

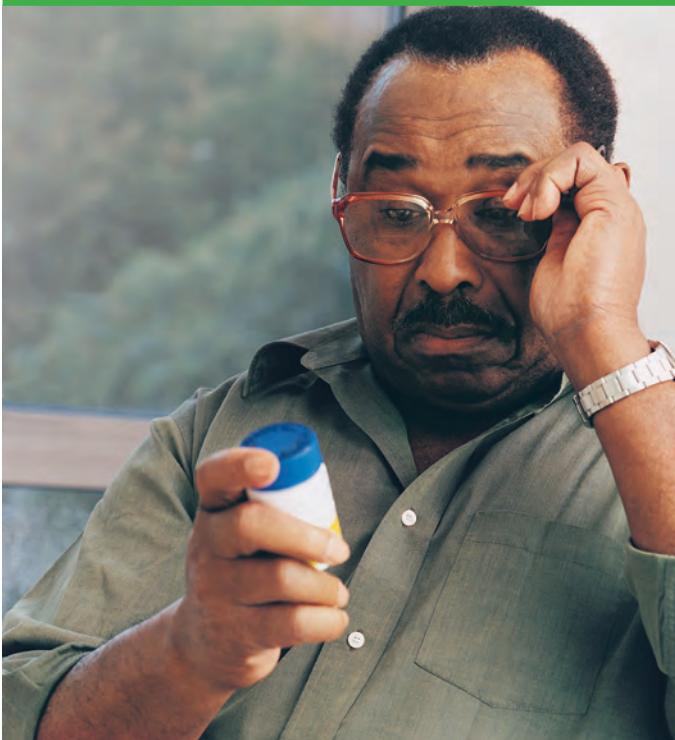
# Prevent Falls

- Falls are the leading cause of non-fatal injuries for children ages 0 to 19. Every day, about 8,000 children are treated in U.S. emergency rooms for fall-related injuries.
- Almost 86,000 fall injuries each year are linked with dogs and cats. This includes falling or tripping over the animal or its toys and/or being pulled down or pushed by a dog.
- One out of 3 people age 65 and older takes a bad fall every year. And in this age group, falls are the leading cause of death by injury. To stay independent and lower the risk of falls, seniors should:
  - Do regular weight-bearing exercises, such as walking.
  - Do exercises to increase balance. Examples are yoga and tai chi.
  - Do exercises that strengthen muscles. Examples are using a stretch band and lifting weights.
  - Get enough calcium and vitamin D through foods and supplements, as advised by their doctors.
  - Get tested for osteoporosis. Follow treatment, if prescribed.



## OLDER ADULTS

### Do This



Let your doctor know if any medicines you take affect your vision or balance or cause other bothersome side effects.

### Not That



Do not stop taking prescribed medicines or adjust the doses of your medicines without your doctor's okay. Contact your doctor if you cannot afford prescribed medicines.

### Do This

Discuss your risk for falls with your doctor. Follow his or her advice.



### Not That

Do not forget or neglect to tell your doctor if you have fallen, even if you did not hurt yourself.



## OLDER ADULTS

### Do This



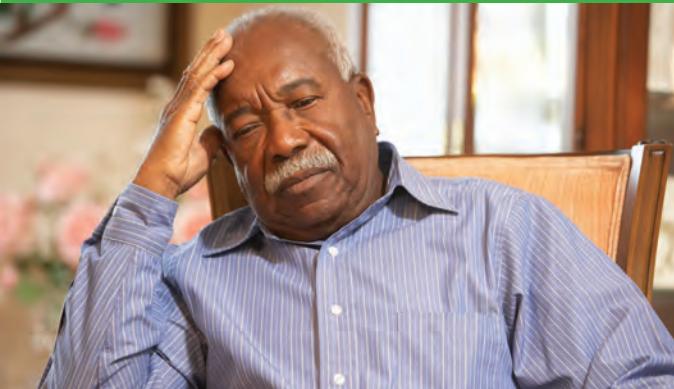
Let your doctor know if you have vision problems.  
Get your vision checked yearly or as often as advised.

### Not That



Do not use old glasses if you do not see clearly with them.

### Do This



Let your doctor know if you feel lightheaded when you get up from sitting in a chair or out of bed. Before you get out of bed, sit on the edge of it for a minute or two and get up slowly.

### Not That



Don't get up from a seated or lying position quickly, especially if you take medication to lower your blood pressure or to control your heart rate.

## Do This



Sit when you put your shoes or slippers on. Use a long handled shoe horn, if needed.

## Not That



Don't bend over to put your shoes on. Don't stand while putting your shoes on unless you are holding on to the wall or a sturdy chair.

## Do This



Ask your doctor to check your blood pressure while you sit, stand, and lie down.

## Not That



Do not stop taking your blood pressure medicine on your own. Discuss side effects with your doctor.

## Do This



Consider using a fall detection/medical alarm device to alert others if you fall. Or, at least, carry a cell phone that has numbers programmed for EMS, family, and neighbors.

