

Working Together to Prevent Falls at Home by Philips Lifeline

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Three steps to minimize the risk of falling

To decrease your risk of a fall, it's important to assess just how at risk you are. If you answer yes to any of the questions here, you're probably at risk. The good news is you'll find tips or suggestions for each step on the following pages.

Step 1: Physical Risks

- * Have you fallen in the past year?
- * Do you sometimes feel dizzy, or have trouble keeping your balance?
- * Do you have trouble walking because you feel weak, your joints feel stiff, or you have problems with your feet?
- * Have you limited your physical activity because of a fear of falling?

Step 2: Hazards in and around the home

- * Are there areas inside and outside your house that are not well lit?
- * Do rugs and floors pose slipping or tripping hazards?
- * Do stairways have handrails on only one side?
- * Do you find moving around the bathroom challenging?
- * Is there clutter in the main walking areas of your home?

Step 3: Health and medicine

- * Do you take four or more medications?
- * Do you take medication to control blood pressure, to treat depression or anxiety, or to help you sleep?
- * Do you need to have a pharmacist or doctor make sure that all your prescriptions are safe to use together?
- * Do you have a history of stroke, heart disease, or diabetes?

Reduce Falls Risk

Our goal at Philips Lifeline is to make sure we do everything possible to help reduce the risk of falling and to get you help quickly if a fall occurs.

Consider these statistics:

- * On average, one third of adults age 65 and older fall each year ¹
- * The majority of falls by older adults occur in the home ²
- * More than 20-30% of falls by older adults result in serious injury such as hip fracture or head injury ³

The Lifeline Service is designed to give people peace of mind in case they do fall. While nobody can completely fall-proof their home, we hope that this eBook will provide you comfort knowing you've taken steps to reduce many of the risks of falling.

Step 1: Physical Risks

A strong body = fewer falls.

Some people think that the best thing to do if you've fallen, or if you're afraid of falling, is to be less active. Actually, inactivity makes it more likely that you will fall. That's because when you're less active your reserves of energy, muscle tone, and alertness are reduced. That's why we recommend starting a regular exercise routine of any kind - even if it's as simple as taking a walk every day.

Here's how to get started.

The first step is to discuss your concern about falls with your doctor. Ask for a physical activity "prescription" that's right for you. This is very important. Your doctor may also want to test your heart, lungs, and joints before you get started.

Exercise suggestions you can do in your home

Seated marching

Alternate lifting knees to chest as if marching.



- * Right leg: 10-15 reps
- * Left leg: 10-15 reps

Knee extension

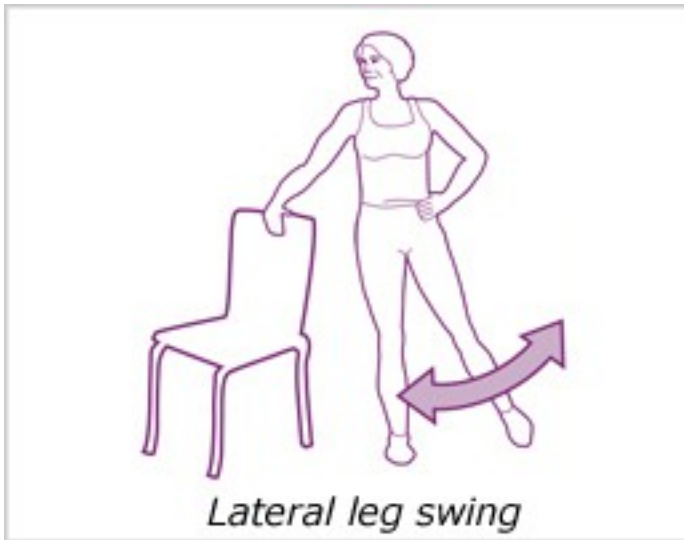
Straighten knee, pause and then lower foot back to floor.



