



Falls Prevention



Home Safety Check



RUSHMOOR
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Falls and how to prevent them

Falls are a concern and can lead to major health problems for older adults. Unfortunately as you get older your risk of falling increases. The good news is that there are many things you can do to prevent them happening.

There are common risk factors that are known to contribute to falls. The first step in protecting yourself from having a fall is to reduce the risks around your home. This Home Safety Check booklet has been put together by the Rushmoor Strategic Partnership (RSP) who are working with other agencies to inform people how many **FALLS CAN BE PREVENTED**. It will help you to identify the hazards you may have around your home and provide helpful tips so that you can correct them and reduce your chances of falling.

Home Safety Check

Around your home

Listed below are a few hints and tips to keep you safe in your home.

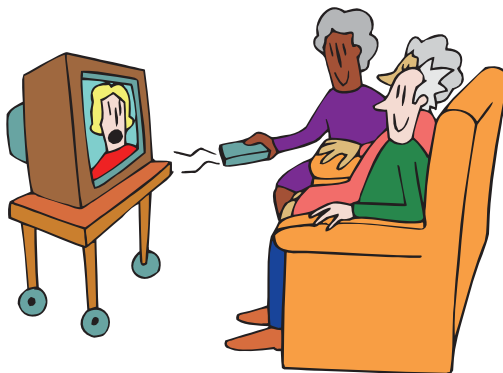
- Make sure you can easily reach your windows, curtains and door bolts without over stretching.
- Try to grip something firm with one hand to steady you when bending or reaching up.
- Ensure that your carpet is in good repair. Secure edges with strong tape. Mats and rugs can cause slips and falls.
- Consider purchasing a wire basket to fit over the letterbox so you don't have to bend down to pick up your post.
- A tall milk bottle holder is also useful.

- Avoid carrying anything with two hands such as a tray on the stairs.
- Do not stack items on the stairs. You may not see them and trip up.
- Removing casters from easily moveable furniture can make them more stable so they can be leant against or held onto to help balance.
- Keep warm. Cold muscles work less well and may lead to accidents and injuries.
- Do away with slippery floor coverings, especially in kitchens and bathrooms.
- Although pets can be great companions, they can also get under your feet – think about giving them a brightly lit collar or a bell so that you will notice them more easily.



Living Room

- Check that small items of furniture such as tables or footstools are not in your way leaving enough space to walk safely.
- Avoid leaving anything on your floor especially newspapers or glossy magazines.
- Your usual chair should be safe so that it does not move when you sit down but is easy to get out of.
- Pause for a moment before getting out of a chair and then get up slowly to reduce loss of balance.



Telephone

- Position a chair by your telephone so you don't have to stand
- Try to avoid hurrying to answer your telephone.
- Consider a cordless telephone, which you can carry with you, and/or a telephone by your bed.
- A pendant alarm could summon help if you fall and are unable to get up.



Kitchen

- Arrange things to minimise bending, lifting and stretching. Leave out items you use regularly.
- Carrying food and drink into another room is often difficult especially if you use a walking aid. A tall trolley might be useful.
- A timer helps to remind you that you have left something in the oven to avoid rushing to the kitchen.
- Mop up spills on the floor straight away.



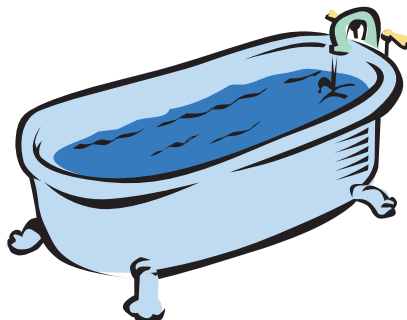
Bedroom

- Your bed should be of a good height for you to get in and out of.
- Try to take your time getting out of bed to adjust your balance.
- If you wake up in the dark you need to be able to switch on the bedside light easily.
- Consider keeping a torch on your bedside cabinet in case of power cuts.
- If you need to get up in the night a commode or urine bottle might be useful.
- Remember to switch off electric blankets before you go to bed.



Bathroom

- You should be able to get on and off the toilet easily.
- Well-placed grab rails can make it easier for you to get in/out of the bath or shower, or on/off the toilet.
- Running the cold water before the hot or running them together will mean the bath is never hot enough to scald you.
- A non-slip bath mat is a sensible investment.
- A stool or chair in the bathroom is useful so you can sit down to dry yourself.
- Do not lock the bathroom door, in case someone needs to come in.



Lighting and Wiring

- Keep the stairs and living areas well lit at all times and remember to use a light at night.
- Avoid standing on a chair to change a light bulb and buy long-life bulbs to avoid having to change them as often.
- Always use a sturdy set of non-slip steps with a handrail, or ask someone to help you.
- Make sure all electrical flexes and telephone cords are tucked away.
- If some of your electric sockets are hard to reach you may want to consider having them moved to a better position.
- Consider two-way light switches at the top and bottom of the stairs.



Outside

- Keep paths swept clear of leaves. Try to keep them in good repair.
- White paint on the edge of a step can improve your awareness of it.
- Make sure your washing line is not too high, and where you walk is level and safe.
- Spreading salty sand on wet or icy steps will make them less slippery.
- Loading and unloading the car boot is easier with several small bags.
- Consider how you would call for help if you fell.



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