

# A Home Safety Checklist

***Stay Active, Stay Independent  
& Stay On Your Feet!***

**Did you know?**

- ✓ Falls are not a normal part of aging. They are predictable and can be prevented.
- ✓ Your home, furnishings and lifestyle all affect your risk of falling in and around the home.
- ✓ Removing hazards in and around the home can reduce the risk of falling and loss of independence.

**Use this checklist to make your home a safer place to live.**



Supported by:



**Ontario**

North East Local Health  
Integration Network



# **USING YOUR HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST**

Using this checklist, take your time and go through each room. Don't forget the basement, garage, porch and walkways too.

Think about having a family member or friend help you. Together you can spot the risks, make simple improvements and list changes needed to keep you and your family safe from falls.

A check in a "NO" box suggests that you could be at greater risk for a fall - use the chart on page 12 to make your home safer.

It's time to take control of your independence!

## Home Maintenance, Repairs and Modifications Support Tips

Upon completing the checklist, you may discover areas of your home in need of change to stay safe and live independently in your home.

Consider these tips and supports in your community:

- A family member, friend or neighbour to help with minor repairs, upgrades and maintenance\*.
- Businesses and agencies in the yellow pages under building contractors, snow removal or landscaping services that can be hired to assist with home maintenance or repairs.
- March of Dimes programs like Home & Vehicle Modification Program, DesignAbility Program, Assistive Device Program - [www.marchofdimes.ca](http://www.marchofdimes.ca).
- Veterans Affairs offer financial help to eligible clients who need to buy assistive devices (including grab bars, slip resistant flooring and mats as well as aid to help you live safely in your home). To find out if you are eligible, call 1-866-522-2122 or visit [www.veterans.gc.ca](http://www.veterans.gc.ca).
- You may be eligible for in home services from Timiskaming Home Support (help with routine household activities such as light housekeeping, shopping, laundry services and meal preparation) [www.homesupportservices.ca](http://www.homesupportservices.ca) or Community Care Access Centre (assess clients and provide advice on what services and modifications best suit your needs) [www.healthcareathome.ca/northeast/en](http://www.healthcareathome.ca/northeast/en)
- Contact your Municipal Office, local MP or MPP to see if older adult services guides exist.
- Ask your healthcare provider if they can refer you to an Occupational Therapist who can offer tips to make your home safer and recommend adaptive equipment, home improvements, and ways to remove hazards that contribute to falls.

\*Some modifications/repairs may require a building permit. Contact your municipality to find out more.

### Financial Aid

The Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit is a tax credit for seniors and family who live with seniors to make accessible upgrades to their home. You can claim up to a maximum of \$10,000 on your taxes and can get back 15% of eligible expenses. 1-866-668-8297  
[www.ontario.ca/healthyhomes](http://www.ontario.ca/healthyhomes)

### For more information

Check out “A Guide to Programs and Services for Senior’s in Ontario” available at [www.seniors.gov.on.ca/en/seniorsguide/](http://www.seniors.gov.on.ca/en/seniorsguide/)



# Outside YOUR HOME

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YES NO

Are the walkways and stairs leading to your home in good repair, free from cracks, holes and clutter?

Are the walkways, stairs, ramps and paths well lit?

Are the walkways, stairs and ramps finished with a non-slip surface or safety treads?

Are there handrails on both sides of entrance walkways, stairs, and ramps?

## Garage

Is the garage door easy to open and close?

When your car is in the garage, can you get in and out of it easily?

Is the garage free from clutter, debris and other hazards?

Is there enough lighting?

## Remember:

Keep all walkways, ramps and stairs free of wet leaves, snow, ice and clutter.

Keep a mixture of sand and salt handy for icy walk areas.

Always wear shoes that have good treads.

If you use a cane, fit it with an "ice pick" so it won't slip on icy surfaces.

# Your ENTRANCE

YES NO

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you have good lighting outside all entrances?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are the eavestroughs over the entrances in good repair and clear of debris?                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do the doors have handles that make them easy to open and close?                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is there a bench or shelf to put packages on while you open the door?                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is the doorway wide enough (about 32" or 800 mm) for easy use with a walker, cane or shopping buggy? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does the front mat stay firmly in position and is it in good condition?                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are porch and balcony floors in good shape and railings secure?                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are all exits and hallways clear of boxes, shoes and other clutter?                                  |

## Remember:

Keep roof and eavestroughs over doorways free from snow and ice.

Consider putting up motion detector lights to light up the path to your door.

# Your STAIRS

YES NO

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are all stairs in good repair?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are the height of steps even and no greater than 8" (200 mm)?                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are the widths of the stair treads even and at least 10" (250 mm)?                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do steps have a secured non-slip surface and clearly marked edges?                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are there handrails on both sides of the stairway and do they go beyond the top and bottom step? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are the handrails mounted firmly and far enough away from the wall to allow for a solid grip?    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are there light switches at both the top and bottom of each flight of stairs?                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are all stairways well lit and free from shoes, packages and other clutter?                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have scatter rugs been removed from top and bottom of stairs?                                    |

## Remember:

Avoid carrying large or heavy items when using the stairs.

Keep one hand free to use the handrail.

Always wear shoes when using stairs, step stools or ladders.

Provide a night light in the stair area.

Extend handrails beyond the top and bottom steps to provide stability.

