



Take Control of Your Health

Learn How to Prevent Falling

Stay Independent

A simple fall can change your life. Many falls result in minor bumps and bruises, but others can cause more serious injuries, which could lead to rehab in a nursing home, disability, and depression. The good news is that you can prevent falls and maintain your independence.

33% of Americans
65 years or older

have had a fall
according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The risk of falling increases with age, so try these tips.

Tip 1

Consult Your Doctor

Scheduling an annual wellness visit, where your doctor can assess your overall risk of falling, is your best resource. He or she will recommend the best ways for you to prevent falls, including an exercise program that's right for you. Your doctor may recommend adding calcium and vitamin D to your diet, or suggest you have a bone density test if he or she thinks you may be at risk for osteoporosis, a disease that weakens bones to the point where they break easily. This test gives you important information to understand your risks for fractures or broken bones in the case of a fall.

Remember to speak with your doctor before you start any exercise routine.

Tip 2

Stay Active

Exercising regularly for 30 minutes a day will help you maintain good balance, build leg strength, and increase your overall flexibility. You'll feel better physically and build your confidence.

Join a walking club. Walking will boost your energy, lower your blood pressure, and reduce stress. If your walking is unsteady, use a cane or walker, and always wear rubber-soled and low-heeled shoes.

Get involved—join a walking club!

Go to mcoaonline.com/keepmoving to find a walking club near you.

Tip 3

Have Your Eyes and Ears Checked Regularly

Good vision and hearing will help keep you on your feet. Be sure to get examined regularly to make sure everything is working properly.

Tip 4

Keep a Safe Home

A high percentage of falls happens while at home. Clearing any tripping hazards, improving the lighting, and making sure stairs are safe by installing safety rails will help make your home a happier, safer place to live. Use the checklist below to help maintain a fall-free home:

| Home Safety Checklist | | |
|---|-----|----|
| | Yes | No |
| Do furniture, clutter, or other items make it difficult to walk through rooms? | | |
| Do you have loose throw rugs on the floor? | | |
| Do your floors or stairs have clutter (such as magazines, shoes, and boxes) that's easy to trip over? | | |
| Is it dark or difficult to see in your stairwell? | | |
| Do you have broken or uneven steps anywhere in your home? | | |
| Is your stairwell missing a handrail on either side? | | |
| Is your tub or shower floor slippery? | | |
| Is your bathroom missing a safety rail? | | |
| In your kitchen, do you often have to reach for items on higher shelves? | | |
| Is the path from your bedroom to the bathroom dark at night? | | |
| Are the lamps next to your bed hard to reach? | | |

If you answered yes to any of these questions, take steps—such as installing nightlights and placing non-slip mats in the tub—to improve safety conditions.

Tip 5

Talk to Your Family and Friends

Falls aren't just your issue—friends and family members can provide support, too. They can help move furniture to make rooms safer, move higher items in your kitchen to lower shelves, and motivate you to stay active.

Be sure to ask your doctor

if any of the medications you're taking can make you dizzy or unsteady on your feet.