths to sink and refrigerator. |  |  |  |
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| **BEDROOM** |  |  |  |
| Light switch is at entryway. |  |  |  |
| Bedside lighting is easy to reach and turn on. |  |  |  |
| Bed is at a height that allows you to place your feet on the floor while sitting on the edge and is easy to get in and out of. |  |  |  |
| Phone is reachable from the bedside. |  |  |  |
| Flashlight is reachable from the bedside. |  |  |  |
| Cane or walker, if needed, is placed in safe position easily reachable from the bed. |  |  |  |
| A partial bed rail is helpful when moving from lying to sitting, and also serves as a steady grab bar when by the bed. |  |  |  |
| All electric cords for lamps, clocks, charging stations etc. are snug along the wall and not trip hazards. |  |  |  |
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| **BATHROOM** |  |  |  |
| Nightlights are in place on the path to bathroom and in the bathroom area. |  |  |  |
| Bathroom is well lit, and the main lighting switch is easy to find at night. |  |  |  |
| Slip resistant rubber-backed mats are placed by the sink, shower, and bathtub to help absorb water. |  |  |  |
| Anti-slip strips or a non-slip suction backed rubber mats are in the bathtub and shower. |  |  |  |
| A shower bench or chair with rubber leg tips is available so one can easily sit down and get back up while bathing. |  |  |  |
| Grab bars are mounted both inside and outside bathtub and shower as well as by the toilet. Bars are installed vertically and horizontally, not diagonally. Towel bars should not be used to support body weight. |  |  |  |
| Toilet seat height is raised, or an elevated toilet seat is in place, so it is easier to sit down and get back up. A commode chair with handrails can also be used. |  |  |  |
| Water temperature is set no higher than 120 degrees Fahrenheit (to prevent the need to recoil from very hot water). |  |  |  |
| Soap and shampoo are easy to reach in the shower and bath. |  |  |  |
| Soap scum is cleaned regularly so it does not accumulate on surfaces. |  |  |  |
| A motion-activated toilet light is in place. |  |  |  |
| Door into the bathroom is wide enough to accommodate walker/wheelchair. |  |  |  |
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| **STAIRCASE** |  |  |  |
| Stairs are free from clutter. |  |  |  |
| Staircase lights are bright. |  |  |  |
| Carpet is secured to each step. |  |  |  |
| If not carpeted, stairs are not slippery or there are non-skids strips on each stair tread. |  |  |  |
| A handrail is on both sides. |  |  |  |
| Handrails run the full distance of the stairs. |  |  |  |
| Handrail is sturdy and secured well. |  |  |  |
| You can clearly see where one step ends and the other begins when going up and down the stairs. |  |  |  |
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| **GARAGE and SHED** |  |  |  |
| Lighting is bright and easy to access from garage entries. |  |  |  |
| All tools and equipment can be retrieved safely and easily. |  |  |  |
| Pathways are cleared for walking. |  |  |  |
| Workbenches and other surfaces are cleared of clutter if needed for hand placement moving through area. |  |  |  |
| Steps or uneven surfaces hard to see are highlighted with bright paint/tape. |  |  |  |
| A flashlight is kept in car in case garage lights are out. |  |  |  |
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| **YARD, DECK AND PATIO** |  |  |  |
| Lighting is bright at outside entrances and along walkways. |  |  |  |
| Walking surfaces are smooth on walkways, decks, patios, and steps. |  |  |  |
| Patio furniture and planters are positioned to allow for easy maneuvering. |  |  |  |
| Grills, fans, and other items with electric cords are placed so cords are clear of all walkways. |  |  |  |
| Options for shade are available to help reduce glare. |  |  |  |
| Garden hoses and tools are picked up and stored between use, so they don’t provide a tripping hazard. |  |  |  |
| Shrubbery is trimmed along walking paths. |  |  |  |
| Higher risk jobs like hanging holiday lights, washing windows, cleaning gutters, or pruning trees are recommended for professionals. |  |  |  |
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| **GENERAL** |  |  |  |
| Do you wear footwear with good traction both inside and outside the home? |  |  |  |
| Do you have a specific place where you keep all important and emergency numbers? |  |  |  |
| Is there plenty of room to maneuver assistive devices (wheelchair, walker, etc.) easily and safely? |  |  |  |
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What are the 3 most important modifications that you can do to make your home safer?

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3.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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## 8-foot Up and Go​

A picture containing text

Description automatically generated

**Primary focus:** Agility, speed and dynamic balance. ​

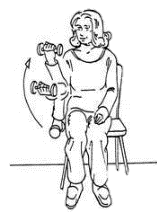
**Why it is important:** These are important for walking through crowds, changing directions, walking on uneven ground, stepping up or down a curb, moving quickly across the street. Feeling strong in this exercise and your balance will give you the confidence get out and be active!

