

Hope & Healing

Falls Preventing Falls In the Home

A heart at peace gives life to the body — Proverbs 14:30

Introduction _____

As we age, changes in vision, hearing, muscle strength, coordination, and reflexes cause us to be at risk for a fall. A broken bone from falling can severely limit our ability to lead an active, independent life. Preventing falls is clearly the best choice. Much can be done in simple ways to lessen the chance of an accidental fall.

Falls are the most common type of accident — and the leading cause of accidental death for people over age 65.

Falls become more dangerous as we age because our bones are more brittle and break easier. A bad fall may require time in bed to recuperate and time in bed leads to weakened muscles, pneumonia, and other problems of being inactive.

Most falls result from being frail and wanting to do something beyond our physical limitations. For example, climbing a ladder and getting on a steep roof to clean gutters. We know better but we're going to give it up next year, not now.

We fail to adapt to the limitations imposed by our loss of muscular strength as we age. More than half of all falls involve problems already diagnosed: changing eyesight, loss of hearing, diminished muscle control (sometimes after a stroke), an unsteady gait, arthritis, and dizziness or fainting. As we age, we tend not to pick our feet up as high as we used to and are more apt to trip. Alcohol abuse and side effects of prescription drugs are other factors often involved in accidental falls.

Accident Proofing Yourself _____

Falls and broken bones seldom "just happen." They often come from factors in our health that are clearly preventable.

- Have your hearing and vision tested regularly and corrected.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about the side effects of the medicines you are taking and how they affect your coordination or balance. Ask them to suggest ways to reduce the possibility of falling.
- Limit your alcohol drinking. Even a little alcohol can slow your reflexes and impair your coordination.
- Use caution in getting up too quickly after eating, or when lying down or sitting. Your blood pressure may fall when you stand.
- Wear shoes that fit and that aren't too worn. Shoes that are rubber-soled and low heeled are best. Avoid wearing only socks or smooth-soled slippers on stairs and waxed floors. They make it easy to flip.
- If you're cold natured, make sure that the nighttime temperature in your home is never lower than 65°F. As we age, our temperature control doesn't work as well, and a fall in body temperature can cause dizziness and falling.
- Use a cane, walking stick or walker to help maintain balance on uneven or unfamiliar ground or if you sometimes feel dizzy. Use special caution in walking outdoors on wet and icy pavement.
- Improve your muscle strength.

Some remarkable research has shown that lifting weights is the right thing to do even as we get into our eighties and nineties.

Regular aerobic exercise such as brisk walking strengthens the heart. Stretching exercises make your joints, tendons, and ligaments more flexible. Weight training increases the size of your muscles and improves the confidence with which you go about your daily activities. Thereby, you have less fear of falling. You see, a minor fall can make you fear that another fall will soon happen, and the natural tendency is to be too cautious for your own good. Don't become an invalid. Force yourself to get into shape and to stay in shape. With stretching and weight training, your balance will improve and so will your reach and range of motion. But what will give you the most confidence will be the power in your hips and legs that large muscles alone can create.

Accident Proofing Your Home _____

Many falls occur because of hazardous conditions at home. To avoid home accidents and the injuries that may follow, take the following precautions. Act with foresight. Expect the unexpected. Don't put off making your home a safer place.

- Don't store objects on stairs.
- Cover stairs with rubber treads, abrasive strips, or skid-resistant paint.
- Install skid-resistant bathtub or shower mats.
- Place lights at the top and bottom of stairways. Install tightly fastened handrails running the entire length of all stairs.
- Maintain a clear field of vision when carrying things up and down stairs.
- Clear ice and snow from door steps.

Watch Where You Walk _____

Avoid slipping, stumbling, or tripping by being on the lookout for unexpected slippery substances such as:

- Water or other spilled liquids. Wipe up spills right away.
- Oil, grease or mud on garage floors. Absorbent materials from hardware stores can take care of oily spills.
- Floor wax that has not dried.
- Icy patches on streets and side walks.

An injury can be made worse if you fall against and break a glass door or window. Make certain that sliding glass doors, glass entrance doors, large windows and shower and bath enclosures are made of safety glazed materials. Also, place a decal at eye level to make the glass more visible.

Ladder Safety _____

60,000 people fall from ladders each year. Make sure your ladder can hold you, is long enough, is properly anchored, and is not near a power line.

Bathroom Safety _____

- Place grab bars at convenient locations to help you get in and out of the tub or shower or on and off the toilet.

- Place non-skid mats or abrasive strips on your tub or shower.
- Install a sensor switch that automatically turns on the light when you enter the room.
- Install nightlights that come on automatically.

Bedroom Safety _____

- Place nightlights or light switches within reach of the bed.
- Have the telephone convenient to the bed.
- Have all rugs well secured to the floor.

Living Areas _____

- Place electrical cords and telephone wires out of walking paths.
- Secure all rugs to the floor.
- Arrange all furniture, especially low coffee tables, so that they are not in the way.
- Have couches and chairs at proper height so that they may be gotten into and out of easily.

Summary _____

Falls and broken bones can usually be prevented through careful planning and carrying out of basic common sense. Take time to educate yourself about common safety hazards. Go through the house and look for ways to make it safer. It is better to be safe than to fall and break a bone and live with regret.

Awaken the Miracles Within You

The Miracle of Christ Within

When you are faced with a presentation before others, or when dealing with a quarrelsome person, think of the Christ within yourself and within the other party as well.

What you are doing is miraculous. By your smile, your way of speaking, your attitude, you are communicating between your spiritual self and that of the other party.

In a moment you will see an argument give way to harmony, or agreement come about in a business proposal. If someone says something negative about someone else, say a prayer to the Christ within the one talked about and refuse to be drawn into the matter. And, of course, refuse to repeat anything about the person to anyone else.

The more you salute the Christ in others, the quicker you will find Him in yourself.

The recommendations and information in this handout are appropriate in most cases. However, for specific information concerning your personal medical condition, please, consult your doctor.