



# FALL PREVENTION FOR OLDER ADULTS



Prestige Senior Living, L.L.C.

Independent Living and  
Assisted Living

Celebrate Life at  
Every Age

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# 1. How are older adults impacted by serious falls?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified falling as the number one health risk to seniors.

Falling is a leading cause hip of fractures, traumatic brain injuries and deaths among older adults. Falling is one of the biggest health and safety risks facing older adults, and one of the leading reasons seniors and their loved ones inquire about assisted living.

While the reality of falls in older adults can be scary, there are many proactive steps you can take to help reduce your risk of falling. This resource guide will offer information about the leading causes of falls, ways to mitigate the risk, the mental health impacts, and much more.

## COMMON OUTCOMES OF FALLS

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**36,000,000** seniors fall every year in the U.S.

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**3,000,000** seniors are treated in emergency rooms due to falls

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**300,000** seniors suffer hip fractures annually, 95% the result of falls

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**32,000** older adults die every year as a result from falls

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## 2. What are some of the leading causes of falls?

A large number of falls occur due to the physiological changes that come with aging, including poorer eyesight, balance problems, slower reaction times, and weaker muscles. However most falls can be prevented with healthy habits and practical safety measures.

### LOSS OF MUSCLE MASS

The ongoing loss of muscle mass can then increase the risk of falling, which often leads to less physical activity in seniors, causing the cycle to continue. Once a senior falls once, it doubles their chances of falling again.

### TRIPPING HAZARDS

Many other falls occur due to tripping hazards in the home, and later on in the guide we'll offer advice on safety-proofing the home to help reduce the risk of falling.



**STARTING AT AGE 30  
WE LOSE 3-5% OF  
OUR MUSCLE MASS  
EACH DECADE.**



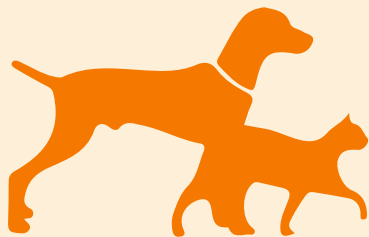
### 3.

## What steps can I take to fall-proof my home?

If you or a loved one are reaching the age range of increased fall risk, it is important to understand the factors that contribute and take active steps to reduce them. Examine your home for possible tripping hazards and implement the following safety measures to reduce fall risk:

### Pets

The benefits of pet ownership includes socialization and exercise, but pets can increase fall risk. Pet-related injuries can result from tripping over pets, pet toys or spills. Consider obedience training to control behaviors that may increase falls such as leash pulling and jumping.



### Lighting

Lights that are too bright or too dim can reduce visibility and increase fall risk. Install nightlights in the bedroom, bathroom and hallways to improve visibility at night.

### Furniture

Arrange furniture so that walkways are clear and open. Avoid furniture that is too low or soft.

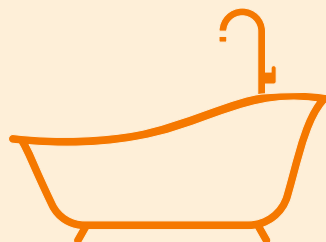


### Rugs

Use grip pads to secure throw rugs or remove them altogether. All door mats and bathroom mats should have non-slip backing.

### Bathroom

Make sure all bathroom fixtures are secure and properly fitted. Installing grab bars in the bathroom and grip pads in the shower can help reduce your fall risk due to slippery floors.



### Clutter

Keep areas that you walk tidy. Don't leave plants, books, boxes or shoes on the floor or stairs. Keep electrical cords and cables secure or behind furniture.

## 4.

# How do exercise and fitness help prevent falls?

Fitness programs geared toward older adults can help build and maintain muscle mass, helping to counteract the deterioration that comes with age and thus reduce the chance of falling, along with improving balance and gait.

It's important to meet with your physician to gain an understanding of your risk factors and any possible limitations, and then build a program from there. It can also be a good idea to hire a personal trainer with experience working with older adults, even if it's just for a session or two to create a program appropriate for your abilities and ensure you're doing so safely.

