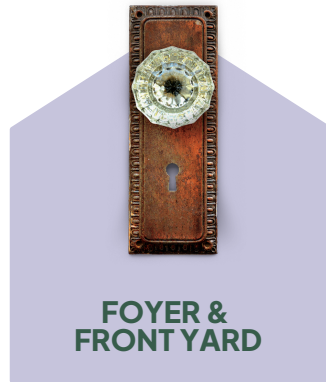




Home Safety Made Simple

Your Helpful Checklist for Safely Aging in Place

Aging comfortably at home is a goal many of us share, but we often forget about the need to keep our home safe. As you continue to enjoy your home, it's essential to recognize and minimize potential hazards before they become problems. Thankfully, many risks at home can be managed easily with just a few simple adjustments. We developed this room-by-room checklist to help you spot common safety issues and find straightforward fixes to help you stay independent, comfortable and safe.



home instead.



HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

Bedroom

Your bedroom should be a peaceful retreat, but hidden hazards like clutter, poor lighting, or unsafe furniture can turn relaxation into risk. Create a safer space to rest comfortably and confidently with some simple adjustments.

- ☐ **Do throw rugs create a tripping hazard? Is the carpet torn?**
Remove throw rugs or use double-sided tape or a rug pad to prevent slips. Fix small carpet tears with glue or staples.

- ☐ **Is the room cluttered with clothing, magazines, or other items? Is there too much furniture for the space?**
Take some time to sort through clothing and unused items. Consider adding shelves or storage solutions to keep walkways clear. If you use a cane, walker, or wheelchair, ensure there's enough room to move around easily and access the bed without obstacles.

- ☐ **Do you have easy access to a phone, especially at night?**
A cordless phone, cell phone, or emergency alert system can provide peace of mind. Research medical alert systems for added safety. Ensure all devices are charged regularly.

- ☐ **Is there enough light?**
Install nightlights in dark areas and ensure bulbs are bright enough for clear visibility. Motion-sensor nightlights can automatically light the way when movement is detected, reducing the need to fumble for a switch. Rope lighting along hallways and near the floor can also provide continuous illumination, especially for the path between the bedroom and bathroom.

**Is the bed too high or too low? Do you have trouble sitting up in bed?**

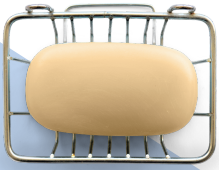
If you sit on the bed and your knees are above your hips, consider raising the bed's height with bed risers. If your feet don't touch the floor when sitting on the edge, lowering the bed by removing the frame or using a low-profile mattress or box spring can help. If you have trouble sitting up in bed, bed rails that slip under the mattress can provide extra leverage and support.

**Do tangled electrical cords obstruct pathways?**

Use extension cords to route wires behind furniture, reposition furniture near outlets, or invest in a power strip to reduce clutter.

**Does the furniture provide proper support if needed?**

Make sure your chairs are the right height so your feet touch the floor and have sturdy legs and arms for support. This provides a stable and secure spot to sit, especially when getting dressed.



HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

Bathroom & Shower

Bathrooms can be risky areas due to slippery surfaces and difficult-to-navigate fixtures. Ensuring your bathroom is safe is crucial to maintaining independence and preventing injuries. Follow these simple tips to make your bathroom safer and more accessible.

- ☐ **Are grab bars available near the tub, shower, and toilet?**
Loose towel racks or curtain rods may indicate a need for extra support. Secure grab bars near the shower, tub, and toilet to help prevent falls.

- ☐ **Is the floor slippery? Is there a lack of bath mats?**
Place a rubber mat or adhesive non-slip decals in the bathtub and outside the tub or shower to reduce slipping. These are available online or at most home and bath stores.

- ☐ **Is the bathtub too high? Does standing in the shower cause fatigue?**
If the tub is too high, like a clawfoot or antique-style tub, a transfer bench can make getting in and out easier. Adding a shower seat provides a safe place to sit while bathing. A handheld showerhead can also be a helpful alternative, making bathing easier and more comfortable. These options are available at medical supply stores.

- ☐ **Is the toilet the correct height?**
If the toilet is too low, a raised toilet seat can help. If it's too high, consult a plumber about installing a lower-profile model.



Is there the potential for bath water to be too hot?

Set the water thermostat to 120°F (48.9°C) to prevent dangerous or uncomfortable water temperatures. Clearly label hot and cold faucets—using red and blue paint or stickers can help distinguish them.



Are medications and other personal hygiene items stored properly: not too high or too low?

Store medications and other frequently used items in cabinets that are within reach to avoid straining or bending. A countertop or shelf-based organizer can also help keep everything accessible.



Are mobility or joint issues making it difficult to reach overhead cabinets, comb hair, or step into the bathtub?

