

How to Prevent Disabling Falls

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As you age, normal alterations in vision, gait, hearing, and cognition increases the chance of falls. Falling doesn't have to be a natural consequence of aging. Tumbles can be prevented with lifestyle changes and some simple home modifications.

- ✓ Perform exercise that improve balance. Consult your doctor before starting any program.
- ✓ Have your vision checked regularly.
- ✓ Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about side effects of your medications, even over counter medications.
- ✓ Limit your alcohol intake.
- ✓ Use a cane or walker for balance control; take your time on steps and curbs.
- ✓ Prevent these tumbles at home by cleaning pathways and hallways of clutter. Tack down carpets and rugs, or purchase rugs with nonskid backing. Keep stairs and hallways brightly lit and use sturdy handrails when walking up or down stairs. Re-arrange furniture to provide plenty of walking room. In your bathroom use a raised toilet seat and safety rails and install handrails in the bathtub along with slip resistant strips or a rubber mat in the tub. A shower seat is also a good safety feature. Store items in waist-high cabinets and shelves in the kitchen; avoid reaching for items that are placed too high to reduce the risk of losing your balance and falling.
- ✓ Most importantly, always remember to exercise good judgment. Making these simple changes will give you the peace of mind to keep living your life.