- * Right leg: 10 reps
- * Left leg: 10 reps

Lateral leg swing

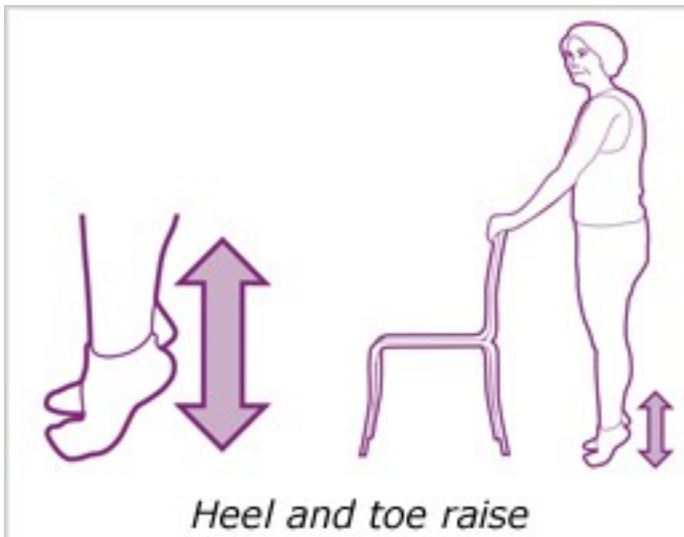
Hold back of sturdy chair. Move right leg straight out to side without bending knee or waist. Keep toes pointed forward.



- * Right leg: 10 reps
- * Left leg: 10 reps

Heel and toe raise

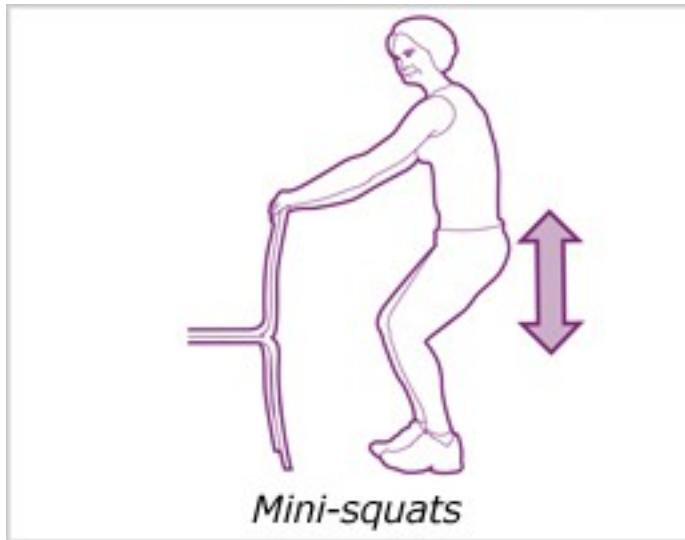
Stand straight, feet shoulder width apart, raise up on toes, pause, then lower back down.



- * Both feet together: 10 reps

Mini-squats

Hold back of sturdy chair. Bend knees as far as is comfortable. Keep back and head up straight behind toes, as in diagram. Then return to standing position.



* 10 reps

Tips for sticking with your program

- * Ask a friend to be your physical activity buddy
- * Listen to music or watch TV while your arms or legs are moving, according to your physical activity plan
- * Keep track of your progress to see improvement over time

Before starting these exercises, consult with your doctor to see if they're right for you.

Even those of us who are in really good shape are at risk of a fall, which is why becoming a Lifeline subscriber should be part of your plan, too. It only costs about a dollar a day. For more information, call 1-800-594-8194 or visit www.lifelinesystems.com.

Step 2: Hazards in and around the home

Does your home pose risks?

As we get older, items in our home that used to be virtually harmless start to pose a greater risk. Carpets, stairs, floors - even pets can be dangerous. The good news is that many falls can be prevented.

Here's how to get started.

Visit each room in your home. Using our checklist as a guide, look at the space objectively and ask yourself: Is this safe? Would that make me trip? What can I do to the room so I don't have to worry about falling? If you feel that you can't check off an item, look at the follow-up solutions underneath.

Overall safety issues

Are all areas of my home well lit?

- * Improve lighting with light-sensitive nightlights and/or motion detector lights that turn on automatically

Are my floor coverings in good repair?

- * Repair torn/worn carpeting and linoleum
- * Secure throw rugs with double-sided tape or no-slip rug pads, or remove the throw rugs entirely
- * Replace shag carpet with low pile

Are the main walking areas free of obstacles?

