

# How To Help Friends and Neighbors with a Home Safety Check

## Individual Action: Get Started Now

“Home Safety Tips & Tools” was developed to help individuals and community groups make the homes of older family members, friends, and neighbors safer and more comfortable. AARP’s Create The Good<sup>SM</sup> makes it easy by providing a checklist of no-cost and low-cost fixes, some as simple as removing scatter or throw rugs or plugging in nightlights.

### Let’s Get Started!

1. Choose three people you would like to assist:  
(Of course, you can help as many as you like, but three is a great starting point.)
  - A. \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Schedule a quick safety walk-through of each home and review the No-Cost/Low-Cost Home Safety Checklist with the homeowner. Do as many of the no-cost changes as the homeowner is comfortable making. Offer to review the rest of the list so that they can think about whether or not other improvements are necessary.
3. Leave a copy of the checklist with the homeowner so that she has time to reflect and consider more ideas for making her home safer and more comfortable.
4. Remember, you can always print more copies of the checklist at [AARP.org/homesafety](https://www.aarp.org/homesafety).  
(You may want to print copies to distribute to other friends and neighbors, too.)
5. Visit [AARP.org/CreateTheGood](https://www.aarp.org/CreateTheGood) to let us know how this project worked for you and to offer suggestions for future ideas.

**AARP Create The Good<sup>SM</sup> encourages everyone to make a difference in the lives of others. Share your experiences with “Home Safety Tips & Tools,” and find other ways to help in your community at [CreateTheGood.org](https://www.aarp.org/CreateTheGood.org).**



# No-Cost/Low-Cost Home Safety Checklist

Whether you own or rent your home, there are many no-cost or low-cost improvements you can make to greatly increase its comfort and safety. Discover how simple updates can make it easier for you to stay comfortable, independent, and injury-free. Begin with this checklist of things you can do quickly and easily for little to no cost.

## No-Cost Home Improvements

- Open blinds and curtains and raise shades during daylight hours to increase natural light inside the home.
- Place exposed electrical, telephone, and computer cords along a wall where people won't trip over them.
- Remove all cords from under furniture or carpeting to lessen the risk of fire.
- Remove clutter from stairways and passageways to help prevent trips and falls.
- Set the hot-water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit to reduce energy costs and prevent scalding.
- Remove all scatter and throw rugs that can cause falls.
- Place the items you frequently use in an easily accessible place.
- Check the carpeting on your stairs to be sure it is firmly attached.
- Arrange furniture to allow for easy passage.
- Create an emergency exit plan in case of a fire.
- Remove debris from outdoor walkways.
- Trim shrubbery to provide a clear view from doors and windows.

### Low-Cost Home Improvements (With Products Costing Under \$35)

The products mentioned below can be purchased at your local hardware or home-improvement store.

- Increase light by using the highest-watt light bulbs or compact-fluorescent bulbs appropriate for your light fixtures or lamps.
- Put nightlights in the bathroom and in hallways leading from the bedroom to the bathroom.
- Use a rubber-suction bath mat or antislip floor strips or decals in the tub or shower.
- Place self-stick carpet mesh or double-sided carpet tape under large area rugs to prevent them from sliding.
- Replace knobs on cabinets and drawers with easy-to-grip D-shaped handles.
- Replace traditional light switches with easy-to-use, rocker-style light switches.
- Place or mount an A-B-C rated, all-purpose fire extinguisher in an easily accessible location near the stove and oven so that you're prepared for any type of kitchen fire.
- Install smoke and carbon-monoxide detectors on all levels of the house, especially where the bedrooms are.

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### Home Improvements (With Products Costing Under \$75)

Most of the products mentioned here can be purchased at your local hardware or home-improvement store.

- Install a handrail on both sides of any staircase so you can stay steady on your feet.\*
- Install easy-to-grip lever door handles on all doors instead of doorknobs.
- Install a handheld adjustable showerhead for easier bathing.
- Install user-friendly lever handle faucets in your sinks and in tubs or showers. Some faucets even include built-in antiscald protection.
- Place a sturdy bathtub or shower seat in the tub and/or shower for comfort and safety.
- Mount grab bars next to the toilet and bathtub and in the shower for help getting up or down.\*
- Install offset hinges on all doors to add two inches of width for wheelchair access, if needed.\*
- Install a security peephole on exterior doors at a height that's right for you, so you can identify the person wanting to enter.\*
- Install photosensitive porch or entryway lighting that will come on at dusk and turn off at dawn. A light-switch timer can also be installed on interior switches for exterior porch or post lights.\*
- Install outdoor floodlights that switch on by motion sensors, to light your way and to deter burglars.\*

\*These items may best be installed by a professional.

#### Learn More

“The Home Fit Guide” is available online and includes information and tips to keep your home in top form for comfort and safety. Visit [aarp.org/housing](http://aarp.org/housing) for this publication and more.

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