



## **Tips for Home Safety and Falls Prevention**

### **General guidelines:**

- No throw rugs; carpets tacked
- No highly polished floors
- Threshold moldings clearly visible and in good condition
- Maintain all walking paths free of obstacles (i.e. cords, etc)
- Objects used for transferring stable & of proper height (i.e. grab bars)
- Wear good, supportive shoes (i.e. sneakers)
- Arrange furniture to avoid an obstacle course of potential falls
- Use a “reacher” device to pick up objects from floor or sit down in a chair to pick up objects from floor.
- Avoid use of alcohol.
- Be aware of any side effects from medications (dizziness, etc)
- Have vision and hearing tested and correct any problems, if possible.
- **Stairs:**
  - Full stairwell illuminated with switches at top & bottom; night light
  - Top and bottom stairs marked for visibility
  - Stair treads in good repair
  - Securely fastened handrails on both sides of stairwell extending full length of stairs and keep stairs clear of objects
- **Bathroom:**
  - Rubber mat in and out of shower
  - Use only securely fastened grab bars for tub/shower and commode. Do not pull on toilet paper holder, soap dishes or towel racks.
  - Adequate lighting on paths to bathroom and in bathroom; night light
  - Water temp set at 110 degrees to prevent burns
  - Clearly marked hot and cold faucets
  - Try dressing while seated
  - Use caution after bathing. A warm bath may make you feel dizzy/tired.
- **Kitchen:**
  - No heavy pots/pans
  - No utensils with faulty handles
  - Stove in good repair with clearly understandable controls
  - Objects stored within reach or use a sturdy step stool, not a chair, for objects out of reach. Store heavier objects at waist height.

- When transferring objects on countertop, slide objects if possible.
- Bedroom:
  - Light switches within reach of bed; nightlight
  - Appropriate bed height. Attach a rail to bed if necessary
  - Any assistive devices (i.e. walkers) should be within reach of bed
  - Rise slowly from lying/sitting position. Sit down if you feel dizzy.
- Ambulation Tips:
  - Remember to use assistive device (canes, walkers, etc) if one has been recommended. Make sure that it is the proper height.
  - Whenever maneuvering around furniture, take small steps.
  - Use a tray or bag to carry objects if using a walker. Do not make walker too heavy.
  - Only reach for objects one arms length around your sides or front
- Transferring Tips:
  - Use small steps to approach surface to sit (bed/chair/commode/toilet)
  - Reach back to chair seat or armrests with both hands. Do not sit unless the surface is located with hands and felt on the back of legs, then lower self gently.
  - When rising, do not pull up by using walker or cane. Push up from chair with hands, come to stand, then put hands on walker or cane.
- Safety precautions for using a wheelchair around the home:
  - Always remember to lock brakes before attempting to move in or out of wheelchair.
  - Move leg rests out of the way when transferring in/out of wheelchair.
  - Use “reacher” device to pick up anything off the floor while in the wheelchair. Leaning over to pick up things in wheelchair could cause it to tip over.
- General Safety Guidelines:
  - Personal emergency response system (i.e. Lifeline)
  - Sound and Sight smoke alarms
  - Easy escape access through doors and/or windows
  - Inform local police/fire departments that a homebound/ wheelchair using person resides in dwelling.
  - Keep a telephone nearby at all times, if possible

**If you wish to have a VNA Physical Therapist make a visit to inspect your home please call us at 908-766-0180.**