Fall Prevention Checklist for Seniors

Stairs and Steps

- [ ] Install good lighting in stairways
- [ ] Replace any burnt out bulbs
- [ ] Make sure a light switch is installed at both the top and bottom of the stairs
- [ ] Consider using light switches that glow so you can see them in the dark
- [ ] Install handrails on both sides of the stairway that are at least as long as the stairs
- [ ] Fix loose handrails
- [ ] Repair any loose, broken, or uneven floor boards
- [ ] Add non-slip safety treads on bare wood stairs
- [ ] Paint a solid stripe at the top edge of each wood stair so you can see the stairs clearly (*light paint on dark wood and vice versa*)
- [ ] Or use reflective tape on the top and bottom of the stairs to clearly mark where your staircase begins and ends
- [ ] If your stairs are carpeted, use solid colored carpet (not patterned, thick, or dark) so you can clearly see the stair edge
- [ ] Fix any carpet that doesn't adhere firmly
- [ ] Remove rugs from the top and bottom of the stairs
- [ ] Clear stairs of any clutter and don't leave objects on them (books, papers, etc.)
- [ ] Keep a flashlight nearby in case your power goes out
- [ ] Watch out for single steps, they can become tripping hazards
- [ ] Make sure all thresholds are even with the floor (including both indoor and outdoor doorways)

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Bedroom

- [ ] Keep a lamp and a flashlight near your bed, in case you need to get up at night
- [ ] Install nightlights from your bedroom to your bathroom
- [ ] Keep a phone or charged cell phone near your bed
- [ ] Add a bed rail to make getting in and out of bed easier
- [ ] Keep your floors clear from any clutter
- [ ] Repair any loose floorboards and ensure any carpet is low pile
- [ ] Hem your pants so they don't touch the floor when you're barefoot, you could trip over them if they are too long

Bathroom

- [ ] Add a nightlight
- [ ] Install grab bars near the toilet and bathtub/shower, add HoldFast Grips for extra non-slip grip aid
- [ ] Add a raised toilet seat to make standing up from the toilet easier
- [ ] Or use a toilet surround to provide a place to grip for support when sitting and standing from the toilet
- [ ] A raised seat with handles combines the two and adds extra support
- [ ] Add a non-slip bath mat or shower mat to reduce slips in the bathroom
- [ ] Use a shower chair or bath bench to sit while you bathe and reduce your chance of falls
- [ ] Use a bath lift if you are no longer able to get in and out of the bath independently
- [ ] Add a grab bar to your tub to make it easier to get in and out
- [ ] Place a secured, slip-resistant rug beside the bathtub/shower for safer entry and exits
- [ ] Clean up any water on the floor promptly

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Kitchen

- [ ] Organize your kitchen so the food, dishes, and cooking equipment you use most frequently are easy to reach
- [ ] If you need to reach objects in upper cabinets, use a step stool with a handle (*don't stand on a chair, countertop, box, etc.*)
- [ ] Keep a reacher grabber nearby for a better solution to reaching objects in high or low cabinets (*without the falling risk of a step stool*)
- [ ] Replace any loose floorboards
- [ ] Remove any rugs (*you could slip or trip on them*)
- [ ] Don't use floor wax, or if you must, only use non-skid floor wax
- [ ] Post any important health information, doctor's phone numbers, etc. on your refrigerator
- [ ] Clean up any spills promptly and don't walk on the floors until cleaning solutions have dried completely

Living Areas

- [ ] Make sure you have a clear pathway between rooms
- [ ] Remove any rugs or secure them with double-sided tape or non-slip backing and check them periodically
- [ ] Install light switches at the entrance of rooms so you don't need to go into a darkened room to turn on the lights (*consider glow-in-the-dark switches*)
- [ ] Keep the room and floor clear of clutter that could be a tripping hazard, including plants, shoes, low coffee tables, books, and blankets
- [ ] Keep electrical, extension, and telephone cords away from your walking path, coil them and tape them to the wall instead (*but don't put any cords under rugs*)
- [ ] Repair any loose floorboards
- [ ] Install low pile carpet over any concrete, marble, or ceramic floors to reduce the severity of injuries if you fall
- [ ] Throw away any wobbly chairs or tables
- [ ] Don't sit on low chairs or couches that are hard to stand up from, if you need support when standing try using a CouchCane

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Outside

- [ ] Make sure all paths are brightly lit
- [ ] Stoops and steps should also be lit to avoid trips and falls
- [ ] Install handrails along any outdoor steps (*front steps, garage steps, back steps, deck steps, etc.*)
- [ ] Repair uneven or broken sidewalks, walkways, and driveways
- [ ] Keep your sidewalk and walkways clear from snow, shovel it or hire someone to do it for you
- [ ] Keep your icy walkways salted to reduce falls
- [ ] Add an ice cane attachment to your cane for extra grip on icy areas
- [ ] Keep your steps, walkways, decks, and porches clear of wet leaves, sticks, rocks, newspapers, and other potential slip hazards
- [ ] Remove roots that stick out from the ground

Other Fall Prevention Suggestions

- [ ] Wear non-slip shoes indoors to reduce your risk of falls, if you prefer socks make sure they are socks with non-slip treads
- [ ] Make sure you have a phone you can reach from your bed, another phone accessible from the floor (*in case you fall and can't stand up*), and consider carrying a cell phone in your pocket
- [ ] Wear a medical alert necklace so you can quickly and easily call 911 for help, if you do fall
- [ ] Ask your doctor about starting an exercise program to improve your strength and balance
- [ ] Have your vision checked annually, impaired vision can lead to falls
- [ ] Ask your doctor to review your medication (*even OTCs*) because some have side effects that can make you dizzy

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