



It is a little known fact that each year 13,000 Americans over the age of 65 die as the result of home falls and 1.6 million are treated in emergency rooms. Home falls are the leading cause of hip fractures among older Americans and nearly 40% of those hospitalized with hip fractures find themselves unable to return home and live independently. For older Americans, or those of us who care for them, it is important to take steps to reduce the risk of a home fall.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends examining the home for possible hazards that increase the likelihood of a fall occurring in the home. Some of the most common hazards include items placed on floors such as, throw rugs, cords, papers, books shoes and boxes. Furniture placed in a walk zone also constitutes a hazard. Several stairway hazards have been identified including, uneven stairs, items, such as shoes, placed on stairs, poorly lit stairs, torn carpeting or loose handrails. Slippery tub/shower floors and bathrooms without handrails when needed for support may lead to falls. Reaching for items placed on high shelves and unsteady step stools are also fall hazards. Taking care of any of these potential risks will help to reduce the danger of falling.

Take steps to reduce your risk by following the tips below.

- Exercise regularly.

- Have medicines reviewed by doctor for side effects that may cause falls.

- Have vision checked at least once each year.

- Get up slowly after sitting or lying down.

- Wear shoes inside and outside the house. Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers.

- Improve home lighting by using brighter light bulbs.

More information on reducing the risk of falling may be found at:

[www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/toolkit/checklistforsafety.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/toolkit/checklistforsafety.htm)

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