- * Rearrange furniture to allow a clear path
- * Keep plants, tables, etc., along walls or in corners
- * Clean up clutter

Are all my phone and electric cords out of the way?

- * Remove all cords from walkways

Bathroom & Bedroom



Bathroom

Do my tub, shower and toilet have sturdy grab bars?

* Install grab bars next to your tub, shower, and toilet. (Towel racks don't count - they can pull out of the wall.)

Do the floors of my bathroom, my tub, and/or my shower have non-slip surfaces?

- * Place non-slip mats or strips in the tub or on the shower floor
- * Add two-sided carpet tape to keep a bathroom rug in place

Is my shower designed to reduce the risk of falls?

- * Add a sturdy shower seat
- * Add a hand-held shower head with hose

Is my toilet at a comfortable height?

- * Install an elevated toilet seat

Do I have nightlights in the bathroom to help me see?

- * Get a light-sensitive nightlight that turns on automatically

Bedroom

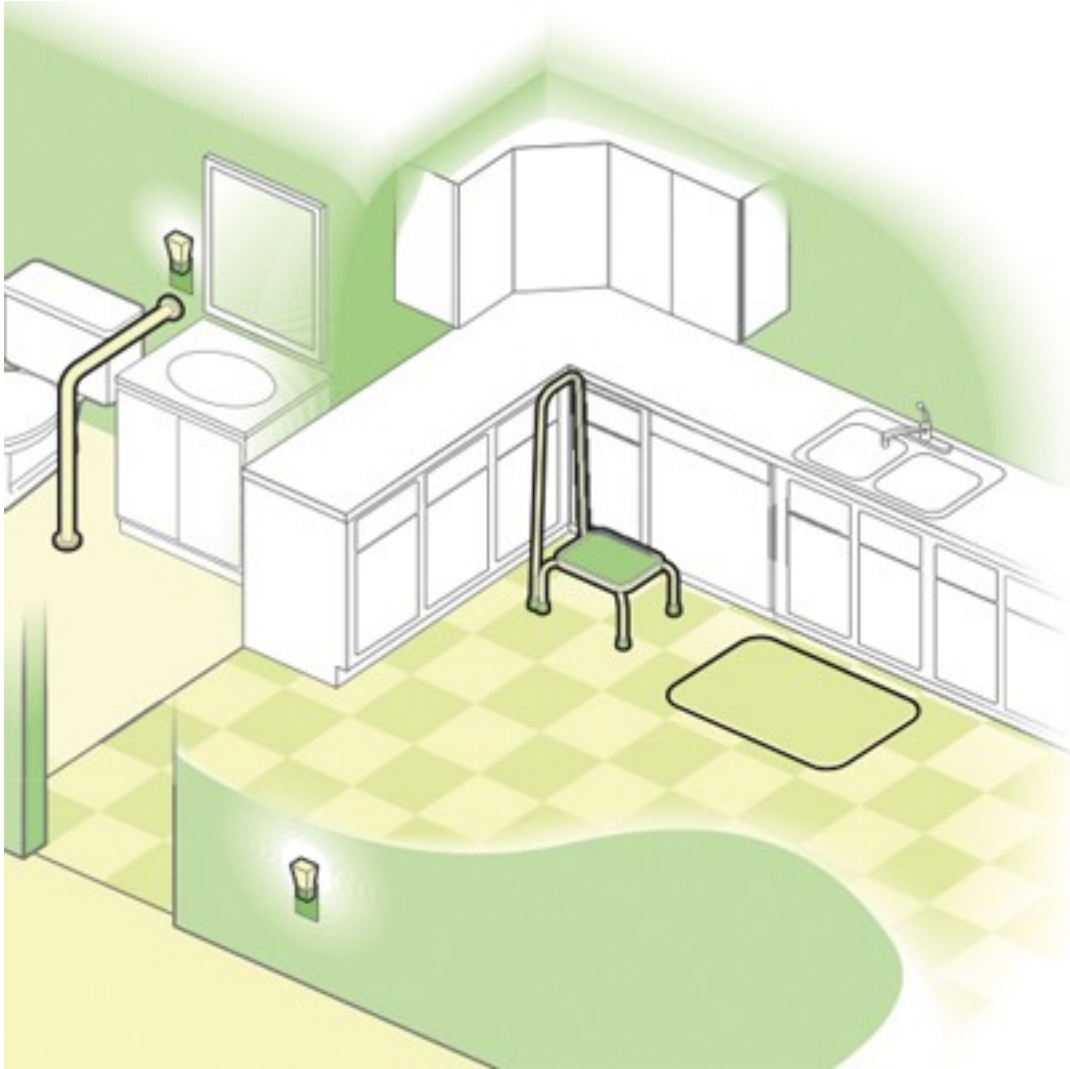
Is the room set up to help avoid stumbles?