## Not That



Don't wear slippers that are too loose. Do not expect that you are immune to falling because you use a cane or other assistive device.

## PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

**Do This**

Use a cane, walker, wheelchair, or scooter as needed.

**Not That**

Do not let pride get in the way of using your assistive device.

**Do This**

Make sure your cane, walker, or wheelchair device is measured to meet your needs. Use it as directed.

**Not That**

Do not use someone else's walker or cane without getting it checked out by a health care professional to make sure it is sized right for your needs.

**Do This**

If you use a safety chair or bench in the tub or shower, make sure it has rubber tips on its legs. Use a handheld shower head. If needed, use a handicap bath step to help you step into the shower.

**Not That**

Do not step out of the shower if water puddles on the floor and makes the shower or bathroom floor slippery. Do not put soap, shampoo, body wash or sponge in places that are hard to reach.



## Do This



Use grab bars next to toilets. Add a raised seat to your toilet. Consider replacing your toilet with an ADA (American Disabilities Act) approved one. The floor to seat height is higher from the floor making it easier to sit down and get up.

## Do This

If possible, modify your bathroom to be handicap accessible.



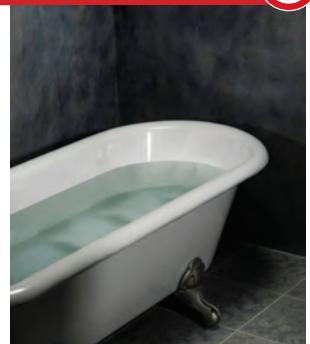
## Not That



Do not hold onto a regular toilet paper holder or towel bar when you get on and off the toilet.

## Not That

Do not get in and out of a regular bath tub or Jacuzzi without assistive devices or someone's help.



## PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

## Do This



Use sturdy ramps with handrails on both sides.

## Not That



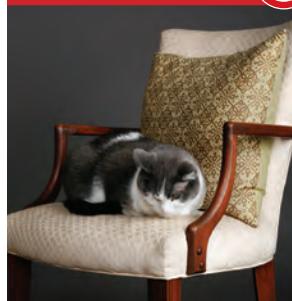
Do not attempt steps in a wheelchair.

## Do This



If you use a walker, go from a standing to sitting position safely. Back up toward the chair until you can feel the back of your knees touch the chair. Then bend your knees and sit down.

## Not That



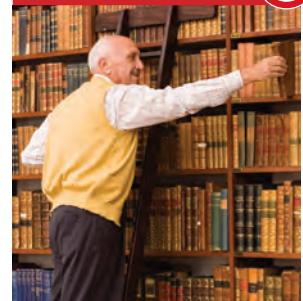
Do not attempt to sit down on a chair that has a pet (or clutter) on or in front of it. Do not get up too quickly to answer the phone or door.

## Do This



Put objects in easy to reach places. For things out of your reach, use a sturdy step ladder with a safety rail or ask someone else for help.

## Not That



Do not stand on chairs, ladders, books, boxes, or other unsteady objects to get things. Standing on your toes can put you off balance, too.

## Do This

Keep outdoor stairs, walkways, and driveways in good condition. Clear them of ice and snow. Put salt on icy areas. Wear boots or shoes with nonslip soles. Be careful or STAY HOME if walkways are icy or slippery.



## Not That



Do not walk on icy sidewalks, driveways, and stairs, especially with footwear that has slippery soles.

## Do This



If you use a walker or wheelchair, be careful when you switch positions from standing to sitting and vice versa. Make sure that:

- The wheelchair or rolling walker's brakes are on.
- You are holding on to the device's handles or arms.
- You are close to the chair, bed, toilet, or other place you are transferring to.

## Not That



Do not sit on a chair that is:

- Not steady enough to hold you
- On wheels and that could fall out from under you
- Too low to the floor to get up and down from

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

## Do This



Wear sturdy shoes with thin, nonslip soles. Make sure your footwear provides traction with the floor surface. Replace shoes and slippers that are too loose.

## Not That



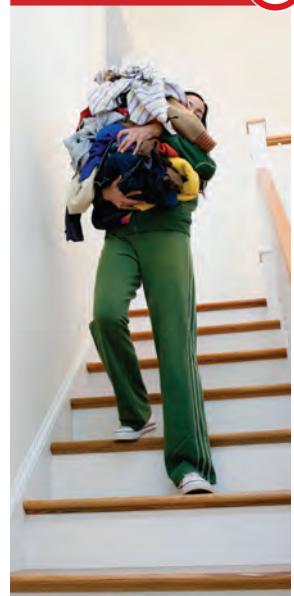
Avoid wearing high heels. These increase the risk for falls and twisted ankles. Do not wear shoes with slippery soles or untied laces.

## Do This



Make sure you can see where you are going when walking and carrying objects.

## Not That



Do not block your view when you walk. Do not lift or carry objects that are too heavy. Do not wear clothing that hits the floor and could cause you to trip.

## Do This

If you use throw rugs, use ones with nonskid backs. Or, put nonslip rug pads or carpet tape underneath rugs.



