



Our Vision: Milwaukee County will be a national leader in the prevention of falls in the adult population through community education, collaboration, and innovation



Milwaukee County Falls Prevention Coalition Resource Series

Home Safety During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Background

- The home environment is a major risk factor for falls in older adults.
- Most older adults have lived in their homes for a long time and may not have considered simple modifications that could support safety and fall prevention.
- It is essential to ensure the home environment is safe to perform physical activity, particularly during COVID-19 pandemic Safer at Home orders.
- Environmental hazards such as sidewalks, curbs, patios, decks, and outdoor stairs play a significant role in falls outside of the home.
- The inability to get up off the floor after a fall can negatively impact recovery and function.

Practical Tips

- Wear supportive footwear, not slippers, when walking in the home.
- Keep hallways and walking paths in home free of clutter.
- Repair or remove tripping hazards including electrical cords, throw rugs, loose carpet or floorboards.
- Install and use grab bars and handrails.
- Ensure lights are working and use brighter bulbs when possible to provide adequate lighting.
- If you are feeling unsteady or not confident climbing stairs do not use them without help.
- When walking outside be aware of cracks, uneven surfaces, and curbs.
- If you fall, take time to get calm and find a steady surface such as a chair, couch, or counter to assist with getting up from the floor.

Electronic Resources

[Home Safety Checklist](#) – Centers for Disease Control

[Home Safety Tips](#) – Alzheimer's Association

[Tips to Prevent Falls in the Home](#) – National Council on Aging

[Fall Proofing Your Home](#) – National Institute on Aging

[Milwaukee County Home Repair](#) – Affordable options available to assist homeowners with repairs.

[Floor Transfer](#) – Video demonstration of getting up from the floor after a fall.

References:

Chippendale, T., & Bear-Lehman, J. (2011). Falls, older adults, and the impact of the neighborhood environment. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 65(6), e95-e100.

Lord, S. R., Menz, H. B., & Sherrington, C. (2006). Home environment risk factors for falls in older people and the efficacy of home modifications. *Age and ageing*, 35(suppl_2), ii55-ii59.

Fleming, J., & Brayne, C. (2008). Inability to get up after falling, subsequent time on floor, and summoning help: prospective cohort study in people over 90. *Bmj*, 337, a2227.