



# 10 Home Safety Tips for the Elderly

While home may be where the heart is, it is also where most accidents happen. Anyone can have an accident, but for the elderly, a small accident can have serious and lasting consequences. The best accident is one that never happens. With this in mind, here are ten home safety tips to help keep your loved one safe.

## Falls

Very often, falls come to mind first when one thinks about home safety. According to the National Safety Council, 18,334 adults over the age of 65 died in 2007 as a result of falls. Elderly individuals can fall more easily than younger adults due to mobility issues and even some of the medications they take. However, taking a few simple steps can keep everyone a little safer.



**1. The first line of defense is to be sure to keep all walkways clear of any clutter.**



**2. Install light switches at both the top and bottom of stairways. Doing so ensures that there will always be adequate light for walking up and down stairs.**



**3. The bathroom can be a dangerous room, but installing grab bars or even a walk-in shower can help increase home safety. Geriatric patients may be able to find some financial assistance for these items.**



**4. Have your loved one's vision checked regularly. Being able to see well will go a long way to stopping falls. An older adult's vision can change quickly due to medical reasons or even due to medications.**

## Emergencies

No one likes to think about an emergency situation, but planning ahead should the worst happen may help to prevent the situation from happening in the first place, or lessen the severity of an instance. A fire in the home can be devastating, so it is imperative to be prepared.

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**5. Have a plan in case a fire happens. This includes ensuring there are well-defined escape routes. Also, make a monthly habit of having a fire drill. Preparation can go a long way in keeping panic and fear to a minimum in case of the real thing.**



**6. There doesn't need to be a fire for Mom to get burned. Home safety experts suggest keeping all exposed hot water pipes covered to protect your loved one from an accidental burn.**

## Daily Activities

Very often people go about their daily activities without giving them much thought. Whether it is cooking a meal or cleaning your home, most take these tasks for granted. As a person ages, a little more thought is needed.



**7. Be sure to keep items you use daily on lower shelves, so they will be in easy reach of older loved ones. This can help limit the need to use a step stool which, in turn, can help limit falls.**



**8. Make several trips when bringing in packages or grocery bags. Trying to carry too much at one time can cause back strain. Also, have a place you can set your packages down as soon as you walk into your home, so you can lock the door behind you.**

## Exercise

Keeping as fit as possible is always a great way to help prevent accidents and stay safe in the home. Exercise will increase your strength and balance as well as your flexibility.



**9. Tai Chi is a great exercise to increase balance. Typically, classes meet a few times each week and include exercises on breathing techniques and several movements. The National Safety Council mentions that of the older adults profiled who took Tai Chi as an exercise class, their risk of falling decreased by 55%.**



**10. Join your local YMCA. Here you should be able to find classes that include swimming and strength training. This will help build muscle which will increase mobility and balance as well as stamina.**

With a little planning you can keep your loved one's home safe and sound with these home safety tips. Elderly adults need to take a little extra precaution, but it is worth the effort.