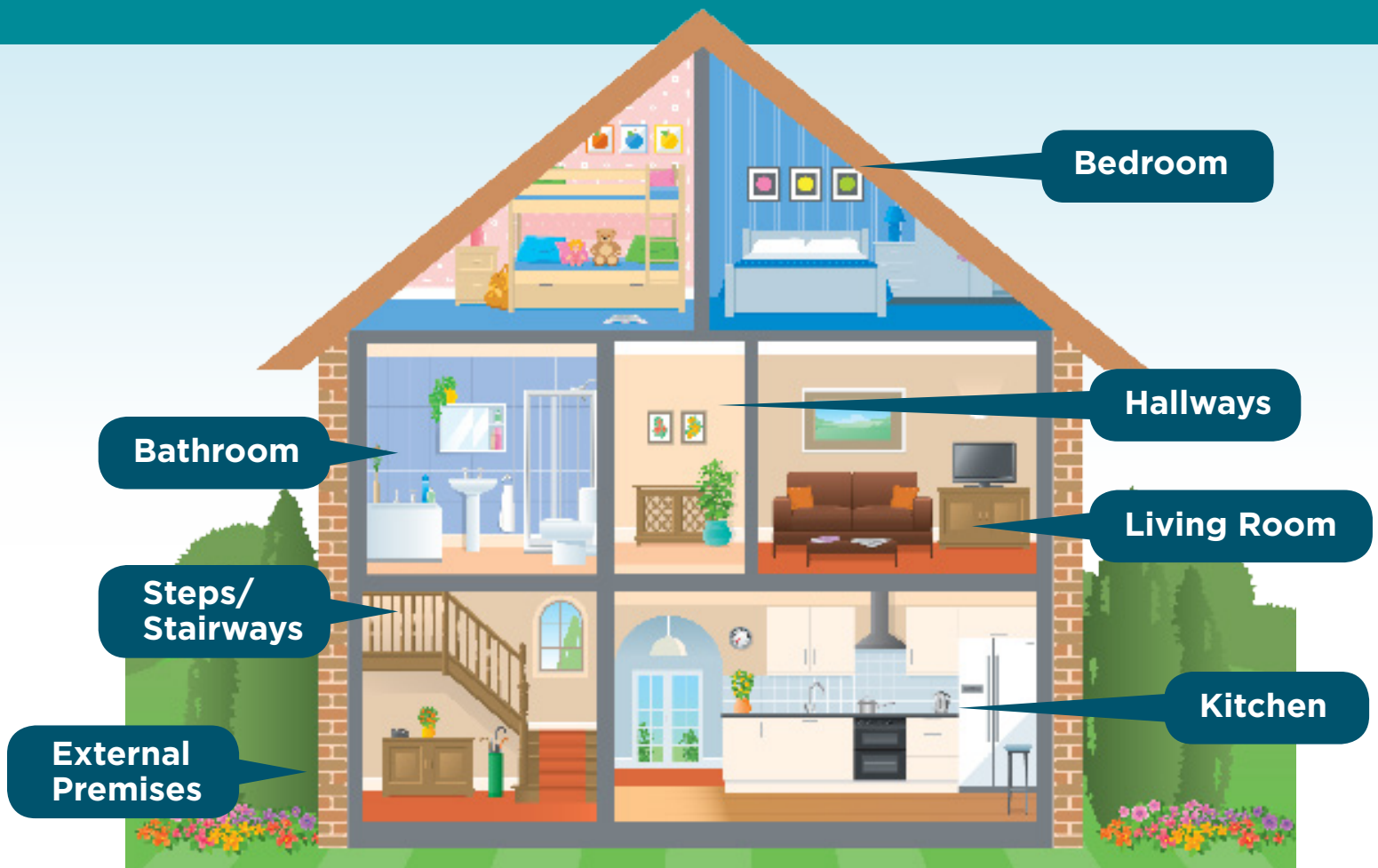


# Fall Prevention Guide

from Right at Home  
with the expert advice of Dr. Rein\*



*\*Rein Tideiksaar, Ph.D., PA-C, (or Dr. Rein, as he is more commonly known) is a gerontologist and a geriatric physician's assistant. He is President of FallPrevent, LLC, in Blackwood, N.J., a consulting company providing educational, legal and marketing services related to fall prevention for the elderly. Dr. Rein's professional profile is located on LinkedIn.*



