

General Safety Tips:

- Locks should be in place on doors and windows.
- No hiding places for keys – someone watching can see you get the key.
- Use an alarm system, smoke detectors, fire extinguisher and carbon monoxide detector.
- Install a peep hole on front door, and see that area is well-lit.
- Answering machine should say "we" even if living alone.
- Organize electric cords so they will not cause tripping, putting by wall and/or behind furniture.
- Steps must be kept clear to avoid falls. Paint edge of steps to help with visibility.
- Avoid storing things on the floor to prevent falling.
- Avoid area rugs as they are known to cause falls.
- Purchase timers or a night light with a sensor, so lights come on automatically when the room goes dark.
- Keep stairs and other walking areas free of shoes, clothing, books, magazines, and other clutter. Install hooks near closets and/or your bed for easy cleanup and storage of robes, sweaters, bedclothes, purses, etc.

Kitchen Safety Tips:

- When finished with a meal or when leaving kitchen, develop a routine of walking around the kitchen after each meal, doing a safety check for turning burners and appliances off.
- Clean up any spills on floor immediately to avoid falls.
- Unplug unused appliances.
- Use timers and buzzers loud enough to hear from another room. When timing, do not turn on radio, TV, or earphones as they can keep you from hearing timer. You could stay in kitchen reading while waiting on a timer or carry a timer with you in your pocket.
- Keep countertops clear of unnecessary clutter.
- Set up a basket for mail, or a bulletin board for important papers and lists.
- Keep your fire extinguisher under the sink, or near the exit, never near the stove.
- Put a non-skid mat or rug in front of the sink.
- Install ready-made, slide-out shelves or baskets in lower cabinets.
- Use a space-saving "lazy Susan" — or a flat, round tray that spins easily — inside a deep shelf or a corner cabinet.
- Use a microwave that sits on the counter, so you can reach it easily.
- Add inexpensive, under-cabinet lighting to make it easier to work, chop vegetables or clean the countertops.
- Post emergency numbers, along with a neighbor's number, near the telephone in the kitchen.

Living Room Safety Tips:

- Ensure that you have adequate lighting for reading, sewing and other tasks.
- Make sure the furniture in your living room is comfortable but sturdy, and not too low or deep to get in and out of easily.
- Rearrange furniture to make the room easier to navigate.
- Treat all fabrics with a stain-resistant coating.
- Use baskets to collect clutter such as newspapers, magazines and children's toys.
- Put non-skid mats under all area rugs to prevent slipping.
- Check rugs and runners for tripping hazards, such as turned up corners.
- Make sure extension cords are out of the way, and try not to put them under rugs, where they can become a tripping hazard.
- Use a good, sturdy set of lightweight tray tables if you eat meals in the living room.
- If you have a fireplace, have it and the chimney inspected annually for fire hazards.

Bedroom Safety Tips:

- Use under-bed storage bins to keep extra blankets or linens out of sight.
- Turn off an electric blanket when not using, or if it becomes too hot.
- Use a timer to make sure your electric blanket or other small appliances turn off when you fall asleep.
- Have a smoke_detector and carbon monoxide detector near your bedroom door.
- Change smoke_detector and carbon_monoxide_detector batteries twice a year.
- Keep a phone by your bedside in case of emergency.
- Use a clock radio with large lighted numbers for easier viewing at night.
- Buy a clock radio with battery back-up in case of a power outage.
- Use a nightlight that has a sensor, so it automatically comes on when the room goes dark.
- Keep a flashlight in your bedside drawer.
- Replace round doorknobs with a lever-type handle, which is easier to grasp.
- Install a light in your closet, either with a switch or one that turns on automatically when you open the door.
- Make sure all hallways and stairways have good lighting, end to end.

Bathroom Safety Tips:

- Consider putting a cordless phone in the bathroom in case of emergency.
- Use a toilet seat riser or toilet safety stand for extra support.
- Install a portable grab bar in areas where you might need a little extra help.
- Dispose of all medication that has passed its expiration date.
- Throw out unused medication to avoid accidental confusion.
- Keep liquid antibacterial soap in a pump dispenser by the sink.
- Make sure any bathroom rugs have a non-skid mat underneath.
- Set your water heater below 120°F to avoid being scalded.
- Keep space heaters, radios and other electrical products away from bathtubs and sinks.

Garage/Basement Safety:

- Use plastic bins with tight-fitting lids instead of paper boxes, so items inside stay safe and dry, no matter where they're stored.
- Store cleaning chemicals, detergent or paint on a flat shelf that's off the ground, but not too high to reach safely.
- Install inexpensive portable shelves for tools and other items.
- Hang items such as shovels, rakes and lawn chairs from hooks on a wall.
- Put anything that might leak in an open plastic basket or crate.
- Install a telephone in the basement and garage in case of emergency.
- Make sure all stairwells have a sturdy handrail and that each step has a non-skid tread.
- Install motion-detecting lights outside of your garage and entry areas
- If you have basement windows, make sure they have secure locks or bars.

