

Avoiding Injuries at Home

Home Safety Checklist

Most falls occur at home, and most broken bones result from falls at home. Falls can cause serious injury to people of all ages and, for the elderly, falls can lead to a tragic loss of independence and mobility. Simple changes to the inside of your home can cut your risk of falling in half!



Stairs and Steps

- Provide enough light to see each step at the top and bottom landings.
- Install handrails on both sides of the stairway and be sure to use them.
- If you have bare-wood steps, put nonslip treads on each step.
- Repair loose stairway carpeting or boards immediately.
- Do not place loose area rugs at the bottom or top of stairs.
- Do not leave objects on the stairs.



Bathroom

- Install grab bars on the bathroom walls near the toilet and along the bathtub or shower.
- Place a slip-resistant rug next to the bathtub for safe exit and entry.
- Place nonskid adhesive textured strips on the bathtub or shower floor.
- Use a sturdy, plastic seat in the bathtub if you are unsteady or if you cannot lower yourself to the floor of the tub.
- Stabilize yourself on the toilet by using either a raised seat or a special toilet seat with armrests.



Kitchen

- Remove throw rugs.
- Immediately clean up any liquid, grease, or food spilled on the floor.
- Store food, dishes, and cooking equipment at an easy-to-reach, waist-high level.
- Use only a step stool with an attached handrail when accessing upper cabinets
- Use nonskid floor wax.



Bedroom & Living Areas

- Clear clutter from the floor.
- Place a lamp and flashlight near your bed.
- Sleep on a bed that is easy to get into and out of.
- Install night lights along the route between the bedroom and the bathroom.
- Keep a telephone near your bed.
- Arrange furniture to create clear pathways between rooms.
- Remove low coffee tables, magazine racks, footrests, and plants from pathways in rooms.
- Install easy-access light switches at entrances to rooms so you will not have to walk into a darkened room in order to turn on the light. Glow-in-the-dark switches may be helpful.
- Secure loose area rugs with double-sided tape or slip-resistant backing.
- Keep electric cords out of your pathways, but do not put cords under a rug.
- Do not sit in a chair or on a sofa that is so low it is difficult for you to stand up.

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Avoiding Injuries at Work

How to Sit at a Computer

If you use a computer for several hours each day, you need to consider proper workstation layout and posture techniques to minimize your risk of developing injuries of the hand/arm, shoulder, neck, and back. When you use a properly set-up workstation, you can sit at the computer in a natural (neutral), relaxed position. Reminders to help reduce your risk of developing musculoskeletal injuries:

- **Spine:** Ears are in line with tops of shoulders, and shoulders in line with hips.
- **Shoulders:** Upper arms hang relaxed and close to the body.
- **Wrists:** Hands are in straight lines with lower arms.
- Don't rest your elbows on hard surfaces.
- Rest your eyes occasionally by focusing on distant objects (look out a window).



The body is not designed to sit still, even in a correct position, for long periods of time. Regular pauses are not a waste of time. Change your seated position occasionally, stand up or stretch whenever you start to feel tired. Basic stretching exercises can help keep limber the joints and muscles you use when you sit at a computer. Some examples:

- **General:** Stand up and stretch your arms over your head.
- **Neck:** Tilt your head to one side (ear to shoulder); hold; relax; repeat on other side.
- **Shoulders:** Slowly bring shoulders up to the ears then roll back and hold briefly.
- **Wrist:** Hold arm straight out in front of you; pull hand backwards with other hand, then pull downward; hold; relax; repeat with other hand.

Avoiding Injuries at Play

Safe Exercise Guidelines



Use Proper Equipment: Replace your athletic shoes as they wear out. Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothes that let you move freely and are light enough to release body heat. When exercising in cold weather, dress in removable layers.



Balanced fitness: Develop a balanced fitness program that incorporates cardiovascular exercise, strength training, and flexibility.



Warm Up: Warm up to prepare to exercise, even before stretching. Warming up increases your heart and blood flow rates and loosens up other muscles, tendons, ligaments, and joints.



Stretch: Begin stretches slowly and carefully until reaching a point of muscle tension. Hold each stretch for 10 to 20 seconds, and then slowly and carefully release it.



Take Your Time: During strength training, move through the full range of motion with each repetition. Breathe regularly to help lower your blood pressure and increase blood supply to the brain.



Drink Water: Drink enough water to prevent dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. Drink 1 pint of water 15 minutes before you start exercising and another pint after you cool down. Have a drink of water every 20 minutes or so while you exercise.



Cool Down: Make cooling down the final phase of your exercise routine. It should take twice as long as your warm up. Slow your motions and lessen the intensity of your movements for at least 10 minutes before you stop completely.



Rest: Schedule regular days off from exercise and rest when tired. Fatigue and pain are good reasons to not exercise.