

Tips for Modifying the Home

More than **one in four people age 65 years or older** fall each year.* The risk of falling increases with age, however, many falls can be prevented.

Here are some suggestions for how to modify your home to better prevent accidents such as falls.



Typical Problems:

Access to home
Slipping in the tub or shower
Trouble getting in and out of shower
Trouble turning handles or doorknobs
Trouble climbing stairs
Inadequate heating or ventilation

Possible Solutions:

Install ramps, lower or remove thresholds
Place non-skid strips or decals in the tub or shower
Install grab bars, shower seats or transfer benches
Replace doorknobs or handles with levers
Install handrails for support
Install insulation, air conditioning or storm windows

Getting the Work Done:

Make a list of the changes needed.
Determine who could make the modifications ? you, family or friends, a contractor or a handyman.
Determine if you qualify for housing modification assistance. Check with your local area agency on aging and local lenders or banks to see what funding options are available.
Ask for recommendations from friends and family who have had similar work done.
Proceed with hiring a contractor or handyman or completing the work yourself.

If Hiring a Contractor:

Check out the recommendations by investigating contractors. The Better Business Bureau or Consumer Protection Office are good sources of information.
Make sure all contractors you consider are bonded and licensed. Ask for written proof.
Ask for banking or supplier references to make sure the contractor is financially stable.
Get three estimates in writing. Make sure the estimate includes a detailed description of the work to be completed.
Review the estimates carefully and ask for explanations for anything that is unclear. Have someone else look over the estimates with you. The lowest bid may not be the best bid.
Choose the contractor and ask for a detailed contract in writing. There should be no blanks in the document. Make a copy of anything you sign.
Feel comfortable with the contractor. There is a federal law that allows you to cancel any home repair contract by giving written notice (within a certain number of days).
Do not sign the final check or completion agreement until the work completed has been inspected by local authorities (if necessary) and meets your expectations.

*<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/falls-and-falls-prevention/falls-and-fractures-older-adults-causes-and-prevention#:~:text=More%20than%20one%20in%20four,related%20problems%20—%20rises%20with%20age.>