

Preventing Falls at Home: My action plan

As we get older, the changes in our body can make it harder to get around and do the things we like to do, like driving, shopping, and doing household chores. You might not have problems now, but you probably know someone who does. Now is the time for you and those closest to you to take the steps necessary to keep you active and mobile in the future.

My plan to stay active

Staying healthy and managing long-term health conditions will help you maintain your mobility. Start building your plan by filling out the checklist below.

- ☐ **Get a physical exam each year.** Some health issues can increase your risk of falling (such as weakness, dizziness, or balance problems).

Last exam date: _____

Next exam date: _____

- ☐ **Get a yearly eye exam with an eye care professional.** Eye problems can increase your risk of falling or getting into a car crash.

Last exam date: _____

Next exam date: _____

Mobility Tip | eyesight

Good eyesight is about more than 20/20 vision. For example, you need to see well in the dark to drive safely at night. Getting a medical eye exam each year will help you find and address any issues before they become a problem.

- ☐ **Have a conversation with your primary care provider or pharmacist about all the medications you take.** Certain medications can have side effects that may affect your ability to drive, walk, or get around safely. This is especially important if you have more than one doctor. To learn more, visit: www.cdc.gov/transportation-safety/about/
- ☐ **Follow a regular physical activity program to help increase your strength and balance.** A mix of both aerobic, strength, and balance exercises can reduce your risk of falling. Aim for 150 minutes a week of aerobic activity like walking or swimming, and muscle strength training at least 2 times a week. If you're just starting out, start slowly and gradually increase. Visit your local senior center to see what classes are offered, or visit:
 - healthyaging.utah.gov/livingwell/
 - nia.nih.gov/health/topics/exercise-and-physical-activity
 - ucoa.utah.edu/

Use the chart on the following page to make a list of activities you want to try and set a date to get started. Some examples may include swimming or Tai Chi classes, yoga, walking, or riding an exercise bike.

Strength activity		Balance activity	
EXERCISE	START DATE	EXERCISE	START DATE
Chair stand	Next Monday	Tai Chi	Next Monday

My plan to stay safe at home

Staying safe at home means making some changes to your home and the way you live your daily life. Start building your plan by filling out the checklist below. Schedule time with a family member or friend to complete your checklist together.

Check your floors

- ☐ Clear your floors of clutter and things that might make you trip.
- ☐ Remove or tape down rugs.
- ☐ Coil or tape cords and wires so they are next to the wall and out of the way.

Check your kitchen

- ☐ Put the items you use the most within easy reach and at about waist level.
- ☐ Use a sturdy step stool with a grab bar to reach items that are up high. DO NOT stand on a chair. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

Check your bathrooms

- ☐ Put non-slip rubber mats or self-stick strips on the floor of the tub or shower.
- ☐ Have sturdy grab bars properly installed to help support you when getting in or out of the tub or shower and when getting up from the toilet.

Check your bedroom

- ☐ Put bright light bulbs in all of your lamps or fixtures.
- ☐ Place lamps close to the head of the bed and within easy reach.
- ☐ Place night lights so you can see where you're walking in the dark. If you don't have outlets, use battery-powered lights.
- ☐ Keep furniture with sharp edges, or oxygen tanks, away from the side of the bed. These can cause serious injuries if you stumble or fall when getting up.

Check your stairs and steps

- ☐ Repair any loose or uneven steps and any loose carpet.
- ☐ Consider installing handrails on both sides of the stairs. Repair existing handrails as needed.
- ☐ Use bright overhead lights and place light switches at the top and bottom of stairs.

Check with your insurance plan

See if they will cover a yearly home safety evaluation or installation of home safety devices, such as grab bars and lights.

My plan to get around the neighborhood

As you age, you may notice changes in your driving skills due to changes in your body that affect your ability to hear well, see well, and react quickly. It is a good idea to have a plan for how you will continue with your daily travel needs.

Write down all the places you go to and think about how you get there now. If you are not able to drive, who could help you get there? Start building your plan by checking out the options at right. Then fill out the planner on the following page.

- ☐ To find transportation options in your neighborhood, visit ridesinsight.org or call **1-855-607-4337**.
- ☐ Consider a driver refresher course. Some insurers give discounts on insurance premiums for taking a course. Learn more at: aarpdriversafety.org | **1-888-687-2277**
exchange.aaa.com | **1-800-222-4357**



Where can I learn more?

Utah Commission on Aging
Falls Prevention Alliance
ucoa.utah.edu/

Salt Lake County
slco.org/aging-adult-services

Utah Department of Health
healthyaging.utah.gov/



Mobility Tip | footwear

Falls are more likely to happen when wearing footwear that's not right for the situation. For example, flip flops that don't cover the heel can cause you to trip or turn an ankle.

Wear shoes that fit well, have a firm heel to provide stability, and a textured sole to prevent slipping.

Notes

Where do I go now?	How do I get there now?	How will I get there in the future?
Meet friends for lunch	Drive myself	Get a ride from a friend

Mobility Tip | *safe driving*

Whether you are the driver or a passenger, always practice safe behaviors, including wearing a seatbelt and not texting or talking on your phone while driving.

Notes

The content in this fact sheet was adapted from **materials developed by the CDC.**