The Right Care, Right at Home

# Fall Prevention Around the House

**1/3** of aged adults fall each year, and among older adults, falls are the leading cause of both FATAL and nonfatal injuries\*

As loved ones age, balance becomes a significant issue due to a variety of factors, including physical weakness, medications and cognitive or visual impairment. Ideally a source of comfort for aging loved ones, the home can become hazardous without a fall-preventive strategy. Right at Home suggests you proactively assess the aging senior's house for anything that might be a health risk. In addition, please consider helping your loved ones remain safe by:

- Finding someone to check on them regularly
- Discussing medications with their physician
- Establishing light-exercise routines
- Scheduling vision checks
- Checking their balance

After observing any safety concerns, suggest an agreeable solution.

## Fall Prevention Bedroom

**Tripping,  
Slipping &  
Loss of  
Balance**



**Getting out of bed, reaching/bending for closet items and getting up from beds or chairs**

Risk Factors	Prevention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor lighting</li> <li>• Electrical cords across the floor</li> <li>• Beds/chairs that don't support safe egress</li> <li>• Obstacles in pathways</li> <li>• Sliding throw rugs</li> <li>• Upended carpet edges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure a light is within easy arm's reach of the bed, and use nightlights to illuminate the path from the bed to the bathroom</li> <li>• Avoid rearranging bedroom furniture so people with limited vision do not stumble over objects and fall</li> <li>• Provide bright light making it easier to avoid obstacles and furnishings</li> <li>• Rearrange lights and electronics along the walls and out of pathways</li> <li>• Remove clutter so paths are wide, straight and clear</li> <li>• Remove throw rugs from pathways or secure them with non-slip backing</li> <li>• Position closet shelves between waist and shoulder high to avoid excessive bending/reaching</li> <li>• Ensure proper bed height (when sitting on edge of bed, elder's knees should be 90 degrees, with both feet flat on floor)</li> <li>• Use enabling side rail/transfer pole to assist with safe bed egress</li> <li>• Provide stable chairs with armrests to help people with weak arms stand up safely</li> </ul>

# Fall Prevention Bathroom

70% of falls in the home occur in the bathroom\*\*

**Tripping,  
Slipping &  
Loss of  
Balance**



## Getting in/out of the tub/shower

Risk Factors	Prevention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slippery floor surfaces</li> <li>Lack of supportive handholds</li> <li>Towels or slippery rugs on floor</li> <li>Stepping from tub/shower onto slippery surfaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grab bars with color contrast</li> <li>Non-slip mats/decals/strips on floor, in tub and shower</li> <li>Shower chairs/transfer benches</li> <li>Wall-attached soap/shampoo dispenser</li> </ul>

## Using the toilet

Risk Factors	Prevention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nighttime toileting</li> <li>Poor lighting</li> <li>Hurrying to toilet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Toilet grab bars (bars that attach to toilet preferable to wall-attached bars for elders with good arm strength)</li> <li>Toilet riser (to make it easier for elders with decreased arm strength to stand up)</li> <li>Nightlights on and outside bathroom</li> <li>Bedside commode</li> <li>Good lighting between bed and bathroom</li> </ul>

## Walking about

Risk Factors	Prevention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slippery floor surfaces</li> <li>Slippery hand-support surfaces (top of sink)</li> <li>Towel bars used for balance support</li> <li>Poor lighting (especially at night)</li> <li>Bathroom door opens inward (difficult to access fallen elder)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-slip tiles/rugs</li> <li>Clear, non-slip tape</li> <li>Replace towel bars with grab bars (color contrast)</li> <li>Increase general and task lighting</li> <li>Bathroom door opens outwards or install sliding pocket door</li> <li>Remove door locks</li> <li>Remove all throw rugs and wiring from walkway</li> <li>If plumbing allows, add hand-held shower</li> </ul>