If daily tasks like personal care are becoming difficult, in-home assistance by a company such as Home Instead may be an option to help maintain independence.



HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

Living Room

Your living room should be a welcoming space that combines comfort and ease of movement. Clutter, poor lighting, and unstable furniture can create hazards. Here's some help for transforming your living room into a more secure and enjoyable space.

☐ **Is there too much clutter and not enough space to move around furniture?**

Too much furniture can make movement difficult. Consider downsizing or rearranging pieces to create more open space. Add shelving, bookcases, or a magazine rack to keep newspapers, books, and other items off the floor.

☐ **Is furniture unstable?**

Sit in chairs to see if arms or legs are wobbly. Secure loose parts with glue or seek professional repairs. If a chair is too low, add a cushion for height. Avoid chairs that are too high or lack armrests for support when standing up.

☐ **Can you reach the light switch to turn it off or on?**

Install a smart plug, remote-control switch, or a "clapper" light switch for easier access. Rearranging furniture can also help make light switches or lamps more reachable.

☐ **Is there adequate lighting?**

Use bulbs with the highest safe wattage for better visibility. Adding extra lamps or installing overhead lighting can also improve brightness. Smart bulbs or smart plugs can be used to program lights to turn on at a specific time of day, such as sunset, ensuring the house stays well-lit for added safety and convenience.

**Do throw rugs and electrical cords pose a tripping hazard?**

Remove throw rugs or secure them with non-slip backing. Low-pile carpet is a better option than shag. Use extension cords to route electrical wires behind furniture.

**Is the floor uneven or is the carpet torn?**

Repair small carpet tears with glue or staples. For uneven floors, consult a contractor or home improvement store for solutions like leveling compounds or plywood.

**Is the room temperature too hot or cold?**

Use lock-in switches on thermostats to maintain a safe, comfortable temperature and reduce fire risks.

**Does glare from the windows make it difficult for you to see?**

Install heat-control window film, thermal curtains, or solar shades to minimize glare and improve visibility. Home improvement stores and window treatment businesses offer a variety of options.

**Do you have trouble getting out of your favorite chair or off the couch?**

Choose chairs that are sturdy, the right height, and have armrests for added support when standing up. Adding a foam pad under the couch cushion can also make it easier to stand up. If getting around is becoming more difficult, additional help from a home care company like Home Instead® can provide the support you need to remain comfortable and confident at home.



HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

Hallway

Hallways, often overlooked, play a critical role in home safety. Proper lighting, clear pathways, and effective safety detectors can greatly reduce the risk of accidents. Here are some tips for making your hallways safe, day and night.

☐ Is there a working smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector in place?

Install new smoke and carbon monoxide detector batteries once a year. Choose a set date, like a birthday or daylight savings time, to ensure they are replaced regularly. Follow manufacturer recommendations for when to replace the entire unit.

☐ Is it difficult to navigate through the hall?

Keep hallways clear of clutter and furniture that narrows the path. Secure rugs to prevent tripping. For added support, consider installing securely mounted handrails on one or both sides in a contrasting color for better visibility.

☐ Is there adequate light at night?

Nightlights are an easy way to brighten dark hallways, with LED options available online or at home improvement stores. Rope lighting along the floor can also help illuminate pathways between the bedroom and bathroom. For added support, in-home care from a provider like Home Instead® can offer assistance and peace of mind overnight.



HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

Garage

Your garage might hold more dangers than you realize—from unsecured tools to chemical hazards. Keeping your garage organized and secure is important for your safety and peace of mind. Here's what to look out for.

- ☐ **Do the stairs into the garage have secure railings?**
Steps leading into the garage should have at least one sturdy railing, ideally two, for added stability.

- ☐ **Is trash piling up?**
Ensure enough trash containers are available between collection days. To prevent pests, store trash just outside the garage and arrange for help moving bins to the curb if needed. Some trash service providers offer house-side pickup, eliminating the need to drag bins to the curb. Contact your provider to see if this option is available.

- ☐ **Are power tools and lawn chemicals stored safely?**
Power tools and toxic lawn chemicals can be dangerous, especially for those with dementia, as they may become confused about how to use them safely. If this is a concern, consider removing these items from the garage or locking them away until they can be used with supervision and assistance.

- ☐ **Is the garage properly secure?**
Always keep the garage door closed to deter break-ins. If the garage has an external door, ensure it remains locked for added security. Installing sensors can also provide notifications if the garage door has been left open, offering extra peace of mind.



HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

Kitchen

The kitchen is the heart of the home but also one of the highest-risk areas for accidents. Whether it's slippery floors, difficult-to-reach cabinets, or hidden hazards, addressing these potential dangers can keep you safer while cooking and dining. Follow these practical guidelines to ensure kitchen safety.



