

**LIVE STRONGER
FOR LONGER**

PREVENT FALLS & FRACTURES

HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

You don't need to wrap yourself in cotton wool to reduce your risk of a fall, but you can make your home safer with a few adjustments

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Te Tāhū Hauora
Health Quality & Safety
Commission



Rugs

As lovely as they are, rugs (a.k.a one of the deadliest trip hazards in a home) should be banned. We’re joking of course (not really), but please take a moment to check your rugs:

Issue	Action
If your rugs slip around when you walk over them (even just a little bit):	Anchor them in place with anti-slip mats.
If your rugs are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frayed at the edges• Rolled at the corners• Wrinkled or lumpy in the middle –	Repair, donate or replace them. As attached as you may be to your rugs, they will trip you up eventually.

Ladders

If you use a ladder around the house make sure it has no missing, broken or loose parts – it’s just not worth the risk.

If you are buying a ladder, look for the standards approved label (AS/NZS 1892.1:1996). Also read the instructions before you use it.

To-do list



Lighting

Of all the ways you can fall-proof your home, lighting is one of the easiest and most effective:

Issue	Action
If your lights aren't bright enough or positioned effectively:	Use area-lamps to target areas that your ceiling lights don't reach.
	Up the wattage of your light bulbs.
	Use nightlights if you get up often in the night.
	Change bulbs as soon as they blow.
	Install light switches at the top and bottom of stairs.
If your lights are too bright or create glare off hard surfaces:	Swap to frosted bulbs.
	Use nightlights instead of overhead lights if you get up often during the night.
If your outside lights are ineffective or non-existent:	Get a professional in to install automatic security lights (front and back doors, along the path to the house). There are plenty of options on the market.

To-do list



Bathroom

Issue	Action
To avoid slips and falls in the bathroom:	Always use a bathmat. Use a non-slip mat in the shower or bath if you need it.
If you can't get on and off the toilet easily, or If you can't get in and out of the bath or shower without holding on to towel rails or taps:	Install sturdy, well-placed hand rails around your bathroom.
If you feel unsteady or uncomfortable standing to shower –	Use a bath-seat and handheld shower head.
If your mirror is mounted over a hand-basin or ledge and leaning makes you feel unsteady:	Get a pull out mirror so you don't have to lean into it.



To-do list



Bedrooms

Issue	Action
If your balance is a bit off in the mornings:	Take your time getting out of bed.
	Roll onto your side, sit up slowly, and then stand.
	Don't attempt to walk until you're good and ready.
	Try sitting down to get dressed.
Other tips in the bedroom	Take your time making the bed. Pull on one layer at a time to avoid back strain.
	You should be able to touch the floor when sitting on the side of the bed. If you can't do this, look at ways to adjust your bed height.
	Install a bedside lamp that you can easily reach from bed.
	Keep all bedrooms clutter free.



To-do list



Kitchen

Issue	Action
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If you want to stay injury free, make your kitchen work for you.



Put the things you use every day at easy reach so you're not constantly bending and reaching.

Try using a hand reacher.

Use a sturdy and safe step-ladder if you need to get things from high places.

When moving dishes in and out of the oven or dishwasher, sit or stand at the side, rather than leaning forward over the door.

To-do list	
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Living

Issue	Action
If you can't walk through your house without bumping into things:	<p>Remove furniture or items you don't need.</p> <p>Downsize large pieces to create more clear space.</p> <p>De-clutter papers and other unnecessary items.</p>
If you can't reach your telephone comfortably from your chair:	<p>Get a cordless phone.</p> <p>Keep your cell phone charged and close by at all times.</p>
If electrical cords are running across your walk-ways:	<p>Tuck electrical cords under furniture or close to the wall and tape them down.</p> <p>If possible, reposition your appliances, or change the room layout (ask for help if your furniture is heavy).</p>

To-do list





Handrails save lives. Have them installed at your home today. A good hand rail is sturdy and extends beyond the last step.

Wear low-heeled, supportive and secure shoes with rubber soles.

Gardening is a great way
to stay fit and get regular
doses of Vitamin D.



Outside

Issue	Action
Gardening is a great way to stay fit and get regular doses of Vitamin D.	<p>Avoid heavy lifting – break the load up into smaller parcels.</p> <p>Use long-handled and lightweight tools to avoid bending over for long periods.</p> <p>Use well maintained tools and step-ladders.</p> <p>Don't get into a tug of war with stubborn weeds (get the buggers some other way!).</p> <p>Steady yourself when bending and standing.</p> <p>Ask for help if you need it.</p>
In winter	<p>If your paths ice up in winter, make sure you apply salt or sand to them, and always use a handrail.</p>

To-do list





Personal safety

Issue	Action
Be safe at all times:	<p>Wear well fitting, flat shoes with non-slip soles for increased stability.</p> <p>Wear well fitting slippers with non-slip soles.</p> <p>Avoid walking around the house in socks or stockings.</p> <p>Get your vision checked regularly.</p> <p>Maintain regular check ups with your doctor or other health professionals.</p>

Falls and concussion – remember the 2R’s of concussion:

- **Recognise** concussion signs and symptoms
- **Refer** to a Doctor for an assessment.

You don’t need to bang your head or even lose consciousness to experience a brain injury.

For more information go to:

www.livestronger.org.nz/looking-after-your-health/your-health/concussion

To-do list



Pace yourself

If you now have a long ‘to do’ list, pace yourself. Put dates next to each task, and cross them off your list one at a time.

For information on any health and disability support services available in your region, including help with modifications to your home, contact your general practitioner for further help.

If you would like more information about how ACC may be able to help you after your recent fall, or more importantly ways to help you prevent further falls, please ring the call centre on 0800 222 950.

You can find more information at:
www.govt.nz/browse/health-system/help-in-your-home/modifying-your-house/

Notes



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