

Sample Home Safety Checklist

(Recommendations for making a referral on p. 3)

Stairs

- Do all stairwells have securely-fixed handrails on both sides?
- Do the handrails extend beyond the length of the steps?
- Does your hand easily wrap completely around the rail?
- Are there lights & light switches at both the top and bottom of the stairs?
- Can you clearly see the outline of each step as you ascend & descend the stairs?
- Do the stairs have even surfaces? (I.e. no metal strips or rubber mats to trip on; in good repair?)
- Are stairs clutter free?

Halls/Entrances

- Are all carpets and runners well-fastened down? Does the carpet lay flat?
- Is furniture positioned to allow full access to doorways with assistive devices?
- Are walkways clear of tripping hazards: cords, toys, low furniture, etc?
- Is there a nightlight lighting the path to the bathroom?
- Do rugs stay put (don't slide or roll) when you push them with your foot?

Living Room

- Does your chair have armrests that are long enough to help you get up or down?
- Can you turn on a light without having to walk into a dark room?
- Are lamps, extension cords, & phone cords out of the flow of foot traffic?
- Has clutter been eliminated?
- Are curtains and furniture at least 12 inches away from portable heaters?
- Do you have easy access to a telephone?

Kitchen

- Do you use non-skid wax, or no wax at all, on polished floors?
- Are rugs non-skid?
- Can you reach the most-often used items without a step-stool?
- Is there adequate lighting?
- Are your stove/oven controls easy to use?
- Are curtains and towels away from burners?

Bedroom

- Is there a nightlight, lamp, or flashlight in reach of your bed?
- Is there a working smoke detector?
- Is there a phone within reach of the bed?
- Is the bed height appropriate (too high or low)?
- Can you easily access needed dresser drawers?

Bathroom

- Does the tub/shower have rubber non-skid mats or strips?
- Do you have grab bars (NOT TOWEL BARS) at the shower, tub, and toilet?
- Do you need a bath seat/bench?
- Is the flooring safe? (loose rugs, carpet or tiles?)
- Do the rugs have a non-skid backing?
- Do you have a hot-water temperature regulator to prevent burns?
- Can you get on and off the toilet easily?
- Do you need a hand-held shower sprayer?
- Do you need a shower curtain to replace sliding shower doors?

Doorways/Entrances/Exterior

- Do all home entrances have outdoor lights?
- Are walkways to the doors clear of debris, plants, cracks, and holes?
- Are door sills (thresholds) low?
- Do outdoor steps have handrails?
- Is a ramp needed?
- Do the outdoor steps have a non-skid surface?
- Are the outdoor stairs in good repair? (i.e. free from cracks, dips, holes)

Other

- Do you have an emergency exit plan (i.e. Fire)?
- Are emergency telephone numbers listed near the phone?
- Do you have lifeline?
- Do you have a system to manage medication?

References:

Community & Home Injury Prevention Project for Seniors, San Francisco Dept. of Public Health
Fall Prevention Project, Pima Council on Aging, Tucson AZ
Home Secure, Jewish Family Services of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA

Recommendations for making a referral for a Home Safety Assessment:

1. Contact a PT or OT who can perform an on-site Home Safety Assessment:

This may be done through home health care (if your patient is already receiving services or will qualify for home health care), or on an outpatient basis (call the PT/OT clinic in the area if you are unsure whether they do home assessments).

2. Provide a prescription for PT or OT to provide that assessment, including:

Patient's name and birthdate

A medical diagnosis

-This may include: gait disorder, balance impairment, gait instability, hemiparesis, history of multiple falls, s/p hip fracture repair, etc.

"PT" and/or "OT" (as appropriate) "Evaluate and treat" (so that necessary follow-up can occur)
"Home Safety Assessment" as appropriate

PHYSICIAN SIGNATURE