



## COMMON CAUSES OF TRIPS AND FALLS

### Accidents in the home are often caused by:

- Poorly organised and cluttered walkways
- Inadequate or unsuitable lighting
- Moving or handling a load incorrectly
- Rushing around
- Tiredness
- Physical ability, lack of mobility or lack of balance
- Poor eyesight, inappropriate glasses
- Medication that can lead to dizziness – older people on four or more different types of medication have an increased risk of falling

## LOOK OUT FOR TRIP HAZARDS

Trip and slip hazards can be a problem in all homes, especially in houses with exposed wooden floors.

### Slippery floors

You should look out for:

- Spills and splashes of liquids and solids
- Wet floors
- Changing from a wet to a dry surface
- Dusty floors

### Cluttered floors

Removing clutter or obstructions on floors and stairs, like loose mats or trailing cables, can help reduce the risk of a fall.

### Uneven floors

Be aware of:

- Changes in surface level or sloping surfaces
- Holes and cracks
- Unsuitable floor surfaces or coverings – for example loose or worn flooring

Bad weather, which can make surfaces slippery, and unsuitable footwear can also increase the risk of a fall.

## FIVE STEPS TO AVOIDING HAZARDS

There are five recommended risk assessment steps for keeping slips and trips to a minimum:

- Look around for anything that may cause an accident
- Decide who is most at risk
- Take preventative measures
- Keep a record of what you have changed
- Continually check your living space – keep a note of all potential hazards

## KEEP ACTIVE TO REDUCE THE RISK OF TRIPS AND FALLS

You can help your general well-being and help to reduce the risk of trips and falls by keeping active and healthy.

A good way to make your muscles stronger and to improve your balance is to take regular exercise. Exercise is important for older people, who are more vulnerable to trip hazards in the home.

You don't have to go to the gym to stay active. Simple tasks like gardening, regular house work and walking can boost energy levels and improve coordination and balance.

## OLDER PEOPLE - GETTING HELP AND ADVICE

Make sure you carry out a risk assessment of all the rooms in your home. For example, do you have hand rails for your bath or is the kitchen free of clutter and well lit? Contact your local council for information on how to arrange a free Home Safety Check.

### [Falls Directory](#)

The Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT) has produced the Falls Directory for anyone who wants to know more about falls; this includes older people themselves, a concerned relative or friend, a health professional or other individuals from a statutory, voluntary or community based organisation.

The Falls Directory will help you to:

- Understand why falls occur
- Reduce the risks of falling
- Improve your bone health
- Understand how health conditions can link to falls
- Make your home environment safer
- Understand how health professionals can help you
- Understand what to do if you fall



## CHILDREN

Children are prone to trips and falls and you should always do a safety inspection of potential play areas, both at home and when you are out. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) provides detailed information about how you can assist in reducing childhood accidents in your home.