- * Create a safe path around the room by rearranging furniture
- * Clean up shoes, clothing, and other clutter
- * Keep bedding tucked in

Can my light be turned on & off without getting up out of bed?

- * Place a lamp or nightlight within reach of the bed
- * Install a nightlight

Kitchen



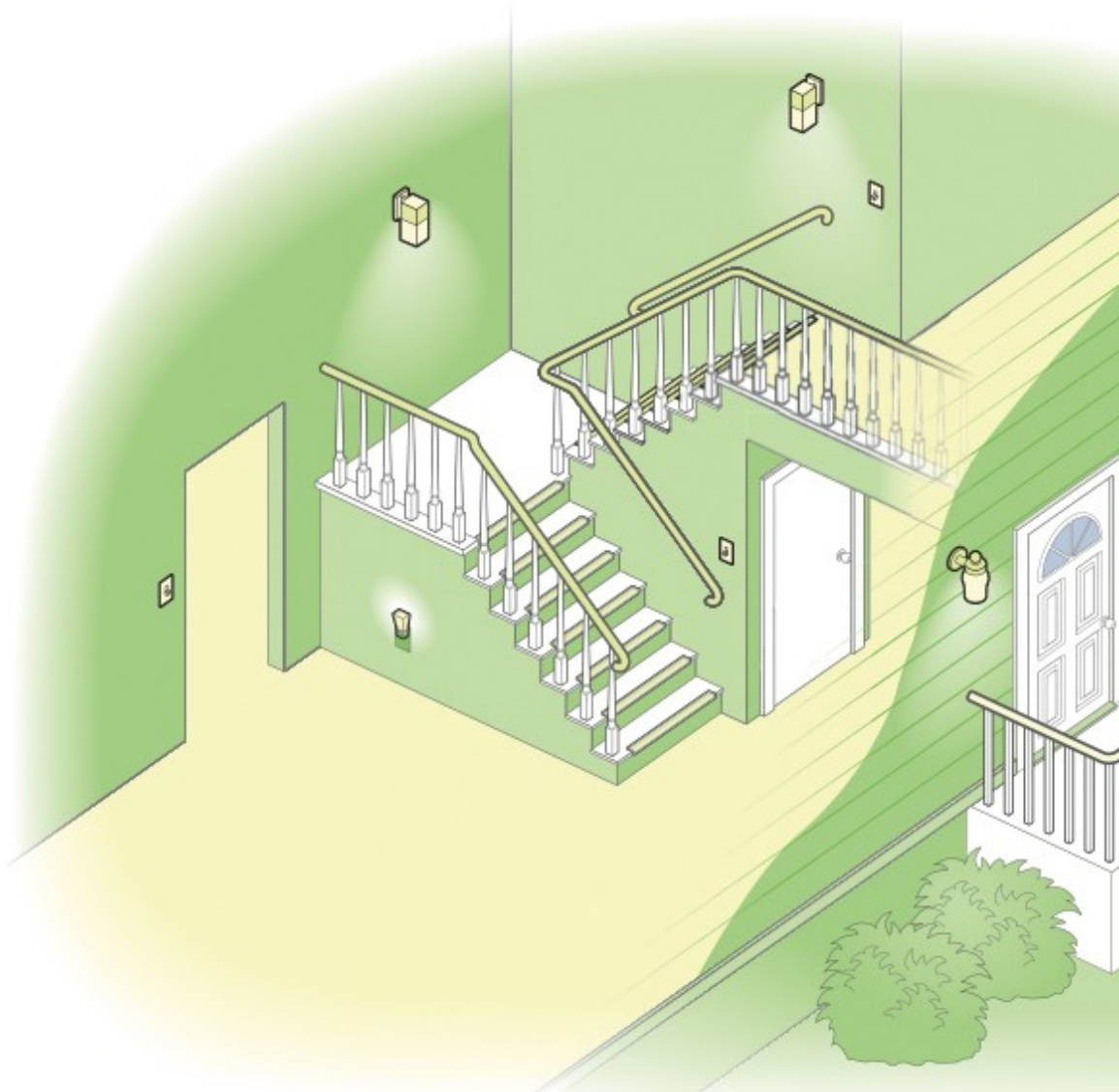
Is the floor designed to reduce the risk of tripping?

- * Place a rubber mat in front of the sink
- * Repair rough flooring

Are the items I use most often easy to reach?

- * Move the items you use most often to lower cabinets and drawers
- * Use a step stool to reach items in high cabinets
- * Consult an occupational or physical therapist to assure correct positioning of safety equipment.

Indoor stairways



Do all my stairways have handrails on both sides?

- * Install handrails for both hands - even on short sets of steps

Are the steps slip-resistant and in good repair?

- * Attach carpet securely; repair any holes
- * If steps are bare wood, add slip-resistant pads

Is visibility good on all my stairways and landings?

- * Install motion detector lighting
- * Install light switches at both top and bottom of stairs
- * Add contrasting paint or glow-in-the-dark tape to edges of stairs to make them easier to see

Is the stairway kept clear?

* Patrol your stairs regularly to make sure all objects are removed at all times

Outside



Are my walkways well lit?

- * Install improved lighting
- * Add motion and/or light-detection lights that turn on automatically

Do my stairs and walkways have non-slip surfaces?

- * Paint steps with a non-slip coating
- * Arrange for regular removal of leaves and snow
- * Repair broken stairs
- * Add handrails to all stairs

Are the walkways clear of clutter and hazards?

- * Move objects from the pathway
- * Trim any shrubs or branches that hang into the walkway

Naturally, not all issues and solutions will apply to your specific living situation. The point is to start seeing your home in a new way - one that will help you identify hazards and minimize the risk of falling.

Still want some added security?

Consider having a back-up plan by becoming a Lifeline subscriber. We answer an average of 25,000 calls every day and night from people just like you who like knowing help is always at hand. For more information, call 1-800-594-8194 or visit www.lifelinesystems.com.

Step 3: Health and medicine

Medications can be a contributing factor to falls

Although medications are supposed to keep you from getting sick, they can also put you at risk for falling. It is a good idea to consult a pharmacist about ALL the medications you take - including over-the-counter and/or herbal preparations that your doctor may be unaware of.

Here's how to get started.

Here are some tips to avoid medication side effects that could contribute to falls:

- * If possible, use a single pharmacy to fill all your prescriptions. Your pharmacist can review your medications and communicate concerns to your doctor.
- * Report any new symptoms to your doctor right away. He or she will help you decide if the symptoms are caused by the medication.
- * Take medications as directed.
- * Avoid mixing alcohol and medicine, unless approved by your doctor.
- * Keep a complete, updated list of the medications you take, including non-prescription medications like aspirin, cold preparations, antacids, vitamins, dietary supplements, etc.

Be alert for side effects.

Even a single medication can have unintended results. After taking medicine, have you experienced any of the following?

- * Dizziness and balance problems
- * Fatigue or drowsiness
- * Confusion
- * Loss of coordination
- * Weakness

To help you organize your medications, simply fill out a chart like the one below. We encourage you to show it to your doctor or pharmacist so that he or she can identify any possible drug interactions that could contribute to a fall.

Medication information

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Pharmacy _____

Medication	Dose	# of Pills/Schedule			
		Morn	Noon	Eve	Bed
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					

You can download this chart in the Medication Tracking Pocket Card at www.lifelinesystems.com/servlet/FileServlet?id=5594. (To print it, you will need to download it from your computer or tablet.)

