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Functional Home Safety Checklist

For Staying Safe, Independent, and Aging in Place

This checklist is designed to help you identify safety concerns and improve function throughout the home. Most recommendations are inexpensive, easy to implement, and can greatly reduce the risk of falls and injury while supporting independence.

How to Use This Checklist

- ✓ **Yes** – This item is already safe or in place.
- ☐ **Needs Attention** – This item should be improved.
- Use the **Notes** section to record needed changes.
- Review this checklist every **6–12 months** or after any illness, injury, hospitalization, or change in mobility or cognition.

Next Steps

- Address fall hazards first.
- Many improvements are simple DIY projects (nightlights, cord clips, brighter bulbs, non-slip mats).
- Consider hiring a professional for grab bars, ramps, railings, widened doorways, or electrical work.
- Review this checklist with your occupational therapist for personalized recommendations.

Overall Home Safety Priorities

☐ Fall prevention

☐ Bathroom modifications

☐ Lighting improvements

☐ Mobility/accessibility

☐ Dementia safety

☐ Emergency preparedness

☐ Medication management

☐ Pet safety

☐ Caregiver education

☐ Other: _____

1. Exterior & Entryways

Safe access to your home begins before you walk through the front door.

Item	Yes	Needs Attention	Notes
Walkway from parking area to entrance is smooth and free of cracks			
Walkways are free of leaves, snow, ice, gravel, or debris			
Entry is well lit at night			
Motion-sensor or automatic lighting is available			
Steps are even and in good repair			
Handrails are installed on both sides of exterior steps			
Ramp or no-step entrance available if needed			
Grab bar available near the front door if needed			
Door has an easy-to-use lever handle			
Keypad or smart lock considered if keys are difficult to manage			
Place available to set down groceries, walker, or packages before opening door			
House numbers are large and visible from the street			
Doorbell is easy to hear and use			
Door camera or video doorbell available (optional)			

2. Lighting & Visibility

Good lighting helps prevent trips and falls.

Item	Yes	Needs Attention	Notes
Hallways, rooms, and stairs have bright, even lighting			
Nightlights in bedrooms, hallways, bathrooms, and stairs			
Light switches are easy to reach			
Motion-sensor lighting used where helpful			
Flashlights with working batteries are easily accessible			
Lamp shades and bulbs are clean and functioning			

Tip: LED bulbs provide brighter light while remaining cool to the touch.

3. Floors, Walkways & General Mobility

Item	Yes	Needs Attention	Notes
Walking paths are clear of clutter			
Throw rugs have been removed or secured with non-slip backing			
Electrical cords are secured along walls			
Floors are even with no loose boards or tiles			
Thresholds are low or ramped if needed			
Doorways are at least 32 inches wide if mobility equipment is used			
Furniture placement allows easy movement throughout the home			
Basket or storage at bottom/top of stairs helps transport items safely			

4. Stairs

Item	Yes	Needs Attention	Notes
Handrails on both sides			
Railings are secure			
Non-slip treads installed			
Top and bottom landings are well lit			
Nothing stored on stairs			
Stair lift considered if stairs are becoming difficult			

5. Living Areas

Item	Yes	Needs Attention	Notes
Chairs and couches are sturdy with armrests			
Seating height allows easy standing			
Furniture lifts used if chairs are too low			
TV and electrical cords secured			
Clear walking paths throughout room			
Electric recliners have a backup plan during power outages			

6. Kitchen

Item	Yes	Needs Attention	Notes
Frequently used items stored between waist and shoulder height			
Microwave located at a safe height			
Sturdy step stool with handrail available			
Reacher/grabber tool available			
Smoke detector working			
Fire extinguisher accessible and current			
Stove area free of clutter			
Stove controls clearly marked			
Single-lever faucet installed			
Side-by-side refrigerator/freezer (if replacing appliances)			
Pull-out shelves or drawer organizers improve access			
Drawer-style dishwasher considered during remodels			

7. Bathroom

Item	Yes	Needs Attention	Notes
Grab bars near toilet and shower			
Non-slip shower surface or mat			
Shower chair or tub transfer bench available if needed			
Handheld shower head installed			
Soap easily accessible (soap-on-a-rope or dispenser)			
Towels within reach before exiting shower			
Toilet is comfort/chair height (17–19")			
Raised toilet seat if needed			
Bidet considered to improve hygiene			
Curb-less shower entry if remodeling			
Bathroom nightlight installed			
Medications stored safely			
Water heater set to 120°F or lower			

8. Bedroom

Item	Yes	Needs Attention	Notes
Bed height allows easy transfers			
Clear path from bed to bathroom			
Motion-sensor lighting for nighttime			
Bedside lamp within reach			
Phone or emergency communication device near bed			
Clothing and shoes stored safely			
Bed rails used if appropriate			
Mattress protector used if needed			
Bedside commode considered if nighttime bathroom trips are unsafe			

9. Laundry & Household Tasks

Item	Yes	Needs Attention	Notes
Laundry is located on the main living floor			
Laundry supplies are easy to reach			
Carrying laundry does not require stairs			

10. Pets

Item	Yes	Needs Attention	Notes
Food and water bowls are away from walkways			
Toys, leashes, and pet beds do not create trip hazards			
Pet hair is cleaned regularly			
Litter box is accessible without creating obstacles			
Pets are prevented from running underfoot			
Pet gates used if needed			

Tip: Consider a pet playpen or designated “pet zone” to contain toys and beds.

11. Emergency Preparedness & Home Technology

Item	Yes	Needs Attention	Notes
Smoke detectors tested monthly			
Carbon monoxide detector working			
Emergency phone numbers posted			
Medical alert system available if needed			
Escape plan practiced			
Important documents stored together			
Smart lighting used if beneficial			
Door camera/security system installed if desired			

12. Dementia & Cognitive Safety

Item	Yes	Needs Attention	Notes
Stove has automatic shut-off or safety device			
Knives, medications, and cleaning supplies secured			
Hot water limited to 120°F with anti-scald devices			
Mirrors or décor that increase confusion minimized			
Doors to unsafe areas secured			
Room labels use large print			
Door alarms or wander alert devices used if appropriate			
Emergency contacts posted in large print			
Clutter and visually confusing patterns minimized			
Calendars, medication reminders, or visual schedules used			

Notes / Recommendations

We are here to support you!

Stay Home Improvements: 360-389-1292, info@stayhomeimprovements.net
Home assessments/recommendations/estimates/modifications, and
Advance Care Planning

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Home assessments/recommendations, Caregiver Training, 1:1 ongoing support