

Day 8: Home and Environment Safety

Home and Environment Safety

- We may not realize it, but there are many risk factors for falls in our homes
- Approximately 50% of all falls that required hospitalization occurred in the home
- We must first carefully evaluate our homes in order to reduce any potential risk factors for falls
- Stairs are the number one location of injury due to unintentional falls
- 25% of known deaths from accidents occur on the stairs
- It is important to carefully evaluate the floor surface to identify if you have a clear walking path
 - Do you have any objects on the floor that could be tripped over?
 - Do you have a dog or a cat that could be a tripping hazard?
 - Do you have a handrail on both sides of your stairs?
 - Are you lifting your toes when you are walking down stairs?
 - Are your floors sticky or slippery? Are your floor surfaces even?
 - Do you have grab bars in the bathroom by the shower and toilet?
 - Do you have enough lighting in your home?
 - Do you have enough space around your furniture to safely walk around?
 - Is your bed too high?
- External environment
 - Is your sidewalk cleared of snow and ice?
 - Are there any slippery surfaces around your home?
- Avoid carrying heavy or awkward objects, especially up and down stairs
- Pay attention while walking. Avoid doing too many things at once.

What can we do to improve the safety in our homes?

- Start today by identifying the unsafe areas around your home
- Have a discussion with an occupational therapist regarding your home and any risk factors that may be fixable
- Ensure that the outside of your residence is safe
- Contact the proper authority if you find something unsafe outdoors
- Remove or avoid hazards
- Install handrails and grab bars.
- Move items to make them easier to reach
- Improve lighting



Day 8: Fire Safety

Fire Safety

- If there is a fire in your home, there is an extreme sense of urgency. This urgency can lead to a fall, since you will likely be rushing or running around, and you may become distracted and you may not pay close attention to other items
- Here are some helpful tips to reduce fires in your home, and to reduce the chance of a fall if your home does catch on fire
 - If you smoke, please smoke outside
 - If you have a little space heater, give it space
 - Do not leave your stove top unattended
 - Check your smoke alarms regularly, or have your building manager check the smoke alarms
 - Ensure that you have clear paths to your bathroom and the front door/main exit
 - Plan and practice your escape route in the event that a fire does occur
 - Plan your escape around your abilities, and ensure that you have a person to contact (who is close by) if an emergency takes place
 - Exercise regularly to ensure that you're physically able to complete your planned escape route
 - Know your local emergency number

Here are some helpful tips to consider if your home is on fire:

- Stop, drop and roll if you are on fire
- Look out for yourself
- Walk carefully and with purpose (avoid running aimlessly, know your exit plan and follow your plan)
- Take your time. Rushing and running can cause more problems and can lead to a hard fall

