



## **Fall Prevention**

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Falling is a major cause of disability in our lives. Falls account for around 80%-90% of hip fractures and can be more debilitating than strokes or heart attacks. As we age the risk of falling grows. Luckily, falling is very much preventable. Mentioned below are a few common causes of falls and tips on how to prevent them.

Many falls in and around our homes can be prevented with a few simple changes. First, adhere non-slip material to the bottom of your throw rugs, or better yet just remove the rugs altogether. Also, remove any other objects on the ground that you have to step over or around. As we age, falls in the bathroom become more common. Installing grab bars in and around the shower can help prevent them. Inadequate lighting is another common causes for falling in the house. Simply adding night-lights in darker areas helps to reduce falls.

The risk of falling outside in especially in the winter can also be decreased with a few simple easy steps. Sprinkling salt on our driveways and sidewalks can reduce or eliminate ice. Non-slip shoes can help, but you can also purchase non-slip treads for the outside of your shoes. If you use a cane, you can replace that rubber end piece with a metal spike. Be warned those are effective on ice and snow, but are actually more dangerous on hard floors.

Here are a few exercises that will get your balance back up to par. Stand in your kitchen next to your sink, put your feet together and close your eyes. If that is too easy try the same exercise with one foot directly in front of the other or even just standing on one foot. Standing at the sink ensures you have something solid to grab onto if you actually do lose your balance.

If you have any more questions, contact your local physical therapist. They can give you balance advice that suits your own personal needs.