



MEASURABILITIES

HOW SAFE ARE YOUR AGING PARENTS IN THEIR OWN HOME?

A HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR CONCERNED CHILDREN

Fall prevention is key to aging in place safely – both in and out of the home.

As your parents age, you want to keep them as comfortable and safe as possible. “Aging in place” is the new term for electing to live at home, but this trend requires the use of fall prevention and home safety modifications, nursing or in-home care, and other ancillary services to ensure comfort, safety and quality-of-life.

Elderly Falls - Statistics

Falls are the leading cause of injuries or death among older Americans. The fear of falling can negatively impact your loved ones’ quality-of-life as strongly as an actual fall. Here are some stats to consider:

- One in four Americans aged 65+ falls each year.
- Every 11 seconds an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall; every 19 minutes an older adult dies from a fall.
- Over 800,000 patients a year are hospitalized due to falls, with the most common injuries being head wounds and/or hip fractures.
- 40% of nursing home admissions are due to falls.
- Falls are the leading cause of fatal injury and the most common cause of non-fatal, trauma-related hospital admissions among older adults.
- More than 90% of hip fractures among adults over 65 are caused by falls.

NEED EXPERT HELP TO IMPROVE HOME SAFETY?

MEASURAbilities Home Safety specializes in affordable fall prevention home safety solutions that allow seniors to remain in their own homes with confidence.

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- The financial toll for older adult falls is expected to increase as the population ages and may reach \$68 billion by the year 2020.

While age may make falls more likely, they do not have to be an inevitable part of aging. Check your parents' home and other environments to ensure you don't add to these statistics.

References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Injury Center. (2017, February 10). Important Facts about Falls
2. National Council on Aging. (n.d.). Falls Prevention Facts.

Room-by-Room Safety Checklist

Floors

Make sure each room has free and clear pathways:

- Eliminate throw rugs or use non-slip backing so rugs won't shift or slip.
- Remove piles of debris, papers, books, boxes, blankets or other objects on the floor.
- Consolidate and/or relocate wires, cords, extension and telephone cords. Combine and coil cords against wall to reduce fall risk.

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Kitchen

Check kitchen cabinets and storage areas for items that require reaching and use of ladders and step stools:

- Move items in cabinets so ensure that frequently used items are on lower shelves (about waist level).
- If a step stool is necessary for reaching, ensure it is stable. Chairs should never be used as a stepping platform.

Bathroom

Bathrooms are the number one place for falls in the home:

- Are the tub, shower or bathroom floors slippery? Non-slip surface treatments are available to increase COF (coefficient of friction). Once treated, there is no visible trace of the treatment but the surface will have increased friction levels when wet, greatly reducing fall risks. Commercial grade stick strips may also be used.
- Installation of safety grab bars in and out of the shower and tub areas ensure safe transfers in and out of each location.
- Remove bath mats – they collect bacteria and are trip hazards.

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Bedroom

Check all the bedrooms in your home for proper location of furniture, lighting and clear pathways:

- Ensure bedside lamps are easy to reach.
- Clear pathways from the bed to the restroom and other areas.
- Use nightlights to illuminate pathways to bathrooms and hallways from bedrooms.

General Safety Tips

- Encourage exercise to improve balance.
- Have the primary care provider review all medications being taken.
- Schedule annual vision and hearing exams.
- Keep emergency phone numbers in large print near each phone in the home.

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