



Tips for Preventing Falls at Home

Falls are the leading cause of unintentional-injury hospitalization and death among seniors. About half of all falls occur at home. Falls are preventable. You can help prevent falls by making your home safer using these tips. Start by doing a safety check in your own home. If your home needs repairs and renovation to make it safer, contact **Project Mend-A-House** at **703- 792-7663**, or visit the web site – **www.pmahweb.org**.

Stairs

- Make sure all handrails are not broken and are securely fastened.
- Both sides of the steps should have handrails.

Floors and rugs

- Make sure that all floor boards are even. Rugs, including area rugs, should be secured to the floor with tacks, non-skid pads or double-sided tape.
- Use non-skid floor wax.

Bathroom

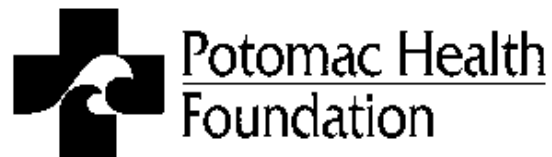
- Be sure you can move safely in the bathroom area and in and out of the tub or shower.
- Remove soap build-up in the tub or shower on a regular basis.
- Place non-slip strips in the bath/shower.
- Install adjustable-height shower heads.
- Mount grab bars at the toilet, bath and shower on walls with secure reinforcements to prevent the bars from coming loose.
- Secure bath mats with non-slip, double-sided rug tape.

Kitchen

- Items you use frequently, such as dishes and food items, should be easy to reach.
- If you use a step stool, make sure that it has a bar at the top to hold on to.

Lighting

- Place nightlights in hallways, bedrooms, bathrooms and stairways.
- Install light switches at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Place a lamp and telephone near your bed.
- Keep lighting uniform in each room, and add lighting to dark spaces.
- Hang light-weight curtains or shades to reduce glare.



All Rooms

- Check whether hallways and rooms have obstacles to safe movement.
- Move newspapers, boxes, electrical and phone cords, plants and furniture away from the places where you walk.
- Store clothing, bed coverings, towels and other household items where you can reach them comfortably.

Other Essential Steps for Protecting Yourself Against Falls

Assessing your home to identify fall hazards, then making the necessary changes to prevent them, are significant steps. These factors also are important:

- Medications matter** — Ask your physician or pharmacist about the effects of the prescription and non-prescription medications you are taking. Some medications can cause dizziness or light-headedness that can lead to falls. As people age, the effects of medications may change.
- Check your eyesight** — Be sure to have your eyes checked every year. Vision problems can cause falls.
- Stay active** — Check with your physician about the physical activity and exercise appropriate for you. Stay as physically active as you can. Activities that enhance balance and coordination can help to prevent falls.
- Choose the right shoes** — Choose shoes carefully. The soles should be non-slip and not too thick. Wear shoes both inside and outside the house. Avoid going barefoot, wearing only socks or wearing slippers.

Other Community Resources

You can contact the **Prince William Area Agency on Aging** at **703-792-6374** or the **Eldercare Locator** at **1-800-677-1116** to identify fall prevention resources in your area.

Project Mend-A-House, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, serving veterans, seniors, the disabled, and low-income residents of Prince William County, the City of Manassas, and Manassas Park since 1984. We recruit volunteer carpenters, plumbers, painters, electricians, gardeners and other willing workers, matching them with people who need minor home repairs and safety modifications. We also loan out certain types of daily adaptive living aids for in-home use. Address: 7987 Ashton Avenue, Suite 231, Manassas, VA 20109. Office hours: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Phone: 703-792-7663 Fax: 703-792-4094 Email: director@pmahweb.org

Sources for these fall-prevention tips:

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Washington, DC

U.S. Health and Human Services Administration, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention