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Devon Senior Voice



Check for Safety
A Home Fall Checklist for
Older Adults

Produced by Devon Senior Voice

The Voice of Older People

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This checklist is based on the original version printed by the “Centers for Disease Control and Prevention”, www.cdc.org, with whom Devon Senior Voice has developed a working relationship.
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People are living longer, and DSV exists to help those over 50 lead lives that are as fulfilling as possible. We started in 2008 with funding from Devon County Council and NHS Devon as an independent and non-party-political forum that is listened to by the decision makers.

We now have more than 2,000 members – and many associate members – in 19 branches across Devon who have been working hand in glove with the authorities and others to meet the needs of older people and to improve their lives.

In 2013 we became a delivery partner with the new consumer watchdog Healthwatch Devon to provide engagement with older people in Devon.

Membership of DSV is free and open to Devon residents aged 50 and over.

If you wish to join, and we hope you do, please see our contact details overleaf.

Stairs & Steps

- 4 Do you have only one light switch for your stairs (only at the top of at the bottom of the stairs)?

Have an electrician put in a light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs. You can get light switches that glow.

- 5 Has the stairway light bulb burned out?

Have a friend or family member change the light bulb.

- 6 Is the carpet on the steps loose or torn?

Make sure the carpet is firmly attached to every step, or remove the carpet and attach non-slip rubber treads to the stairs.

- 7 Are the handrails loose or broken? Is there a handrail on only one side of the stairs?

Fix loose handrails or put in new ones.

Make sure handrails are on both sides of the stairs and are as long as the stairs.

INTRODUCTION

FALLS AT HOME

Each year, thousands of older people are treated in emergency departments because of falls at home.

Many of them are seriously injured, many die and some are disabled.

Many of these falls are due to hazards that are easy to overlook, and just as easy to fix. This checklist will help you find and fix those hazards in your home.

The checklist asks about hazards found in each room of your home. For each hazard, the checklist tells you how to fix the problem.

At the end of the checklist, you'll find other tips for preventing falls.

“Making changes in our home to prevent falls is good for us and

Floors & Kitchen

Floors: Look at the floor in each room

- 1 When you walk through a room, do you have to walk around furniture?

Ask someone to move the furniture so your path is clear.

- 2 Do you have rugs or mats on the floor?

Remove the rugs or use double-sided tape or a non-slip backing so the rugs won't slip.

- 3 Are there papers, books, towels, shoes, magazines, boxes, blankets or other objects on the floor?

Pick up things that are on the floor. Always keep objects off the floor.

- 4 Do you have to walk over or around wires or cables (like lamp, telephone or other extension cables)?

Coil or tape cords and wires next to the wall so you can't trip over them. If needed, have an electrician put in another socket.

"Last Saturday our son helped us move our furniture. Now all the rooms have clear paths."

Kitchen: Look at your kitchen and eating area.

- 1 Are the things you use often on high shelves?

Move items in your cupboards. Keep things you use often on the lower shelves (about waist level).

- 2 Are your steps unsteady?

If you must use a step stool, get one with a bar to hold on to. Never use a chair as a step stool.

Bedrooms, Stairs & Steps

Bathroom: Look at all your bathrooms.

- 1 Is the bath or shower floor slippery?

Put a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips on the floor of the bath or shower.

- 2 Do you need some support when you get in and out of the bath or up from the toilet?

Have someone put grab bars inside the bath and next to the toilet.

Bedrooms: Look at all your bedrooms.

- 1 Is the light near the bed hard to reach?

Place a lamp close to the bed where it's easy to reach.

- 2 Is the path from your bed to the bathroom dark?

Put in a night-light so you can see where you're walking. Some night-lights go on by themselves after dark.

"I put a lamp on each side of my bed. Now it's easy to find the light if I wake up at night."

Stairs and Steps: Look at the stairs you use both inside and outside your home.

- 1 Are there papers, shoes, books or other objects on the stairs?

Pick up things on the stairs. Always keep objects off stairs.

- 2 Are some steps broken or uneven?

Fix loose or uneven steps.

- 3 Are you missing a light over the stairway?

Have an electrician put in an over-head light at the top and bottom of the stairs.