



Prevent falls

**Assess your risk.
Talk with your doctor.
Create a plan.
Put it into action.**

5 easy tips to help you prevent falls!



1. Exercise regularly.
2. Eat a well-balanced, nutritious diet.
3. Fall-proof your home.
4. Have your medication checked regularly.
5. Have your vision and hearing checked annually.

What's it worth to you to proactively avoid falling into these statistics?

Of adults age 65 and older
hospitalized due to a fall:

60%
end up
in a nursing
home or
rehabilitation
center

28%
experience a
hip fracture

11%
suffer a
traumatic
brain injury

"Falls are not accidents! They are not random, uncontrollable acts of fate, but occur in predictable patterns, with recognizable risk factors and among identifiable populations. A fall is a predictable and preventable event."

New York State Department of Health

Start today!

3 ways you can reduce your risk of falling



1. Exercise regularly.

Exercise is one of the most important ways to lower your chances of falling. It makes you stronger. Consider exercises that improve balance and coordination, like Tai Chi.

2. Eat a well-balanced, nutritious diet.

Picture a healthy plate as a guide for each meal: $\frac{1}{2}$ of the plate filled with vegetables and fruit, $\frac{1}{4}$ with grains, $\frac{1}{4}$ with protein, and an 8 oz. side of dairy.



3. Fall-proof your home.

About half of all falls happen at home. To make your home safer:

- Keep stairs and where you walk through your home clear of papers, books, shoes, or anything you can trip on.
- To make your bathroom safer, have grab bars put next to the toilet and in the tub or shower and use non-slip mats in the tub and shower.
- Remove small throw rugs.
- Keep items you use often in cabinets you can reach easily to avoid unnecessary extreme stretching, bending over or using a step stool.
- Improve the lighting in your home. As you get older, you need more light to see well. Hang light-weight curtains or shades to reduce glare.
- Keep your pet away from your feet and don't get tangled in its leash.
- Install handrails and lights on any staircases that don't have them.
- Wear good fitting shoes both inside and outside the house.
- If possible, paint the bottom step of staircases your favorite neon color.



***This is
your plan
for action.***

As we grow older, gradual health changes and some medications can cause falls, but many falls can be prevented. Use this tear-off falls-free plan to learn what you can do to stay active, independent, and falls-free.

Source: Washington State Department of Health, Injury & Violence Prevention Program.



Check "Yes" if you experience this even sometimes	Yes	Talk with your doctor about:
Have you fallen in the last six months?		When and how you fell
Do you take four or more prescription or over-the-counter medications daily?		A schedule to review medications with your doctor The side affects you might experience
Do you have difficulty walking or standing?		What makes it difficult for you to walk or stand Pain, aching, soreness, stiffness, weakness, swelling, or numbness in your legs or feet
Do you use a cane, walker, or crutches?		Any difficulty you have using the equipment How to learn to use the equipment better
Do you have to use your arms to stand up from a chair?		Exercises to strengthen your leg and arm muscles
Do you ever feel unsteady on your feet, weak, or dizzy?		Unsteadiness, weakness or dizziness you have Whether your medications may cause the problem The need to get up from sitting or lying down slowly
Has it been more than two years since you had an eye exam?		How often you should have your eyes examined
Has your hearing gotten worse with age, or have you been told you have a hearing problem?		Any hearing problems you notice or have been told about How often you should have your hearing examined How you can best use hearing aids, if recommended
Do you usually exercise less than two days a week?		Your goals for increasing activity, including improving strength and balance Your doctor's recommendations on amount and kinds of exercise for you
Do you drink any alcohol daily?		The amount of alcohol you drink Your doctor's recommendations on amount of alcohol that is safe/healthy for you, especially considering the medications you take
Do you have more than three chronic health conditions (such as heart or lung problems, diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis, etc.)?		Health changes that cause weakness or illness Any questions or concerns you have with keeping your appointment schedule Staying healthy and active with your health condition