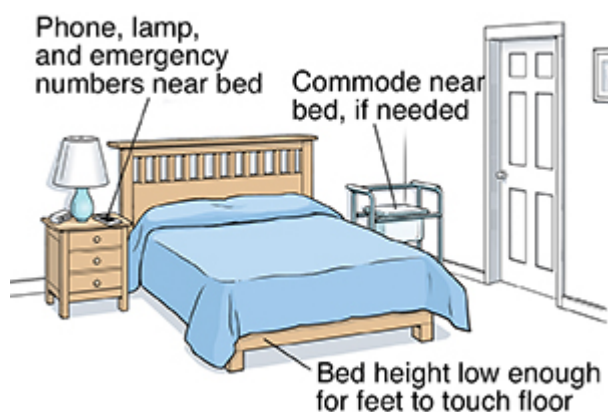
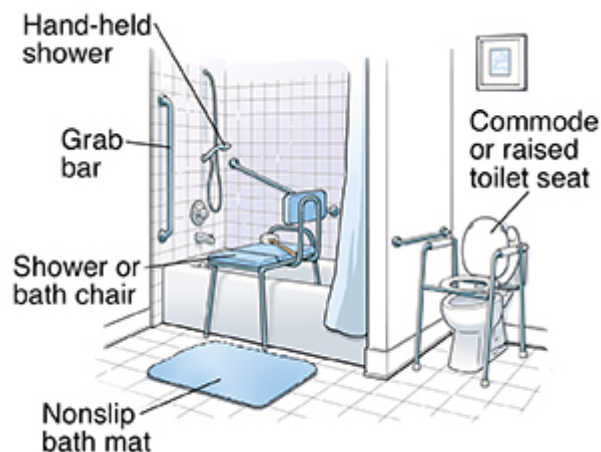


Preventing Falls: Making Changes in Your Living Space



Is your living space filled with hazards that could cause you to fall? Changes can make you safer. They could even save your life. Take a careful look around your home. Change what you can on your own. Hire someone or ask friends or family to help with harder tasks.



Remove hazards

- Remove things that can trip you, like throw rugs, boxes, piles of paper, or cords.
- Nail down rugs or carpeting if you don't want to remove them. Use slip-resistant backing.
- Don't store items on stairs.
- Keep walkways clear.
- Clean up spills right away.
- Replace glass tables with wooden ones. They're safer if you fall.

Add safety devices

- Add handrails to both sides of stairs.

- Buy a raised toilet seat.
- Add grab bars near the toilet and in the shower.
- Get grabbers to help you reach things and avoid climbing.

Improve lighting

- Add nightlights to halls, bedrooms, and bathrooms.
- Put light switches at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Be sure each room and flight of stairs has proper lighting.
- Use shades or curtains to cut glare from windows.
- Put flashlights in each room. Replace burned-out bulbs.
- Get glowing light switches for room entrances.

Take other precautions

- Use nonskid floor wax.
- Buy a nonslip mat and a liquid soap dispenser for the shower.
- Put most-used items within easy reach.
- Add bright paint or tape on the top front edge of steps.
- Save big jobs, such as moving furniture or other heavy objects, for family or friends.
- Get professional help installing grab bars. They can be unsafe if not installed the right way.

Fix riskier rooms first

Don't tackle everything at once. Focus on one room at a time. The bathroom is a common spot for falls, so you may want to start there. Or start with a room you spend lots of time in, such as your bedroom. Make only a few changes at once. This will give you time to adjust to them.

Outside safety

You might arrange for these changes yourself, or you might need to talk to your building manager or homeowners' association about them.

- Have loose boards on porches or damaged stairs repaired.
- Have rough edges, holes, or large cracks in sidewalks or driveways repaired.
- Remove hazards that could trip you, such as hoses or vines.
- Use high-wattage light bulbs (100 watts or greater) near outside doors and stairs.
- Add handrails to outside stairs. Have them extend beyond the bottom step.
- Get help in winter weather with ice or snow removal.

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