



Home Safety Checklist

For Fall Prevention



At HealthCraft, we have distilled our 30 years of experience into easy-to-use tools and products to fight the epidemic of falls.

Contents

When entering your home	3
Moving through the home	5
Getting on and off the toilet	7
Getting in and out of the tub	8
Getting in and out of the shower	9
Bedroom	10
Living Room.....	12
Stairs and Steps.....	13
Kitchen	14
Home Automation / Assistive Technology	15



When entering your home

- The entrance is well-lit and free of clutter.
 - Ensure there are no objects at the entrance or on the steps.
 - Ensure that good lighting illuminates every step.

- Entrance and any steps are well-maintained and free of ice and snow.
 - Repair entrance and steps as necessary and keep free of ice and snow to prevent trips and slips.

- Step risers and threshold are low enough to easily step up.
 - Step risers should be shallow enough (7" or less) so that it is easy to climb the stairs. Thresholds at doorways may be difficult to step over due to their height and thickness. Make the height lower by adding an extra step.
 - Install a grab bar or handle at the threshold or door jamb.

- A ramp or platform lift is in place for walker, rollator, or wheelchair access (if I use one).
 - If you use a walker or wheelchair, consider an accessible entrance, ideally in the garage or out of inclement weather.

When entering your home (cont'd)

- A sturdy railing is in place to provide support on steps or stairs.
 - Even several steps should have a [railing](#).
 - Ensure the handrail extends 12" past both the top and bottom steps.
 - If you have a weaker hand or arm, install 2 sturdy railings to provide support on the strong side both ascending and descending the steps.

- A key lock or security system is easily managed.
 - Maintaining your balance while struggling to unlock and open the door can be a challenge. Ensure an easy system.
 - Place a small table or shelf inside and outside entrance to hold parcels while opening doors.

- The door handle is easy to manipulate.
 - Consider a lever door handle.

- The door can easily stay open for you to enter and exit safely.
 - If the door has an automatic closer remove it. It could potentially cause a shift in balance when you are stepping over the threshold.

- There is a place to sit for putting on shoes or footwear.
 - Add a bench or sturdy chair beside the door with armrests and a good seat height.



Moving through the home

- Pathways are clear and free of clutter.
 - Move any furniture or objects to create direct paths between areas and rooms.
 - Install handrails along long corridor walls.
- Scatter mats are not present.
 - Remove all scatter mats/rugs to eliminate tripping hazards. Add double-sided tape to all edges of any carpets or runners that must remain.
- Pets and toys do not present a tripping hazard.
 - Have a plan to keep pets and toys away from your feet. Put a bell on their collar so you know where they are.
- There is room to maneuver a walker or wheelchair (if I use one).
 - Ensure that there is space to use a walker or rollator everywhere you move in the home.
- There is good lighting throughout the home.
 - It is important to have sufficient lighting to see any obstacles in your path or any changes in flooring or elevation.
 - Consider automatic lighting, or timers, that come on when it gets dark.

Moving through the home (cont'd)

- The thermostat, curtain pulls, and window openings are easy to access.
 - Ensure that there is clear access to the frequently used home features. Avoid excessive bending, reaching, or stretching which can lead to a loss of balance.

- I wear supportive, non-slip comfortable footwear around the house.
 - Choose well-fitting, non-slip footwear. Slippers that can easily slip off can cause falls.

- The path to the bathroom is fully accessible.
 - Remove all obstacles so that when we are in a rush to get to the bathroom, there is no need to maneuver around obstacles on our way.

- Electrical cords do not interfere with walking areas.
 - Coil or tape any lamp, telephone or extension cords next to the wall so you can't trip over them. If needed, have an electrician put in an additional outlet.

- All doorways accommodate my walker or wheelchair (if I use these).
 - Use swing-clear hinges on doors to widen doorways or have a contractor widen doorways to allow better access.

- There are no tripping hazards in my home.
 - Ensure that all transitions between flooring types are not a tripping hazard and that any potential tripping hazards are remedied.

- I know what to do if I fall and can't get up.
 - Establish a plan with family or neighbours
 - Ensure you have a way of calling for help like a portable phone
 - Consider wearing an emergency alert button like Lifeline and consider automatic fall detection as a feature.



