Making Your Home Safer After a Fall: A Practical Guide

Why a fall changes how you think about home safety

A single fall can shift your perspective on the spaces you once moved through without a second thought. The hallway rug you never noticed becomes a trip hazard. The bathroom floor that always seemed fine suddenly feels slippery. The fear of another fall can be as limiting as the injury itself. But you can take practical steps to reduce the risk and build confidence back into daily life. The key is to work through your home room by room, making small changes that add up to a much safer environment.

Start with the floor: remove trip hazards first

Most falls happen on level ground, often because of something on the floor that should not be there. Walk through every room and look at the floor from a standing position, then again from a seated height. Loose rugs are a major culprit. If you have area rugs, secure them with double-sided carpet tape or a non-slip pad underneath. Better still, remove small rugs entirely from hallways and doorways. Look for electrical cords running across the floor, tape them down along the baseboard or reroute them behind furniture. Check for raised edges on carpet transitions, and have a handyman fix them if they are more than a quarter-inch high. In the kitchen, keep cabinets and drawers closed when you walk past. A half-open drawer at hip height can catch you off balance and send you to the floor. The goal is to clear a clear path through every room.

Light the way: improve visibility at every turn

Poor lighting turns familiar spaces into obstacle courses. Install a nightlight in every hallway, bathroom, and bedroom. Plug-in models that come on automatically when the room darkens are simple and effective. For stairs, make sure there is a light switch at both the top and bottom so you never have to climb in the dark. Consider motion-sensor lights for the path from the bedroom to the bathroom, they eliminate the need to fumble for a switch in the middle of the night. Replace any dim or flickering bulbs. The brighter and more even the light, the easier it is to spot a misplaced shoe, a dropped object, or a change in floor level.



Bathroom safety: where surfaces get wet and slippery

The bathroom is one of the highest-risk rooms in the house. Wet tile, soap film, and hard surfaces make a fall here especially dangerous. Install grab bars near the toilet and inside the shower or tub. Do not rely on towel racks or soap dishes; they are not designed to support body weight. Have a professional mount grab bars into wall studs or use anchor plates that distribute the load. A shower chair or a transfer bench lets you sit while bathing, reducing the time spent standing on a slick surface. A handheld shower head makes it easier to wash while seated. Non-slip mats or adhesive strips in the tub and on the bathroom floor provide extra traction. Keep a small waterproof pouch with a phone or an alert device within reach of the shower and toilet. If you do fall, you need a way to call for help without getting up.

View the location on Google Maps

The bedroom: a safe space for rest and recovery

Your bedroom should feel like a sanctuary, not a place where you worry about getting out of bed. Keep a clear path from the bed to the door. Move any furniture that sticks out into the walkway. A bedside lamp with a switch you can reach without stretching is essential. A cordless phone or a mobile phone charger on the nightstand means you can call for help without getting up. If you have a low bed, consider raising it with bed risers so getting in and out requires less bending. For those who use a walking aid or a wheelchair, make sure there is enough space beside the bed to transfer safely. A bed rail can provide extra stability when rolling over or sitting up. These small adjustments reduce the chance of a fall during the moments when you are most vulnerable, half-asleep and moving in the dark.

Kitchen and living areas: reorganise for reach and stability

In the kitchen, store frequently used items on countertops or in cabinets between hip and shoulder height. Bending low or reaching high for a mug or a can of soup throws off your balance and increases the risk of a fall. Use a step stool only if it has a handrail and wide, non-slip steps, and never climb on chairs or countertops. In the living room, arrange furniture so there is a clear path from the sofa to the door. Keep coffee tables and footstools away from the main walking route. Choose chairs and sofas with armrests; they give you something to push against when you stand up. A firm, supportive seat cushion also makes rising easier. If you use a mobility aid such as a walker or cane, make sure the room is wide enough to manoeuvre. Remove any furniture that creates a bottleneck.

Stairs: the most dangerous stretch in the house

Stairs demand extra care. Make sure every step has a secure handrail on both sides if possible. The handrail should extend the full length of the stairway, including one extra handhold beyond the top and bottom steps. Check that the rail is firmly attached to the wall or posts. If your stairs are carpeted, ensure the carpet is tightly fastened with no loose edges that could catch a foot. For bare wood stairs, apply non-slip treads or adhesive strips. Mark the edge of each step with a contrasting colour so the change in level is easy to see. If you have trouble judging depth, consider installing stair lights that illuminate each tread. Avoid carrying items up and down the stairs with both hands full. Use a basket or a bag that leaves one hand free to grip the rail. When you are tired or in pain, take the stairs slowly and use the handrail every time.



Wearable help: a safety net that moves with you

Even after you make your home safer, a fall can still happen. That is where a reliable alert system makes the difference. A wearable device with automatic help after a fall can detect a sudden impact and tilt, and send an alert to a family member or a response centre without you needing to press a button. This is especially important if the fall leaves you unable to reach a phone or speak. Many modern devices combine an impact sensor with GPS location sharing, so the person receiving the alert knows exactly where you are, inside the house or out in the garden. Some devices also allow two-way voice calling, so a family member can talk to you through the device to assess the situation. The peace of mind that comes from automatic help

after a fall is hard to overstate. It means you can continue living independently knowing that if the worst happens, help is on the way.

Look for a device that is comfortable to wear all day, a lanyard, wristband, belt clip, or armband option lets you choose what works for your routine. Make sure it works both at home and away, using the same mobile network coverage you already rely on. Check how the alert is handled: some systems call a list of contacts in order until someone answers, while others can be programmed to call emergency services directly. Ask the provider about false alarms and how the device distinguishes a fall from a sudden movement like bending over or sitting down quickly. A good device will let you cancel the alert if it was a false alarm, avoiding unnecessary worry for your family.



Putting it all together

Making your home safer after a fall does not require a complete renovation. It is about noticing the small hazards and dealing with them one at a time. Start with the floor, improve the lighting, secure the bathroom, and clear the paths you use most. Then add a wearable alert system that will call for help automatically if you do fall. These steps together rebuild your confidence and give you back the freedom to move around your own home without constant worry. If you would like to learn more about personal medical alarms and fall detection devices, Familyr at

14 Grand View Road, Remuera, Auckland 1050, New Zealand, can be reached at +64 9 872 0345 for a no-obligation discussion about what might work for your situation.

Familyr is also on YouTube.