

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.



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

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

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.

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/steady
- National Council on Aging
ncoa.org/healthy-aging/falls-prevention

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

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



**Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention**
National Center for Injury
Prevention and Control