## Not That

Do not use frayed or wrinkled throw rugs or ones with slippery backs.



## Do This



Clear clutter off floors and walkways. Arrange furniture so there is a clear path for walking. Test if furniture is sturdy enough to lean on. If needed, get help clearing piles of clothes, books, magazines, and other stuff.

## Do This

Keep stairs in good condition. Use secure handrails on stairs. See that carpet on stairs is nailed down securely. Keep stair areas clear of clutter and well-lit.



## Not That



Do not store excessive piles of stuff in a room or allow clutter or anything, such as shoes to block walkways.

## Not That

Don't leave clothes, toys, and other objects on stairs or in walk paths or areas where someone can trip on them.



## GENERAL GUIDELINES

## Do This



Clean up water and other spills, such as broken eggs right away. Wear nonslip shoes or slippers when you do. Clear floors of other falling hazards, too.

## Not That



Do not walk on wet floors. Do not use slippery floor wax.

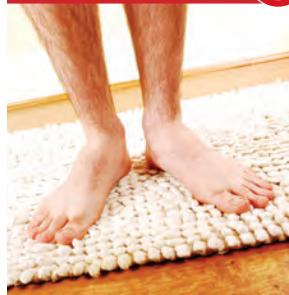


## Do This



Place safety mats or nonskid tape or decals in tubs and showers. Step out of the tub or shower onto a nonskid bathmat or rug.

## Not That



Do not use bathmats made of cotton on both sides. These can slide easily on a wet or dry floor. Do not let water leak out of the shower or tub onto the floor.

## Do This



Install and use grab bars in tubs and showers and next to toilets.

## Not That



Do not use a regular towel bar for balance or to grab onto when getting in and out of the bathtub or shower.

## Do This



Keep lamp, extension, and other cords out of walking paths. Coil or tape cords and wires next to the wall so you don't trip on them.

## Not That



Don't leave electrical cords in walk paths. Do not put electrical cords under rugs.

## Do This

Be mindful of where your pet and his or her toys are to avoid tripping over them. Consider having your dog trained to take commands. Be alert to children who can move quickly, too.



## Not That

Do not walk one or more dogs that have enough strength to pull you down. Do not put a pet's bed in a walking path.



## GENERAL GUIDELINES

## Do This



Keep inside and outside walking areas of your house and garage well-lit. If you can, install motion sensor lights for outdoor entries and walkways.

## Not That



Do not walk inside or outside of the house in the dark without turning on a light so you can see.

## Do This



Use nightlights in bathrooms, hallways, and bedrooms. Consider using ones with sensors that automatically come on in the dark.

## Not That



Do not use lit candles for night lights.

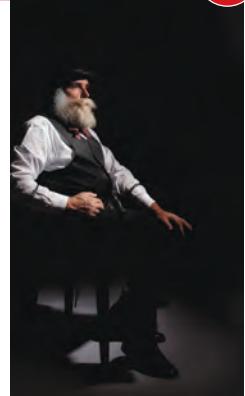
## Do This

Put a lamp close to your bed so you can reach it easily. Have light switches at the top and bottom of stairways and at each room's entry point. Get light switches installed, as needed.



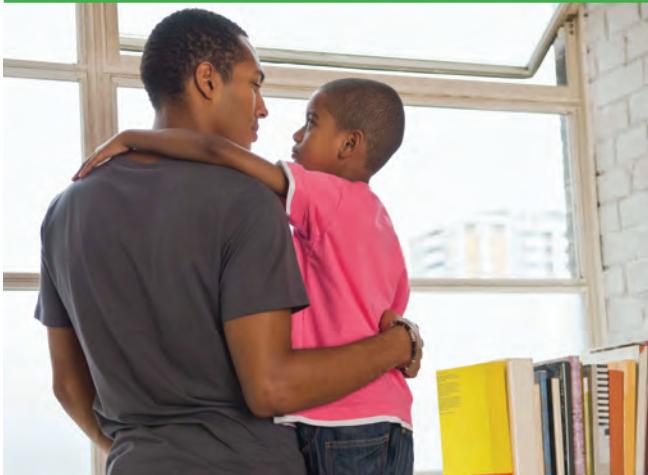
## Not That

Do not get up from a chair or the bed in the dark. If you need eyeglasses to see where you are going, do not leave them in another room. Wear them or keep them within reach, such as on a bedside table when you go to bed.



## FROM WINDOWS

## Do This



Supervise children near windows when opened or closed. Use fall-prevention child window guards or screens. Or use window opening control devices that limit a window from opening more than 4 inches. Keep closed windows locked.

## Not That



Do not let children play by opened windows, especially ones they can fit through or that they can open wider and fall out of. Do not use opened windows to dry laundry.

## Do This



Use a sturdy ladder that allows you to reach without straining.

## Not That



Do not strain to reach. This puts you off balance.

## Do This



Put decals on windows and doorwalls so children do not accidentally try to go through clear glass.

## Not That



Do not place chairs, tables, boxes, or any object that children can climb on next to windows. Do not rely on screens to prevent children from falling through windows or doorwalls.