Stay Independent
Learn more about fall prevention

In 2016 in Arizona unintentional falls were the leading cause of injury-related mortality among residents 65+ years of age.

1 in 4 people 65 years and older fall each year.

Falls can lead to a loss of independence, but they are preventable.

Four Things You Can Do to Prevent Falls:

1 **Speak up.**
   Talk openly with your healthcare provider about fall risks and prevention. Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medicines.

2 **Keep moving.**
   Begin an exercise program to improve your leg strength and balance.

3 **Get an annual eye exam.**
   Replace eyeglasses as needed.

4 **Make your home safer.**
   Remove clutter and tripping hazards.

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# Checklist to find and fix hazards in your home.

## Stairs & Steps (Indoors & Outdoors)

- **Are there papers, shoes, books, or other objects on the stairs?**
  - □ Always keep objects off the stairs.
- **Are some steps broken or uneven?**
  - □ Fix loose or uneven steps.
- **Is there a light and light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs?**
  - □ Have an electrician put in an overhead light and light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs. You can get light switches that glow.
- **Has a stairway light bulb burned out?**
  - □ Have a friend or family member change the light bulb.
- **Is the carpet on the steps loose or torn?**
  - □ Make sure the carpet is firmly attached to every step, or remove the carpet and attach non-slip rubber treads to the stairs.
- **Are the handrails loose or broken? Is there a handrail on only one side of the stairs?**
  - □ Fix loose handrails, or put in new ones. Make sure handrails are on both sides of the stairs, and are as long as the stairs.

## Floors

- **When you walk through a room, do you have to walk around furniture?**
  - □ Ask someone to move the furniture so your path is clear.
- **Do you have throw rugs on the floor?**
  - □ Remove the rugs, or use double-sided tape or a non-slip backing so the rugs won’t slip.
- **Are there papers, shoes, books, or other objects on the floor?**
  - □ Pick up things that are on the floor. Always keep objects off the floor.
- **Do you have to walk over or around wires or cords (like lamp, telephone, or extension cords)?**
  - □ Coil or tape cords and wires next to the wall so you can't trip over them. If needed, have an electrician put in another outlet.

## Kitchen

- **Are the things you use often on high shelves?**
  - □ Keep things you use often on the lower shelves (about waist high).
- **Is your step stool sturdy?**
  - □ If you must use a step stool, get one with a bar to hold on to. Never use a chair as a step stool.

## Bedrooms

- **Is the light near the bed hard to reach?**
  - □ Place a lamp close to the bed where it's easy to reach.
- **Is the path from your bed to the bathroom dark?**
  - □ Put in a nightlight so you can see where you're walking. Some nightlights go on by themselves after dark.

## Bathrooms

- **Is the tub or shower floor slippery?**
  - □ Put a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips on the floor of the tub or shower.
- **Do you need some support when you get in and out of the tub, or up from the toilet?**
  - □ Have grab bars put in next to and inside the tub, and next to the toilet.
### Check Your Risk for Falling

Circle “Yes” or “No” for each statement below. **Why it matters**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes (2)</th>
<th>No (0)</th>
<th>I have fallen in the past year.</th>
<th>People who have fallen once are likely to fall again.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes (2)</td>
<td>No (0)</td>
<td>I use or have been advised to use a cane or walker to get around safely</td>
<td>People who have been advised to use a cane or walker may already be more likely to fall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
<td>No (0)</td>
<td>Sometimes I feel unsteady when I am walking.</td>
<td>Unsteadiness or needing support while walking are signs of poor balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
<td>No (0)</td>
<td>I steady myself by holding onto furniture when walking at home.</td>
<td>This is also a sign of poor balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
<td>No (0)</td>
<td>I am worried about falling.</td>
<td>People who are worried about falling are more likely to fall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
<td>No (0)</td>
<td>I need to push with my hands to stand up from a chair.</td>
<td>This is a sign of weak leg muscles, a major reason for falling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
<td>No (0)</td>
<td>I have some trouble stepping up onto a curb.</td>
<td>This is also a sign of weak leg muscles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
<td>No (0)</td>
<td>I often have to rush to the toilet.</td>
<td>Rushing to the bathroom, especially at night, increases your chance of falling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
<td>No (0)</td>
<td>I have lost some feeling in my feet.</td>
<td>Numbness in your feet can cause stumbles and lead to falls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
<td>No (0)</td>
<td>I take medicine that sometimes makes me feel light-headed or more tired than usual.</td>
<td>Side effects from medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
<td>No (0)</td>
<td>I take medicine to help me sleep or improve my mood.</td>
<td>These medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
<td>No (0)</td>
<td>I often feel sad or depressed.</td>
<td>Symptoms of depression, such as not feeling well or feeling slowed down, are linked to falls.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**

Add up the number of points for each “yes” answer. If you scored 4 points or more, you may be at risk for falling. **Discuss this brochure with your doctor.**

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This checklist was developed by the Greater Los Angeles VA Geriatric Research Education Clinical Center and affiliates and is a validated fall risk self-assessment tool (Rubenstein et al. J Safety Res; 2011: 42(6)493-499). Adapted with permission of the authors.
**Tips**

By making changes you can lower your chances of falling.

- Wear well-fitting shoes with good support inside and outside the house.
- Watch your step around pets and children.
- Learn to use walking aids safely.
- Exercise to improve your balance and strength.
- Enroll in an evidence-based fall prevention program.
  - A Matter of Balance
  - Tai Chi for Health
  - EnhanceFitness
  - SHiM (Safety and Health in Motion)
- Identify and fix hazards in your home.
- Discuss your responses to the checklist with your doctor.

**Learn More about fall prevention**

For information on exercise, fall prevention programs, or options for improving home safety contact:

- Pima Council on Aging, Area Agency on Aging for Pima County 520-790-7262, pcoa.org
- Southeastern Arizona of Governments Organization, Area Agency on Aging for Santa Cruz, Cochise, Graham & Greenlee Counties 520-432-2528, seago.org

For additional information on fall prevention visit:

- Southern Chapter of the Arizona Falls Prevention Coalition, HealthyPima.org/Falls
- Arizona Falls Prevention Coalition azstopfalls.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention CDC Injury Center cdc.gov/steadi
- National Council on Aging ncoa.org/healthy-aging/falls-prevention

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/steadi

This brochure was produced in collaboration with the following organizations: VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, Geriatric Research Education & Clinical Center (GRECC), and the Fall Prevention Center of Excellence