Getting on and off the toilet

- I can sit down or rise from the toilet with control.
 - Consider a tall toilet (18" or higher) or add a raised toilet seat to make the seat height easier for you to use.
 - Install a [grab bar](#) if you have difficulty rising from the toilet with control.
 - Install two grab bars if more support is required to rise with control. Consider [flip-up grab bars](#) that mount to the wall behind the toilet.
 - Install a [floor-to-ceiling pole](#) if there is no place to put a grab bar.

- I can manage my clothing and stay balanced without any support surface.
 - Consider a support surface or [grab bar](#) at standing height to provide stability when standing to manage clothing.

- All products needed during the toileting routine are accessible from a seated position.
 - Have a small table or plastic cabinet with drawers to keep all products (wipes, extra toilet paper) handy to prevent reaching too far when on the toilet.

- I can enter and exit the bathroom without any problems.
 - Ensure that the door opens fully and there are no obstacles preventing it from opening all the way and staying open. Take the door off its hinges if it is a problem.
 - Place a commode on levels of the home where it is not possible to install a bathroom.



Getting in and out of the tub

*if you don't use a bathtub you can skip this section

- I have a reliable non-slip surface in the tub.
 - Install non-slip strips or use a non-slip rubber mat that does not move on the floor of the tub.

- I can safely step into and out of the tub or shower one leg at a time without any balance issues.
 - Install one [grab bar](#) as a support when you step into and out of the tub.
 - For more support, install two or more [grab bars](#) for two-handed support when you step into and out of the tub.
 - Install a [floor-to-ceiling pole](#) if there is no place to put a grab bar.
 - If you cannot step over the tub wall, use a transfer bench so that you can sit down, slide over, and lift your legs over the edge of the tub. You will need a hand-held shower for a safe, seated shower.

- I can easily get down into the bottom of the tub for a soak.
 - If you need a [grab bar](#) to assist you down into the bottom of the tub, install a grab bar placed on a diagonal, two heights of horizontal bars, or one horizontal and one vertical.

- I can easily get up from the bottom of the tub.
 - If you need a [grab bar](#) to assist you to get up from the tub, install a grab bar placed on a diagonal, two heights of horizontal bars, or one horizontal and one vertical.
 - If you can't get up from the bottom of the tub, consider a shower seat for a safe, seated shower with a hand-held shower. As an alternative, consider a bath lift.



Getting in and out of the shower

*If you do not use a shower, proceed to the next section.

- I have a reliable non-slip surface in the tub/shower.
 - Install non-slip strips, or use a non-slip rubber mat that does not move, on the floor of the shower.

- I can safely step in and out of the tub/shower one leg at a time without balance issues.
 - Install one [grab bar](#) as a support when you step into and out of the shower.
 - For more support, install two or more [grab bars](#) for two-handed support when you step into and out of the shower.
 - Install a [floor-to-ceiling pole](#) if there is no place to put a grab bar.
 - If you cannot step over the tub wall, use a transfer bench so that you can sit down, slide over, and lift your legs over the edge of the shower.

- I can stand for the duration of the shower without fatigue, shortness of breath, or dizziness.
 - Use a [bath seat](#) for a safe, seated shower and a grab bar to assist in getting up and down from the seat.
 - Install a lightweight hand-held shower with on/off in the handset, and a 72" or 84" flexible hose.

- I can stand in the shower, close my eyes and turn around without any balance issues.
 - Install a [grab bar](#) in the shower to provide a little support during the shower when turning around.
 - For more support, install two or more [grab bars](#) for two-handed support when turning around in the shower.



Bedroom

- I can easily stand up or sit down with control from the edge of the bed.
 - Install a **bed rail** at pillow height to provide hand support.
 - Ensure the bed height is higher than the back of your knee to make it easier to stand up.
 - Consider installing a **floor-to-ceiling** pole at bedside when maximum effort is needed to come to standing or when an assistant is required.

- The edge of the bed is firm enough to prevent sliding off the bed when seated at the edge.
 - Install a **bed rail** to provide hand support for a feeling of security.
 - Use a sturdy chair for dressing from a safe, seated position.