# Fall Prevention Hallways

**Tripping,  
Slipping &  
Loss of  
Balance**



## Walking about

Risk Factors	Prevention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor lighting</li> <li>• Obstacles in pathways</li> <li>• Sliding throw rugs</li> <li>• Upended carpet edges</li> <li>• Electrical cords across the hallway floor</li> <li>• Handrails absent or handrails that don't support walking balance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rearrange lights along the walls and out of pathways</li> <li>• Remove clutter or furnishings in pathways</li> <li>• Remove or secure throw rugs with non-slip backing</li> <li>• Provide bright lighting making it easier to avoid obstacles</li> <li>• Install handrails for balance support</li> </ul>

# Fall Prevention Living Room

**Tripping,  
Slipping &  
Loss of  
Balance**



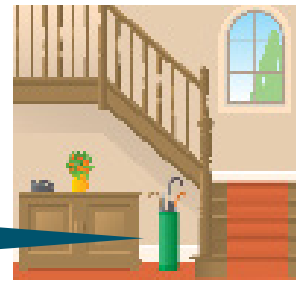
## Getting up from sofas/easy chairs

Risk Factors	Prevention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sofas/easy chairs don't support safe egress</li> <li>• Smooth, slippery floors such as vinyl or wood</li> <li>• Upended carpet edges</li> <li>• Electrical cords across the floor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rearrange lights and electronics along the walls and out of pathways</li> <li>• Remove clutter</li> <li>• Relocate low-lying coffee table (may be difficult to see and hazardous)</li> <li>• Remove sliding throw rugs or secure them with non-slip backing</li> <li>• Tape down upended carpet edges</li> <li>• Create wide, straight and clear paths</li> <li>• Provide sofas with armrests to support safe egress</li> <li>• Use transfer pole to assist with safe sofa/easy chair egress</li> </ul>

# Fall Prevention Steps

## Walking up/down steps

### Tripping, Slipping & Loss of Balance



Risk Factors	Prevention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of handrail support</li> <li>Lack of lighting</li> <li>Steps/step coverings in poor repair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install handrails on both sides of steps (handrails should extend beyond top/bottom step so elders know they are on solid footing; handrails should be round in shape to ensure good grasp)</li> <li>Install increased stairway lighting and check for shadows that may cause visual confusion</li> <li>Provide lighting at top/bottom of steps where most falls occur</li> <li>Repair faulty steps/coverings</li> <li>Install carpet or non-slip rubber treads on each step (carpeted stairs are preferable to bare steps because they are less slippery)</li> <li>Work on education/behavior modification to change potentially accident-prone stairway activity (i.e., grasp hand rails)</li> <li>Wear supportive footwear with slip-resistant soles</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stairway Activity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hurrying up/down steps</li> <li>Carrying loads, unable to see steps</li> <li>Wearing socks (easy to slip on steps)</li> <li>Not using handrails</li> </ul>	

# Fall Prevention Kitchen

### Tripping, Slipping & Loss of Balance

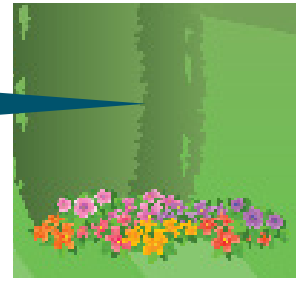


## Reaching/bending for objects on shelves, slipping on wet flooring and getting up from kitchen chairs that slide/aren't equipped with arm-rest support

Risk Factors	Prevention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High/low shelf/cabinet heights</li> <li>Slippery floor surfaces</li> <li>Unstable chairs</li> <li>Objects on high shelves/cabinets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place a water-absorbent, non-skid mat in front of the sink</li> <li>Use kitchen chairs with arms to allow elders to sit/stand up more easily</li> <li>Never keep wheeled chairs in the kitchen</li> <li>Avoid storing frequently-used items (e.g., heavy pots and pans) on high shelves or in high cabinets</li> <li>Position cabinet/shelf between elder's waist and shoulder</li> <li>Consider using a Lazy Susan if cabinet/shelf space is limited</li> <li>Provide adequate lighting</li> <li>Clean up spills immediately</li> <li>Stay off freshly mopped floors</li> <li>Remove sliding throw rugs or secure them with non-slip backing</li> <li>Use a sturdy step stool with a handle for balance support to obtain out-of-reach items</li> <li>Encourage elders to ask for help whenever possible with tasks like changing light bulbs and retrieving things from high shelves rather than relying on the step stool</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climbing on unsteady stools/chairs to obtain items</li> </ul>	

