

America is Getting Older

Mature Americans represent the fastest growing segment of our society today. In the near future, almost **half of this country's population** will be over fifty.

- In recent years, 38% of all emergency room visits were injury related.
- Accidental falls were the leading single-category cause of injuries. Over 27% resulted in visits to the emergency room.
- Each year, over 7,000 senior citizens die as a result of falls.
- Nearly 2 million senior citizens are taken to hospitals for fall injury treatment.
- Up to 1/2 of all falls can be prevented.



Physical Conditions and Falls

Physical change is common for Seniors. Bodies may become unstable from: physical conditions, medicines, illnesses, and low blood sugar.

- Medicines such as antihistamines, sleeping pills, and tranquilizers can cause dizziness.
- Impaired sight can also lead to an unsteady gait.



- If you are experiencing any dizziness, immediately report it to your doctor who will make necessary adjustments.

If You Should Fall

As we age, ordinary nuisances can become physically dangerous. A simple fall can severely limit a person's independent and active lifestyle!

When we fall our bodies naturally tense up muscles. The safest falls are those in which you:

- ✓ allow your body to go limp.
- ✓ roll to a natural stop.

In this way your body avoids large jolts of movement and receives fewer injuries.



Getting Help

Sometimes fall injuries are unpreventable. Take necessary home precautions and use the following tips:

1. **Call out for help.**
2. **Wear an emergency beeper.**
3. **Have contact with at least one person each day.**



Being prepared means being protected!

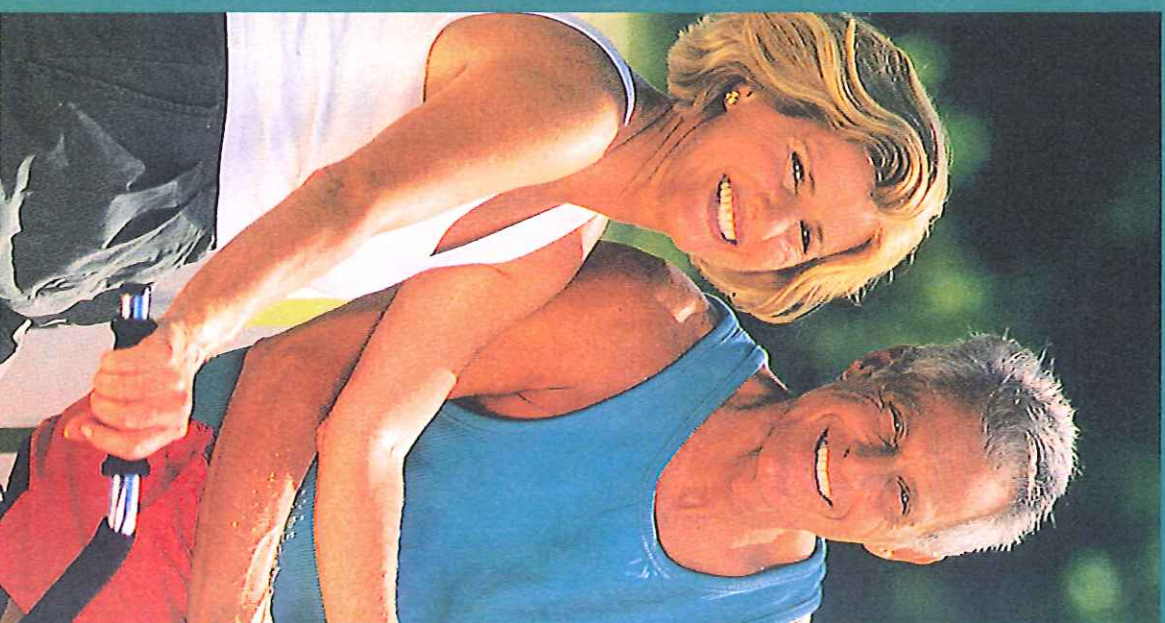
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Senior Safe[®] / Elder Safe[®]

Falls

Prevention

Protecting Your Active Lifestyle



National Fire Safety Council, Inc.

Avoiding Falls

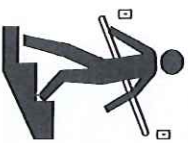
The majority of accidental falls are not job-related nor do they involve situations of extreme danger. They occur in homes during everyday activities. Look for ways to reduce potentially hazardous situations. There are simple steps you can take to keep yourself safe.



Falls are the #1 cause of accidental death in persons 55 and over.

Floors and Stairways

Whether at home or work, floors and stairways can be treacherous.



Watch out for small steps.

Never step over sleeping pets.

Have suitable lighting everywhere.

Avoid areas that appear wet or slippery.

Always use handrails on stairs.

Keep halls and stair flights clear.

Watch out for unsecured carpet or rugs.



Walk carefully on patterned or vinyl floors.

Beware of electrical or phone cords in your path.

Bathrooms

1 Install a grip bar by the tub, shower stall, and above the sink and toilet.

2 Set water heater below 120°F. A burn can startle the victim and cause them to fall.

3 Apply textured vinyl safety strips to the tub, shower, or tile floors, and use nonslip mats.

4 Avoid scatter rugs! Tack down or tape, cut-to-fit carpet or rubber backed rugs.

5 Use a long handled scrubber for better balance when bending over.

6 Watch out for slick soap or water spills.

7 Use nonslip bath and shower chairs.

8 Never brace yourself on towel bar.



Protect Yourself Indoors and Outdoors

- Use the highest allowable wattage bulbs in all light fixtures and lamps.
- Never walk into a dark room: all rooms should have a light switch or lamp by the door.

- Be able to reach a light switch or lamp from bed or a favorite chair. Have a flashlight nearby.
- Install handrails on both sides of stairs and steps. Always use them.



- Use light-colored or reflector tape on stair treads. Textured tape helps prevent slips.
- Have light switches at each end of stairs.
- Secure scatter rugs with double-sided tape or tacks, especially in the kitchen and bath.
- Run electrical cords against walls, and never under rugs or across doorways.
- Only carry what you can safely.
- In bedroom, look out for scattered clothing, shoes, and blankets or untucked sheets.
- Wear well-fitted slippers or shoes with non-slip soles. Knitted slippers have less traction.
- Watch for slick sidewalks.
- Wipe up spills right away. Use detergent to cut greasy residue.
- Use a sturdy step stool with handrails to reach high cabinets. Long tongs help reach high items.
- Keep walkways clear of toys, magazines, newspapers, or yard and garden equipment.

