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Senior Home Safety Checklist √

The following list is provided to alert you to potential hazards which may have a greater effect on elderly people. While not fully comprehensive, it covers a range of modifications you may wish to consider.

General

- ☐ Where possible remove furniture with sharp corners or edges/consider stick on corner guards
- ☐ Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors
- ☐ When choosing paint, flooring or furniture colours choose strong colour contrasts*

*Minimise or eliminate pattern if dementia is indicated

- [ ] Avoid extension cords and fix any long cables to skirting boards (baseboards) with clips
- [ ] Ensure adequate lighting throughout/ often light levels need to increase with age
- [ ] Due to the potential for macular degeneration ensure all light sources are diffused
- [ ] Create an Emergency Procedures document and keep in a visible place. This should include doctor's details, immediate calls in case of emergency, and all current medicines/dosage
- [ ] Ensure level access throughout or highlight potential trip hazards with contrast tape or trim
- [ ] Add a handrail wherever there is a change of level-even if it's a single step, or if more culturally appropriate, put a high-back chair adjacent to a single step to assist
- [ ] Remove loose rugs or inset into the flooring if possible
- [ ] Wide doorways and lowered light switch plates will be of benefit should a wheelchair be required in future
- [ ] If radiators are used, consider high level thermostatic valves or cover to prevent injury/scalding

Living Room

- [ ] Check fireplace hearth does not create a trip hazard/ highlight edges as required
- [ ] Seating will be easier to get in and out of if the seat height is raised. Consider reupholstery of seating cushions to achieve this or adding an additional layer
- [ ] Standing and sitting is safer and easier with arms on furniture. If possible, look for pieces where the arm sits back slightly from the seat edge
- [ ] A soft caddy hung on a chair arm, or a box on a table adjacent to seating can be used to keep essentials such as remote controls and reading glasses in reach
- [ ] A tall adjustable standing lamp can make an excellent reading light but ensure it is positioned where it cannot be used as a potential support
- [ ] Where curtains are full-length secure them back or otherwise make sure they cannot create a trip hazard

Kitchen

- ☐ Crockery and glassware should be kept easily accessible/consider fitting drop down wire shelving inside high kitchen cupboards
- ☐ Keep inedible substances in an entirely different room or locked as they can sometimes be easily confused
- ☐ Remove macerators or garbage disposal units
- ☐ Mid-height wall ovens and microwaves are easier and safer to access than low or high appliances
- ☐ Provide seating for longer task such as preparing vegetables/ in general standard chairs with slightly higher seats are preferable to stools
- ☐ Ensure adequate lighting to food preparation areas
- ☐ Consider a thermostatic ‘stop’ on the water temperature at a maximum of 120°F or 49°C
- ☐ As manual dexterity can be challenged with age access to storage will be easier with a handle, rather than a traditional knob

Bedroom

- ☐ Install a nightlight on an automatic timer and make sure to update the timing as the year progresses/you may need more than one to get a person from their bed to a bathroom/toilet
- ☐ Remove all loose rugs
- ☐ Avoid floor length bed dressings as these can become a trip hazard at night
- ☐ If a bed is dressed with decorative cushions and throws provide a chair or surface well away from the bed where they can be stored at night
- ☐ Provide a phone with pre-programmed contact numbers
- ☐ Provide large bedside table surface areas to minimise trips for medications, etc.

Bathroom

- ☐ Where possible use non-reflective or matt surfaces to reduce glare
- ☐ As manual dexterity can be challenged with age use a single lever mixer tap (faucet) with a temperature ‘stop’ set to a maximum of 120°F or 49°C
- ☐ Access to storage will be easier with a handle rather than a traditional knob
- ☐ Install a fixed or dropdown seat in the shower (useful for any age)/shower controls and a handheld showerhead should be in easy reach
- ☐ See professional assistance in the correct setting out and wall requirements for support rails/many look like smart towel rails but take full body weight
- ☐ Simplify shower curtains to one layer only and shorten as needed to prevent entanglement
- ☐ Choose non-slip vinyl flooring over tile/ smart options are available and you are seeking a slip rating of between R11-R12 or similar based on the ratings of your country/ discuss with your supplier