SWEDISH

OUTPATIENT REHABILITATION SERVICES

Fall-Prevention and Fall-Risk Reduction

Goals

- Improving balance
- Increasing strength and range of motion
- Reducing hazards in the home
- Modifying other risk factors (such as footwear)

Treatment includes

- Initial assessment
- Balance training
- Home-exercise program
- Home-safety evaluation
- Risk-factor education

Hours

- 7:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

Check list for safety

- Will your throw rugs trip you?
- Is your home adequately lit?
- Could your bathroom be unsafe?
- Are your stairs clearly visible?
- Do your shoes provide safe support?

For an appointment, call

Ballard:	206-781-6346
Cherry Hill:	206-320-2404
Factoria:	206-320-5430
First Hill:	206-386-2035
West Seattle:	206-320-5510

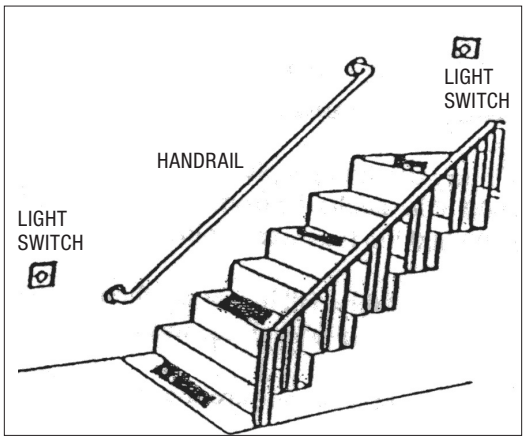
Home safety

Seventy-five percent of all falls occur in or around the home. Falls are the leading cause of accidental death in persons over the age of 65.

Here are some common-sense suggestions aimed at decreasing your risk of falling at home.

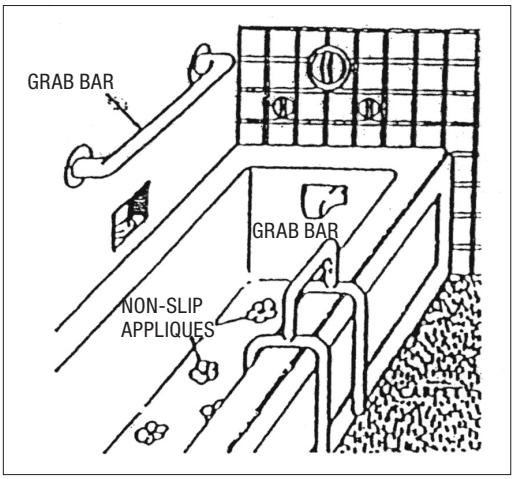
Stairs

Make sure your stairs are well-lit and have light switches at both the top and bottom, or night lights. Stair steps can be made clearly visible by marking edges with non-skid, contrasting colored tape. Install sturdy handrails to run on both sides of the stairwell. Handrails should extend slightly beyond the first and last step.



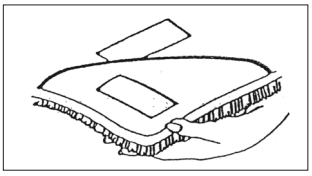
Bathroom

Install grab bars on the bathtub or shower wall. Replace towel racks with sturdy grab bars. Slip-proof the bathtub or shower with a rubber mat or non-slip decals. Prevent falls in the bathroom due to slippery, wet floors by installing a low-pile carpet or non-skid rug. Try a shower chair and flexible hand-held shower hose. Use an elevated toilet seat.



Carpeting and throw-rugs

Carpets should have short, dense pile. All edges should be tacked down securely. Throw rugs can slide when walked on and should be removed. If left in place, back them with a non-skid material or double-sided carpet tape.



Beds

- Transfer falls from high or low beds — bed height of approximately 18 inches (from top of mattress to the floor) allows for safe transfer.
- Poor sitting balance may lead to bed falls — bed mattress edges should be firm enough to support a seated person without sagging.

Chairs

- Armrests provide leverage during sitting/rising. Use chairs that are at least 16 inches from the seat edge to the floor to improve safety when moving from a seated position to standing.

Shelves

Reaching or bending to retrieve objects from high or low shelves leads to imbalance and falling. Rearrange frequently used kitchen and closet items to avoid excessive reaching/bending; encourage use of hand-held reaching tools.

Lighting

- Increase lighting in your home by using the highest watt bulb allowed for the light fixture. Use frosted bulbs to reduce glare.
- Always turn on the lights before walking into a dark room, even if you are only going in for a moment.
- Keep the light on in the bathroom at night or use a night light.
- Increase lighting in high-risk areas, such as stairs, the bathroom and the bedroom.

Footwear

- A study of falls in older people showed that unsteady footwear increases the risks of falls and hip fractures.
- Shoes should be firmly fastened. (Velcro closures are good.)
- Soles should be non-skid. Avoid slippery leather or rubber soles which grab unexpectedly.
- Shoes should allow toes to lie straight and flat.
- Shoe fabric or leather should surround the entire foot for adequate support.
- ***Poor choices:*** slippers, sandals, high heels and stocking feet.
- ***Good choices:*** tennis shoes, oxfords and walking shoes with non-slip soles.
- Many factors contribute to falling. “Safe” shoes reduce that risk, but are no guarantee against failure.

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