**Steps to complete this exercise:**

1. **Equipment needed**: chair, a marker (tissue box, piece of tape, sticky note, etc.), tape measure and a timer
2. You will need a chair that does not move when you stand up and sit down. If necessary, place your chair against a wall and make sure it is stable.
3. If you have a tape measure, measure 8’ from the edge of the chair and place the object you are using as a marker. (You are measuring eight feet from the edge of the chair to the furthest edge of the object.)
4. If you do not have a tape measure, stand in front of the chair, and take four average steps forward. This is approximately 8’. Place your object on the floor in front of you.
5. Sit in the chair, place the timer next to you on the table (Note: We do not recommend doing this exercise with a timer in your hand. Additionally, the goal is to start and stop from the seated position). Start the timer. Stand up and walk CLOCKWISE around the object and sit back down. Stop the timer. Records your time.
6. Repeat the exercise. This time moving COUNTERCLOCKWISE around the object. Record your time.
7. If you require additional support, this exercise can be modified by using the arm rests for support as you stand and sit. With repeated practice, you may find that over time, you are able to complete this movement without the use of arm rests.
8. If the result feels good to you today, record it.
9. Enter the number of seconds:
   1. Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Number of seconds: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   2. Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Number of seconds: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   3. Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Number of seconds: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   4. Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Number of seconds: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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## Arm Curl

**Primary focus:** Upper body strength

**Why it is important:** ​ It is important for tasks such as carrying laundry, groceries, and luggage. Everyday movements that support your independence can be affected by lack of upper body strength.

**Steps to complete this exercise:**

1. **Equipment needed:** Chair with no arms, a stopwatch, and dumbbells (5 lbs. for females and 8lbs. for males)
2. If you do not have dumbbells, here are a few household items you can use: A 72-ounce bottle of detergent or ½ gallon of milk equals 5lbs. Bags of sugar, flour or rice often come in 5lb-bags. A gallon of milk is a little over 8lbs. Place the item in a grocery bag so you can curl it . A 15oz. can of food is approximately 1lb. Place 5 or 8 cans in a sturdy bag to use as your weight.
3. If the designated amount is too heavy right now, choose a weight that you can curl comfortably.
4. Sit in the chair with your arms straight. Place the appropriate dumbbell in one arm by your side. Perform as many biceps curls as you can in 30 seconds, while keeping the rest of your body stable. Count each time you return the dumbbells to your side. If you are over halfway up when the time is up, count that repetition.
5. Repeat with your other arm.
6. Practice the movement.
7. If the result feels good to you today, record it.
8. Enter the number of repetitions:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ weight amount: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Right arm: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Left arm: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ weight amount: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Right arm: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Left arm: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ weight amount: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Right arm: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Left arm: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ weight amount: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Right arm: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Left arm: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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# Instructions for Getting Up from the Floor

* Don’t rush to get up too soon, but first take several deep breaths to help the body relax. Getting up to soon could make an injury worse.
* While still on the ground assess your body for pain. Wiggle your toes, ankles, fingers, wrists. Gently move your arms and legs.
* If you don’t have pain or injury and feel you can get up on your own safely, begin by lying on your back. Bend your dominate leg with knee pointing up toward ceiling and the foot flat on floor.
* Tuck your opposite arm snug along your stomach and hip.
* Slowly roll over the tucked arm, placing your free hand and elbow on the floor and begin to push up on your hands and knees into a crawl position.
* Crawl to a study chair, couch, or if outside, maybe a bench or signpost.
* Put one hand and one elbow on the sturdy piece and slide one foot forward so that it is flat on the floor and your knee is under you.
* Keep the other leg bent so the knee is on the floor. From this kneeling position, push off the sturdy piece with your hands as you slowly rise, and turn your body to sit in the chair, or slowly stand up and stabilize yourself by the signpost.

*If you are hurt or cannot get up on your own, or if you feel dizzy, ask someone for help or call 911. If you are alone, try to get into a comfortable position and wait for help to arrive.*

*Carrying a mobile cell phone in a fanny pack or neck wallet as you move about your day can make it easier to call someone if you need assistance. Another option is a wearable emergency response such as a necklace or wristband with a button to alert help.*

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Session Two Kaizen Step

1) Goal I want to accomplish: (example: I want to review my home for fall hazards.)

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2) One step I could take toward that goal: (example: I will review my kitchen.)

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3) Ways I can break this step (#2) into smaller actions: (List as many actions as you can think of.)

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