Practicing Habits That Help You Stay Safe:

- Use your deadbolts and locks – they won't help if they are not used faithfully.
- Have key ready when entering house.
- Leave spare key with a trusted neighbor you know quite well.
- Don't be predictable; change things up so someone watching stays confused.
- Befriend your neighbors; they will look out for you.
- Never share personal information on phone or in public: schedules, last name of self or friends, or say you won't be home at a certain time or day (that invites burglars).
- If you have an electric garage door, do not unlock the car door until garage is completely shut.
- As you drive or walk up to house, glance around before you turn into the driveway to assure no one is nearby. If you see something amiss go on by and seek help.
- Carry a cell phone when in or out of the house. Have important numbers in phone's memory for quick dialing.
- Keep doors and windows locked. Use peep holes. Never open your door automatically. Keep an inside storm door locked to talk to someone. Install an intercom system is possible. Ask for identification and establish why they are there. Should the caller produce identification but you still are not sure of the validity of the visit, telephone the caller's business office for confirmation. If you still feel uncomfortable, do not open the door; ask the caller to return in 30 minutes or an hour. This will allow you sufficient time to contact a friend or relative to be present when the caller returns. Being cautious increases your safety and well-being.
- Notify neighbors and the police when going away on a trip.
- Never leave notes on your front door.
- Be suspicious of offers from unknown contractors to do home repairs. Only work with reputable businesses.

Staying Safe While Out and About

- Be sure someone knows where you are going and approximately when you should return, especially at night.
- Ask security or trusted friend to walk you to your car (which you parked in well-lit area).
- Avoid ATM's, especially if in closed-in area, someone is close around, or at night. (If a car or person is nearby, drive around the block till they're gone and try again.)
- If walking, use a buddy system by walking with another person or persons.
- Leave valuables and anything that might look like a purse or valuable in trunk to avoid theft.
- Use fanny pack or similar device or front pockets only to avoid valuables dangling in purses or in a back pocket.
- Limit credit cards to one if possible, and have the number to call if stolen clearly findable.
- Never carry large sums of money
- Never flash money for someone to see.
- Avoid uneven surfaces when possible. Use walking stick or cane as extra caution when you must walk on such places.
- Carry at least the minimal medical and emergency information with you at all times.
- *Trust your instincts!*

Home Repair Fraud:

Senior citizens are approached by individuals offering to perform various home repair jobs such as driveway repair, roof or gutter repair and asphalt repair. The perpetrators claim to have materials left over from other jobs, offer significant discounts, or that they were sent by a close relative or friend. Once the job is completed, the cost of the work is suddenly more than the first quote and payment in cash is demanded. The con artists may even offer to provide a ride to the bank so the victim can convert his/her check to cash.

Citizens are advised to always get references from home repair workers. The elderly are advised to be especially leery of workers from outside the local area. If you believe that you are being ripped off, contact your local police and your personal lawyer prior to payment. Finally, the potential employers are advised to contact the Better Business Bureau.

Telemarketing Fraud:

Thousands of Americans continue to receive unsolicited phone calls from telemarketers trying to sell a variety of products. The majority of telemarketers represents legitimate businesses, and adheres to ethical sales techniques. Unfortunately, others do not. Unscrupulous telemarketers are the smoothest of operators, successful at swindling consumers out of millions of dollars.

According to the Better Business Bureau and the FTC, here's how you can reduce your risk of becoming a victim of telemarketing fraud:

- Be skeptical of "too good to be true" telephone offers.
- Resist pressure for an immediate decision and ask for written follow-up materials that explain the offer.
- Agree to pay no more than the price of a postage stamp when notified about "winning" a sweepstakes. All legitimate sweepstakes must allow a "no purchase necessary" way to play the game and collect the prize.
- Never provide your credit card or checking account numbers to a caller from an unfamiliar company without first checking the company out with your Better Business Bureau, state consumer protection agency or state Attorney General.
- Ask to be placed on the company's "do not call" list to reduce the number of unwanted telephone solicitations you receive.

10 Simple Steps to Avoid Falls:

1 - Be Aware of Your Surroundings

Look before you leap! Always look where you are walking to be sure there's nothing you could trip on or over. Walk slowly, rushing puts you off balance - and use your cane or walker if it has been prescribed. If you don't feel well, ask someone to help you.

2 - Get Plenty of Rest, Proper Nutrition, and Hydration

Fuel Up First! Be sure to eat properly and drink plenty of water. Sleep – being tired makes you less aware and more likely to bump into objects. Follow the advice of your doctor and caregivers.

3 - Simplify

Clear out the clutter! Make your environment safer. Get rid of anything that could make you trip and fall. This includes furniture or excess clutter. Arrange furniture so you have a clear pathway between

rooms. Remove low coffee tables, magazine racks, footstools, and plants from pathways. And it's less to clean!

4 - Avoid Trip-Ups

Keep it clear! Remove things that lie on the floor such as area rugs, extension cords, and/or other things that can create obstacles in your path and cause you to trip.

5 - Clearance

Give yourself a wide berth. Make sure you have 36 inches to 42 inches clearance in your walking path.

6 - Hold On

Get a grip! Hold on to sturdy furniture or handrails if you are unsteady on your feet.

7 - Pay Attention

Pay close attention to the FALL trouble spots. Be aware that 45% of all household injuries take place in the bathroom and 20% take place in the kitchen. Install safety bars if you need them – or know where you have handholds if you should trip. Wear safe footwear. Make sure that the soles of your shoes are not worn since they can cause you to slip. If you wear slippers around the house, make sure they have rubber soles.

8 - Exercise

Move it or lose it! Ask your primary care physician to prescribe an appropriate exercise plan for you to help improve balance, gait, and muscle tone. Regular exercise improves all areas of your life so enjoy it.

9 - Lights

Light your way! Keep your home well lit. A dark home is a dangerous home. Make sure that all of the areas you walk in are illuminated at all times of the day and evening. Pay extra attention to areas where you frequently walk like pathways to and from the bathroom, bedroom, and kitchen. Keep a flashlight handy at all times in case the power fails.

10 - Medication

Follow the directions! Take medications as directed, on time, and only the dosage prescribed. Do not skip medications. Report any side effects or negative reactions you experience to your primary care physician. Remember, failure to properly take medication is a major cause of falls and fall related injuries.