Review your medication list with a healthcare provider and ask about the risk of falling. For added peace of mind, we encourage you to become a Lifeline subscriber. We're there for you 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. To find out more, call 1-800-594-8194 or visit www.lifelinesystems.com.

Further resources

Family Resources by Philips Lifeline offers several booklets downloadable as PDFs about falls reduction and safe medication use at www.lifelinesys.com/content/resources.

1. Physical risks

Exercise and Physical Activity: A Guide from the National Institute on Aging is a free 80-page booklet. Order by calling 800-222-2225 (TTY: 800-222-4225). You can order the booklet online, or download a copy at www.niapublications.org/agepages/exercise.asp.

The National Institute of Health (NIH) Senior Health website (www.nihseniorhealth.gov) offers a wealth of information and resources for older adults who want to increase their level of physical activity.

2. Hazards in and around the home

Your local Senior Information and Assistance Number, which you'll find in the Community Services or Government pages in the front of your phone book.

Eldercare Locator (www.eldercare.gov) provides sources of information on senior services.

The National Resource Center on Supportive Housing and Home Modification (www.homemods.org) offers online resources and publications to help make the home safer and more convenient for older adults.

AARP's Home Design web center (www.aarp.org/families/home_design) includes more information about home safety.

3. Health and medicine

The National Institute on Aging website (www.nia.nih.gov/healthinformation) has fact sheets and resources about the special medication concerns of older adults.

Medline Plus, a service of the U.S. National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health, is a source of information on thousands of prescription and over-the-counter medications. Visit (www.medlineplus.gov).

Helping you live independently at home

The Lifeline Difference

Our industry-leading, standard Lifeline Service provides fast access to highly trained, caring Response Associates at the push of a button, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Our new Lifeline with AutoAlert⁴ option also enables you to push the pendant-style button for help at any time. In addition, AutoAlert provides an added layer of protection by automatically placing a call for help if a fall is detected and you can't push your button because you are disoriented, immobilized, or unconscious.

This enhanced service option can provide even greater peace of mind and confidence. Lifeline is the **ONLY** medical alert service provider that integrates this capability into a pendant-style Help Button.

Getting the Lifeline Service is quick and simple.

To order the Lifeline Service please call: 1-800-594-8194 or visit www.lifelinesystems.com. There is no equipment to buy⁵ and no long-term contract to sign.

How the Lifeline Service works

1. Summon Help

Simply push your Lifeline Help Button at any time to connect to our 24/7 Response Center. Note: If you have our Lifeline with AutoAlert option, you will get an added layer of protection, as your AutoAlert Help Button will automatically place a call for help if a fall is detected and you are unable to push your button.

2. Hear a reassuring voice

A Lifeline Response Associate will access your profile and assess the situation.

3. Know help is on the way

Our Associate will contact a neighbor, loved one, or emergency services based on your specific needs, and will follow up to confirm that help has arrived.

To order the Lifeline Service or to find out more about Philips Lifeline, please call: 1-800-594-8194 or visit www.lifelinesystems.com.

1. Judy A. Stevens, Ph.D., "Falls Among Older Adults - Risk Factors and Prevention Strategies," Falls Free: Promoting a National Falls Prevention Action Plan (2005).

2. Andrew Kochera, "Falls Among Older Persons and the Role of the Home: An Analysis of Cost, Incidence, and Potential Savings from Home Modification," Public Policy Institute, American Association of Retired Persons 2002.

3. D.A. Sterling, J.A. Connor & J. Bonadies, "Geriatric Falls: Injury Severity is High and Disproportionate to Mechanism," Journal of Trauma-Injury Infection and Critical Care (2001): 50 (1): 116-9.

4. AutoAlert option is locally available at participating Lifeline programs. AutoAlert does not detect 100% of falls. If able, you should always press your button when you need help.

5. Applicable tax, monthly service, activation and shipping/handling fees may apply. Minimum stay on service may be required. Please call: 1-800-594-8194 or visit www.lifelinesystems.com for more information on how Lifeline works. Button signal range may vary due to differing environmental factors.