# Fall Prevention External Premises

**Tripping,  
Slipping &  
Loss of  
Balance**



nearly  
**50%** of all outdoor falls are related to walking activity\*\*\*

**70%** of outdoor falls land on hard surfaces (concrete, asphalt, tile, marble, stone, or a wood floor), and almost half fall forward\*\*\*

approx.  
**1/3** of elders fall at least once a year away from home, with many suffering multiple falls\*\*\*

**outdoor falls are more common than indoor falls\*\*\***

**men & active people**

are more likely to fall outdoors than women or people with frailties\*\*\*\*

## General walking about

Risk Factors	Prevention
<p><b>Environment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdoor falls are triggered by uneven sidewalk and street surfaces, curbs and slipping</li> <li>Falls commonly occur on porches and in parks</li> <li>Falls occur in parking lots and garages, particularly from tripping over short curbs often placed at the end of parking spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install good lighting on stairs and walkways</li> <li>Ensure adequate lighting on perimeter of house</li> <li>Cover walk areas such as porches and steps with weatherproof and textured paint for more traction</li> <li>Reduce the chance of slipping by adding abrasive strips or rubber stair treads, or use deck paint that has a rough texture</li> <li>Keep steps, sidewalks, decks and porches free of obstacles/debris</li> <li>Always use handrails when stepping on stairs</li> <li>Be aware of changes in surroundings (especially changes in terrain); try to stay on level ground and watch for steps, holes, uneven areas and obstacles in pathways</li> <li>Check the height of curbs and steps before stepping up on them or down from them. Curbs with inclines or cutaways for bikes can be misleading.</li> </ul>

\*\*\*Outdoor Falls Among Middle-Aged and Older Adults: A Neglected Public Health Problem [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1483851/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1483851/)

\*\*\*\*Indoor and Outdoor Falls in Older Adults are Different: The Maintenance of Balance, Independent Living, Intellect, and Zest in the Elderly of Boston Study [www.medscape.com/viewarticle/734147\\_1](http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/734147_1)

## General walking about

### Risk Factors

#### Environment:

- Poor outdoor lighting
- Vision problems or glare from sun
- Loose or uneven sidewalks, steps and driveways
- Inadequate or lack of stair railings
- Patio or deck furniture in walkways
- Inclement weather creating unsafe conditions (e.g., ice, snow accumulation, mud, etc.)
- Overgrown shrubs and tree branches

### Prevention

- Wear correct eyewear and/or sunglasses when walking. Reading glasses or bifocals can distort potential hazards
- Install handrails for outdoor steps (must be reachable and graspable)
- Make sure stairs are even, in good shape and well-lit or repair or replace any damaged, loose or worn-down areas, and make sure no nails are protruding
- Paint the edges of the steps with a color that contrasts with the rest of the stairway
- Install sturdy railings around deck and patio areas
- Replace steps with ramp access, as needed
- Ensure outdoor furniture is out of the walkway
- Use ice melt and cat litter to provide traction on ice and snow. Be especially aware of black ice.
- Walk on grass if sidewalks or driveways appear slippery or uneven
- Hire or ask someone to help with shoveling, yard work and pruning of shrubs and trees
- Remove protruding tree roots and repair loose concrete areas on driveways

# Right at Home Can Help!

If your loved one needs assistance, we offer caregiving services for almost any family and practically every situation. Our bonded/insured care professionals can help keep your loved ones safe from falling.

In addition, we can:

- Supervise light exercise
- Assess the environment and suggest modifications
- Prepare nutritious meals
- Assist with transportation to medical appointments
- Provide personal companionship
- Help with other essentials to ensure the well-being of your senior or disabled adult

## The RightCare Difference<sup>®</sup>

We exceed your expectations by providing the right care every time with the reliability and quality of an international system. We are the Right People doing the Right Things the Right Way for the Right Reason.



### RIGHT PEOPLE

The personal care of a friend with dedicated local owners and trained, committed and compassionate caregivers.



### RIGHT SERVICES

The care they need when they need it with a wide range of services and flexible scheduling.



### RIGHT APPROACH

A personalized Care Plan managed by professionals with caregiver matching based on a thorough assessment.



### RIGHT MISSION

A resolute passion to improve the quality of life for those we serve means peace of mind for you.