

Home Safety Checklist

Outside

- Make sure entryways, including walkways, exterior steps, and porches are in good repair, free of debris, and with no crumbling edges or broken boards.
 - Install a secure railing that is easy to grasp with both hands.
 - In some cases, steps may need to be modified or ramps installed.
 - Use lights to illuminate a wide area of yard and walkway from the parking area to the entrance.
 - Smooth out or eliminate the doorway threshold, or make sure it is well marked.
 - Install a key safe outside the front door to allow access for caregivers and emergency personnel to open the door if the care recipient is unable.
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In the Kitchen

- Floor space should be free of clutter and throw rugs.
 - Floor should not be waxed or slippery.
 - Make sure pathways are wide enough to accommodate a walker or wheelchair, if necessary.
 - Make everyday kitchen items easily accessible to avoid excessive bending and reaching. This may mean leaving a small number of dishes, cups, pots, etc. on the counter instead of on shelves that are too high or too low
 - Chairs should be firm and stable, without casters or rollers.
 - Loosen lids before putting items away in the refrigerator or pantry, or purchase special openers made for arthritis sufferers.
 - Pre-cut vegetables, cheese, and meat.
 - Buy or prepare smaller portions/packages of food for easier meal prep.
 - If necessary, prepare meals or use a meal service.
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Home Safety Checklist (cont.)

In the Bedroom

- Make sure the floor is clutter free without loose rugs.
- The path between the bed and the bathroom should be free of clutter and well lit (use nightlights that go on automatically when it gets dark or motion-activated lights).
- Smooth out or eliminate doorway and shower thresholds.
- Use adequate lighting with accessible switches that can be turned on without walking across a dark room.
- There should be an accessible phone near the bed.
- A chair with armrest and firm seating is recommended to avoid falls while dressing.
- Lower closet racks and remove items from low dresser drawers to avoid excessive reaching or bending.
- Consider lowering (or lifting) the bed if it is difficult to get in and out of easily. In some cases, safety rails may be necessary.
- Simplify wardrobes for easier dressing, particularly for those with dexterity issues.

In the Bathroom

- Doorways should be wide enough to pass through when using a walker or wheelchair, if necessary, and thresholds should be smoothed out or eliminated.
- Floors should be free of clutter, without throw rugs.
- Install secure grab bars in shower/bath and near the toilet.
- Consider using a shower seat or walk-in tub.
- Make sure the floor of the tub and/or shower has a non-slip surface.
- Consider a raised toilet seat with attached grab bars.
- Install a handheld shower sprayer within easy reach.

Home Safety Checklist (cont.)

Other Living Areas

- Walkways should be wide enough to pass through using a walker or wheelchair, if necessary.
- Pathways should be free of clutter, with no electric or phone cords running across walkways or open areas.
- Be sure carpets and large area rugs are securely tacked down, with no frayed or rolling edges, and eliminate throw rugs.
- Use adequate lighting with accessible switches that can be turned on without walking across a dark room.
- Sofas and chairs should be high and firm enough for easy sitting and rising. In some cases, assisted chairs may be necessary.
- All stairways should be free of clutter and loose rugs and have secure handrails and proper lighting.
- If stairs are unavoidable and difficult to negotiate, consider installing a stair lift.
