

Fall Prevention

1. Know Risk Factors

- Medications * watch out for orthostatic hypotension* (this is a drop in blood pressure when changing positions and is a VERY common side effect of medications)
 - Try counting to 10 before moving after going from lying down to sitting
- Health Conditions
- Impaired vision
- Impaired inner ear (vestibular) function ← PT CAN HELP ☺
 - This might present as feeling dizzy, particularly with head movements
- Nutrition
 - STAY HYDRATED
- Impaired sensation in feet
 - Common with diabetes, peripheral neuropathy

2. Make sure to have your eyes checked!

3. Modify Environmental Factors

- Remove boxes, newspapers, electrical cords and phone cords from walkways.
- Move coffee tables, magazine racks and plant stands from high-traffic areas.
- Secure loose rugs with double-faced tape, tacks or a slip-resistant backing — or remove loose rugs from your home.
- Repair loose, wooden floorboards and carpeting right away.
- Store clothing, dishes, food and other necessities within easy reach.
- Immediately clean spilled liquids, grease or food.
- Use nonslip mats in your bathtub or shower. Use a bath seat, which allows you to sit while showering
- Place night lights in your bedroom, bathroom and hallways.
- Place a lamp within reach of your bed for middle-of-the-night needs.
- Make clear paths to light switches that aren't near room entrances. Consider trading traditional switches for glow-in-the-dark or illuminated switches.
- Turn on the lights before going up or down stairs.
- Store flashlights in easy-to-find places in case of power outages.

4. Try to Be Open to using Assistive Devices ← PT CAN HELP ☺

- Hand rails for both sides of stairways
- Nonslip treads for bare-wood steps
- A raised toilet seat or one with armrests
- Grab bars for the shower or tub
- A sturdy plastic seat for the shower or tub — plus a hand-held shower nozzle for bathing while sitting down

5. Look at your footwear ← PT CAN HELP

- Try to avoid socks or slippers in home and use fastened shoes or no shoes at all
- More Resources on proper footwear:
<https://vestibular.org/article/coping-support/living-with-a-vestibular-disorder/footwear/>

6. Stay Active and Strengthen Muscles and Balance Systems* ←PT CAN HELP 😊

- Find something you ENJOY to stay active
 - Walking
 - Tai Chi – VERY good for balance
 - Silver Sneakers Program at fitness centers
- Physical Therapy Exercises

7. See your Medical Doctor or Physical Therapist for recommendations specific to you.

Sources:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/healthy-aging/in-depth/fall-prevention/art-20047358>

<https://vestibular.org/article/diagnosis-treatment/types-of-vestibular-disorders/age-related-dizziness-and-imbalance/balance-aging/>