# Your FLOORS

YES NO

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do all doorways have a low doorsill or threshold (less than one-half inch)?                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are area rugs and runners fastened to the floor?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do they have a slip-resistant backing?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is flooring in good repair and floor vents secure?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are floor surfaces non-slip, especially wet areas such as bathroom, kitchen, laundry and entrances? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you use non-skid wax and floor cleaners?   |

## Remember:

Highly waxed floors can be very slippery and cause you to fall.

Keep bathroom, kitchen, laundry and entrances dry to avoid slips.

Scatter rugs are dangerous. Attach area rugs and runners with doublesided carpet tape.

Carpets with a low, tight pile are safest.



# our **LIVING SPACE**

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YES NO

Is there a light switch for turning on a light before entering a room?

Is the furniture in your living areas arranged so you can move easily without bumping into objects?

Are your travel paths clear of telephone and electrical cords, pets and their toys?

Are the windows easy to reach and to open, close and lock?

## **Remember:**

Pets, their toys and leashes can be tripping hazards. Train your pets not to sleep on your travel paths. Pick up their toys when they are done playing. When walking your pet, keep the leash short to reduce your risk of tripping on it.

Consider installing motion sensor switches for lights.

Add electrical outlets and phone jacks to avoid extension cords.

A good stable chair with arm rests makes it easier to get up and sit down.

To make it easier to get in and out of chairs, consider putting wooden blocks under furniture or use extra foam cushions to raise the seat height.



# Your **KITCHEN**

YES NO

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Can you reach items you use most often without having to climb or strain to reach them? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you have a step stool (with a safety rail) for reaching high places?                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are heavy items in the lower cupboards and light items in the higher cupboards?         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are the electrical outlets easy to reach without using extension cords?                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Can you turn the sink taps easily with one hand?  |

## Remember:

Consider sitting down to complete kitchen tasks.

Avoid heavy lifting by resting large pots on the stove and filling with a cup.

Use a slotted spoon, metal colander or wire basket to remove vegetables or pasta from hot water rather than lifting the pot to drain.

Wait until water has cooled, drain using a cup or container so you don't have to lift the heavy pot.

Keep your emergency numbers beside the telephone.

# Your **BATHROOM**

YES NO

Does your bathtub and shower have a non-slip mat or slip-resistant surface?

Is there good lighting in the bathroom, including a night light?

Have grab bars with a textured hand surface been added to your bathtub and shower?

Is it easy to reach and turn the taps on your basin or bathtub?

Does your bathroom floor mat have a slip-resistant backing?

## Remember:

By placing towel racks close to the sink and tub you are less likely to drip water on the floor.

A bath seat and an adjustable shower head can provide stability for bathing.

A raised toilet seat and grab bars make it easier to reach the toilet.

Use a long-handled tub scrubber/mop when cleaning the tub or shower walls to avoid bending and reaching.

Test the temperature of the water before getting into the shower or bath.



# our **BEDROOM**

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YES NO

Is there a switch to turn lights on before entering your bedroom?

Is there a lamp or light switch within easy reach of your bed?

Is there a telephone within easy reach of your bed?

Is there a clear path from the bed to the bathroom?

Is there lots of space to move around the room freely?

Is there a working flashlight within easy reach of the bed?

Are all area rugs, mats and runners firmly secured to the floor and do they have slip-resistant backing?

## **Remember:**

Keep your emergency numbers beside the telephone.

Sit rather than stand to complete dressing activities.

Get light-sensitive night lights that brighten when it gets dark in a room or hallway.

Consider a long-handled shoe horn or sock aid for putting on socks and shoes.

Keep items you use often in easy reach in closets and storage areas.



# our BASEMENT

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YES NO

Is there plenty of light in the basement?

Is your basement floor free from clutter?

Are the edges of each stair clearly marked with a colour that stands out?

Can you move through the room without bumping into things?

Are the stairs well lit, in good repair and do they have a non-slip surface?

Is there a handrail or banister on both sides of the stairway and do they go beyond the top and bottom step?

Are there light switches at both the top and bottom of each flight of stairs?

## Remember:

Consider putting a phone in the basement or carry a portable in your pocket.

Have a flashlight handy in case of power failure.

Be sure you know how to shut off the hydro, gas and water service.



# our **MEDICINE CABINET**

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YES

NO

Do you know why you take each of your medications?

Do you know what side effects your medication may cause?  
Some can increase the chance of falling!

Do you know when and how to take each of your medications?

Are your medications in clearly labelled containers in a cool dry place, away from the heat and humidity of the bath or shower?

Do you keep an updated medication record, including any herbal supplements and over the counter medications, and carry it with you at all times?

## **Remember:**

Take old medications to your pharmacy or a hazardous waste disposal centre. Do not put them in the garbage or down the drain or toilet.

Only use medication that has been prescribed for you. Sharing medication can be dangerous and sometimes fatal.

Talk to your health care provider or pharmacist before taking herbal supplements or over the counter medications. They are there to answer your questions.



# our **SAFE HOME SUMMARY**

	<b>Work to be Done</b>
<b>Outside</b>	
<b>Entrance</b>	
<b>Stairs</b>	
<b>Floors</b>	
<b>Living Space</b>	
<b>Kitchen</b>	
<b>Bathroom</b>	
<b>Bedroom</b>	
<b>Basement</b>	
<b>Medicine Cabinet</b>	



**For more information, call:**  
**Stay on Your Feet Timiskaming**  
**705-647-4305 or toll free 1-866-747-4305**

**[www.timiskaminghu.com](http://www.timiskaminghu.com)**



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