Are cabinets too high or low?

Store frequently used items on shelves closest to the counter. Install wall hooks for easy access to pots and pans.



Is there clutter on countertops or throughout the kitchen? Are pathways obstructed?

Use a Lazy Susan to organize countertop items. Create additional workspace by repositioning a kitchen table or adding an island. Unplug and store small appliances when not in use to free up counter space and keep the kitchen tidy.



Is there adequate light for cooking?

Increase bulb wattage to the highest safe level. Consider battery-operated under-counter lighting or consult an electrician for additional lighting options.



Are dangerous chemicals and cleaning materials secure?

Household chemicals should be stored in a safe place, especially if cognitive changes are a concern. Higher storage or locked cabinets may help prevent accidental exposure.

**Is the floor slippery?**

Clean up spills immediately and avoid walking on wet floors. Wear well-fitted shoes or socks with non-skid soles. If possible, switch to flooring with better traction.

**Is there spoiled food in the refrigerator?**

Prevent foodborne illness by checking the refrigerator weekly for expired or spoiled items like meat, eggs, and dairy. If leftovers are common, divide them into freezer-safe portions for future use.

**Is emergency contact information within easy access?**

The refrigerator is a great place to store emergency contact details such as a contact worksheet and medication tracker.

**Is there a risk of injury from sharp utensils or fire hazards?**

Ensure there is a working fire extinguisher in the kitchen. If handling sharp utensils or cooking becomes challenging, consider in-home assistance from a provider like Home Instead® for help with meal preparation and support around the kitchen.



HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

Laundry Room & Basement

Bathrooms can be risky areas due to slippery surfaces and difficult-to-navigate fixtures. Ensuring your bathroom is safe is crucial to maintaining independence and preventing injuries. Follow these simple tips to make your bathroom safer and more accessible.

- ☐ **Is there enough lighting on basement stairways?**
Increase bulb wattage to the highest safe level and install overhead or wall lighting if needed.

- ☐ **Are there sturdy handrails for the stairway?**
Install at least one railing along the entire stairway, ideally on both sides. A contractor can help ensure proper installation for safety and code compliance.

- ☐ **Are the steps too steep or slippery?**
Use adhesive stair treads or a carpet runner for better traction. These are available at home improvement and carpet stores.

- ☐ **Does the last step blend in with the floor, making it hard to see?**
Paint the bottom step a different color to make it more visible, or line the edge with colorful duct tape for added contrast.

- ☐ **Are the pathways clear of clutter?**
Avoid using stairs as storage space. Store shoes and other items in a closet or on shelves to prevent tripping.



Are laundry detergent bottles or boxes too heavy to lift?

Transfer detergent into smaller, easier-to-handle bottles or containers.



Has detergent spilled on the laundry room floor?

Keep floors dry and wear shoes or socks with non-skid soles in the laundry room to reduce fall risks.



Do you have to carry baskets of laundry up and down the stairs?

If possible, move the laundry area to the main floor. If carrying laundry up and down stairs is a challenge, in-home care from a provider like Home Instead® can help with household tasks and laundry assistance.



HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

Foyer & Front Yard

The entryway to your home should be both welcoming and safe. Issues like inadequate lighting, slippery surfaces, or uneven steps can create risks. Ensure your home entrance is secure and accessible with these practical tips.

- ☐ **Do steps have proper handrails?**
Stabilize loose railings, and if they're missing, install at least one—preferably two—for added safety.

- ☐ **Are steps too steep, cracked or uneven?**
Proper handrails are essential for steep stairs. Repair any cracked or uneven steps or sidewalks. If needed, plan an alternate route to and from the home. Contact local city or county services for possible sidewalk or driveway repairs.

- ☐ **Are driveways or walkways covered in snow or ice?**
Arrange for regular snow removal or yard maintenance. Coordinate with a neighbor or hire a service to keep walkways clear, and use snow melt as needed.

- ☐ **Is there adequate lighting at night?**
Add an outdoor light if one isn't available. Motion-activated lighting can provide extra security and peace of mind. Small bulbs or smart plugs can also be programmed to turn on lights at a set time, such as sunset, to ensure the home stays well-lit.



Is there a risk of wandering?

Install barriers or fences to help create a safe outdoor area. Large flower pots can block small openings, and inviting seating areas like benches can provide a comfortable space to enjoy the outdoors while staying secure.



Can you hear the doorbell clearly?

If hearing the doorbell is a challenge, install a device that triggers a flashing light when it rings. Some systems can sync with existing house lamps or use special strobes for better visibility throughout the home. A smart doorbell can also provide alerts to a cell phone and display video of who is at the door, adding convenience and security.



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