## 5.

# How do medications impact the risk of falling?



OVER A THIRD  
OF PEOPLE 65  
AND OVER ARE  
ON AT LEAST  
FIVE DIFFERENT  
MEDICATIONS.

Many older adults take at least one medication, and quite often they have several. Many prescriptions on their own can lead to side effects like dizziness, muscle weakness, or other symptoms which can increase the risk of falling.

The chances of those side effects increase with the number of medications someone is required to take each day. It's called polypharmacy, which is the simultaneous use of multiple prescriptions. If you or a loved one has multiple prescriptions, it's important to speak with a doctor about how those medications interact, particularly if you or your loved one is experiencing the side effects that can lead to a fall.

## 6. How does falling impact mental health?

**Fear, isolation, depression, and an unwillingness to engage in activities can all be realities for a senior who is afraid of falling.**

While many older adults suffer physical injuries as a result of falls, there are mental health ramifications as well. For seniors who live alone, the prospect of falling leads to fear that they may not be able to get themselves back up, as it may be impossible for some to hoist themselves back onto their feet after a fall, particularly if they've also suffered an injury.

It's a traumatic experience no one would want to live through a second time, which leads to seniors withdrawing from activities and social life that can be fulfilling out of a concern for falling again. In fact, many seniors who have fallen go on to exhibit symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

If you or a loved one is having mental health concerns in the aftermath of a fall, or due to the fear of a fall, consult your physician or a mental health professional as quickly as possible. They should have resources available to provide guidance and help find a path forward. Or, start with a conversation with a family member or trusted friend. You don't have to suffer in silence.

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If you or a loved one need immediate assistance, there is a free, confidential mental health hotline available at 1-800-662-HELP (4357).

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## 7. Are people with memory loss at a higher risk of falling?

Yes. New data shows that nearly half of older adults living with dementia suffered a fall in the preceding year. Many people living with cognitive decline have visual impairment, particularly difficulty distinguishing between colors. So for instance, if the color or pattern of the stairs matches that of the floor, they may not be able to tell where the floors stop and the stairs begin, thus leading to a much higher chance of a fall. Other factors can include impaired hearing, where they may not hear a pet or another person coming around a corner, or other auditory clues that a fall risk might be in their vicinity.

Dementia can also affect gait and balance, leading them to shuffle their feet, feel unsteady as they walk and thus leave them prone to tripping over something. Wandering and diminished judgment can also present severe risks for those with Alzheimer's or dementia.

If you're a caregiver for a loved one with memory loss, we recommend consulting their physician to determine any risk factors they may possess that can lead to a fall. In addition, the teams here at Prestige Senior Living can offer solutions and guidance as you travel this path.

**NEARLY HALF  
OF OLDER ADULTS  
WITH DEMENTIA  
SUFFERED A  
FALL IN THE  
PRECEDING YEAR.**



## 8. How can Prestige help?



RESIDENTS RECEIVE  
A FULL FITNESS  
ASSESSMENT TO  
DETERMINE  
RISK FACTORS  
AND PROVIDE  
FALL PREVENTION  
TACTICS.

Upon moving to Prestige, a new resident receives a full fitness assessment, and then is guided to appropriate exercise classes. Our care team will help you understand common fall risk factors and work with you to take proactive steps to reduce the likelihood of a fall.

### FITNESS

Exercise and fitness are vital components to our philosophy of care for our residents. We offer a variety of fitness programs, which could be seated, standing, group classes or personal training.

### EDUCATION

We offer Fall Reduction Classes for our residents, which is in concert with our fitness programming. The classes reduce falls by building strength and flexibility, improving balance and increasing mobility, as well as identifying common fall risks.

### SAFETY

Our apartments are designed to help reduce the risk of falling and maintain independence. All apartments are equipped with weight-bearing grab bars in the bathrooms, curb-less showers, emergency call buttons and accessible shelving in the closets.

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We're here to help. Contact a Prestige community near you to learn more.

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FOR MORE ABOUT PRESTIGE SENIOR LIVING VISIT  
**PRESTIGECARE.COM**

