

GP Fact Sheet: Home and Community Safety

Evidence

- Home safety in high risk population: ↓ falls up to **38%** (Gillespie et. al. 2012).
- Home safety assessment and adaptation conducted by an occupational therapist are more effective in people at higher risk of falling, such as:
 - those who are living with frailty
 - those with multiple falls or injurious falls
 - those with multiple morbidities
 - those with severe visual impairment
 - those who have been recently hospitalised



Key points

- Environmental adaptations include: raising awareness of potential hazards, removing hazards, adding protective features (such as non-slip stair strips) or assistive devices, moving furnishings and other strategies to create clear pathways, and using safer behaviours when doing tasks or just walking about.
- A crucial role for occupational therapists includes educational and behavioural change support in facilitating patients to raise awareness and make adaptations to the environment.
- Community safety, by an occupational therapist or physiotherapist, can include correct use of mobility aids, training in protective walking strategies, and coping with low vision.

Referral and patient resources

- Occupational Therapy Australia: [Find an occupational therapist](#) (speciality: aged care).
- Patient education leaflet: [Falls Prevention – Home Safety](#) (click [here](#) for other patient flyers on the NSW Clinical Excellence Commission website).
- [Home safety checklist](#) (NSW Active and Healthy website www.activeandhealthy.nsw.gov.au).

References

- Clemson, L., Mackenzie, L., Ballinger, C., Close, J. C., & Cumming, R. G. (2008). [Environmental interventions to prevent falls in community-dwelling older people: a meta-analysis of randomized trials](#). *Journal of Aging and Health*, 20(8), 954-971.
- Nikolaus, T., & Bach, M. (2003). [Preventing falls in community-dwelling frail older people using a home intervention team \(HIT\): results from the randomized Falls-HIT trial](#). *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 51(3), 300-305.
- Pynoos, J., Steinman, B. A., & Nguyen, A. Q. D. (2010). [Environmental assessment and modification as fall-prevention strategies for older adults](#). *Clinics in Geriatric Medicine*, 26(4), 633-644.