- Appropriate slippers or footwear are accessible from a seated position at the side of the bed.
 - Install and hold onto a **bed rail** as you put on slippers to avoid slipping off the bed.
 - Add non-slip strips onto slippery floors to ensure that your feet aren't are going to slip as you stand up.
 - Ensure that the flooring is not slippery when you have bare feet or sock feet at night.

- The telephone or call bell is within easy reach when in bed.
 - Place a telephone or call bell within reach to eliminate the need to get out of bed when you need to call for assistance.

Bedroom (cont'd)

- I can get to the bathroom without rushing at night.
 - Consider a bedside commode or urinal for nighttime use.

- The path is well-lit and free of obstacles from the bed to the bathroom or commode.
 - Keep the path to the bathroom clear of clutter or obstacles.
 - Place a lamp within easy reach. Voice-activated or touch-activated are easier to use. Install a night light that goes on automatically after dark.

- A clock is visible from the bed.
 - Consider a lighted clock face or a projection clock that projects a large display onto the ceiling.

- There is adequate room at the side of the bed for walker or wheelchair access.
 - Ensure your walker or wheelchair is always within easy reach. Don't leave it at a distance from your bed.



Living Room

- I can easily stand up or sit down from my favorite chair or couch.
 - Ensure the seat height is higher than the back of your knee to make it easier to stand up.
 - Add height to the chair or couch with furniture risers.
 - Add a piece of plywood or a rigidizer under the cushion of the chair or couch to bring the overall height higher and provide firmness to the sitting surface.
 - Choose a different chair with a higher seat height, firmer seat, and sturdy armrests to make it easier to stand up or choose an electric lift chair.
 - Consider installing a [floor-to-ceiling pole](#) or [floor-mounted pole](#) at the couch or chair when maximum effort is needed to come to standing or when an assistant is required.



Stairs and Steps

- My stairs are well-lit so that each step is fully visible.
 - Change the light bulb if it has burned out (have a friend or family member change the light bulb).
 - If there is no light, have an electrician install an overhead light and switches at both the top and bottom of the stairs.
- My steps and stairs are well-maintained.
 - Repair steps or stairs as necessary to prevent trips and slips.
 - If carpeted, ensure the carpet is firmly attached to every step, or remove the carpet and attach non-slip rubber treads to the stairs.
- My steps are not slippery.
 - Install non-slip nosing or stair treads.
- The stairs and landings are free of clutter or items.
 - Remove all items from the landings and stairways.
 - Remove any loose rugs from the top and bottom landings or tape them down.
- A sturdy railing is in place to provide support on steps or stairs.
 - Even several steps should have a **railing**.
 - If you have a weaker hand or arm, install 2 sturdy railings to provide support on the strong side both ascending and descending the steps.
- I am able to climb up or down the stairs without fatigue, pain, or shortness of breath.
 - Install a stair lift.
 - Move your living space all to the main floor. Avoid basements or second levels.



Kitchen

- I can stand to perform tasks at the sink or the counter without fatigue, shortness of breath, or dizziness.
 - Use a stool, chair, or sit on your walker to work at the counter or sink. Open the lower cabinet doors to provide knee space.

- I can access all the items I need daily without reaching far above my head or bending and reaching a low height.
 - Move all frequently used items to shelves or counters that are easily reached.
 - Eliminate the need to use a step stool.

- I can easily stand up or sit down from my favorite kitchen chair.
 - Consider using a tall stool at the counter instead of a lower chair at the table. Eliminate the need to use a step stool.
 - Consider installing a floor-to-ceiling pole or floor-mounted pole when maximum effort is needed to come to standing or when assistance is needed.



Home Automation / Assistive Technology

- I incorporate smart technology into my home environment.
 - Install smart appliances and devices to control air conditioning, heating systems, security systems, telephones, lights, etc and connect them to control devices such as Google Home, Amazon Echo or your cell phone.
 - Consult CMHC's Accessible Housing by Design – Home Automation on www.cmhc.ca
 - Install phone jacks in convenient locations, use a portable phone or carry a cell phone at all times.
 - Install a video doorbell camera that links to your cell phone.
 - Consider using a medical alert system like Lifeline and consider automatic fall detection as a feature. Some smart watches offer this feature.



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