

Lifeline

# How to create a safer home



A room-by-room guide to help eliminate the most common causes of falls

# Lifeline Falls Prevention Guidebook

We can't prevent every fall, but we can help reduce the likelihood of trips and slips that lead to them.

This guide provides before-and-after images to help you identify and remove fall hazards in the home, and includes advice on what to do if you happen to fall.

Falling is a serious health risk on its own and can be related to other major health issues.

The time to prepare is now, before a fall happens. In addition to making every effort to remove the fall risks in your environment, make a plan for after you fall.

- Think about how you would get up from a prone position to sitting or standing.
- If you can't get to your feet, call for someone you live with, use a medical alert system or dial 9-1-1 if your cell phone is within reach.
- If you're with someone who has fallen and don't think you can help them up in a way that's safe for both of you, call 9-1-1.



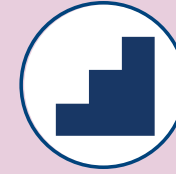
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# Bathroom: needs improvement



**1** Tight spaces and wet floors make the bathroom one of the most likely places for falls.

**2** Lack of a nightlight makes it hard to see at night or in low light.

**3** Unsecured bath mats can slide out from underfoot and wet floors can lead to slips.

**4** Slippery surfaces can cause you to lose your balance or fall while getting in or out of the shower or tub.



# Much better

- 1 Grab bars
- 2 Helpful nighttime lighting
- 3 No slip or trip hazards
- 4 Assistive equipment



1 Grab bars help increase safety.

2 Installing an automatic motion- and light-sensitive nightlight improves visibility and increases security.

3 Removing or securing a bath mat, or replacing it with a non-slip option, makes it safer to get in and out of the tub or shower.

4 Using a sturdy shower seat helps reduce the risk of losing your balance and installing a hand-held unit eliminates the need to reach overhead.



# Bedroom: needs improvement



**1** The chair is too close to the door and could make exiting the room difficult.

**2** Shoes, small rugs and other items on the floor are easy to trip on in the dark or when first waking up in the morning.

**3** Clutter on your nightstand can easily be knocked off, creating a potential tripping hazard.

**4** Without space for a phone, you may trip or lose your balance in the rush to answer a call.



# Much better

- 1 Spacious walkway
- 2 No trip hazards
- 3 No clutter
- 4 A phone or Lifeline device



**1** Relocating the chair clears the path to the door.

**2** Moving shoes and slippers out of the walking areas and removing small rugs or securing them to the floor with double-stick tape helps reduce falls risk.

**3** Decluttering the nightstand creates room for necessities that must be accessible from bed, and adding a lamp improves nighttime visibility.

**4** Placing a phone or medical alert service device on the nightstand offers easy access to help 24/7.



# Bedroom: needs improvement



**1** Low visibility at night increases the likelihood of slips, trips and falls.

**2** The walker isn't easily accessible from the bed.

**3** Electrical cords and charging cables are easy to trip over.

**4** Bed linens and other items on the floor may create a tripping hazard or cause a fall.



# Much better

- 1 **Nighttime lighting**
- 2 **Accessible assistive equipment**
- 3 **Cords safely moved**
- 4 **Nothing on floor**



**1** Installing an automatic motion- and light-sensitive nightlight makes it easy to find your way.

**2** Moving the walker makes it accessible from the bed and clears the path to the door.

**3** Making sure cords are safely run behind furniture removes trip hazards.

**4** Keeping items off the floor helps reduce the risk of trips and falls.





# Living room: needs improvement



**1** Items on the floor increase the likelihood of tripping.

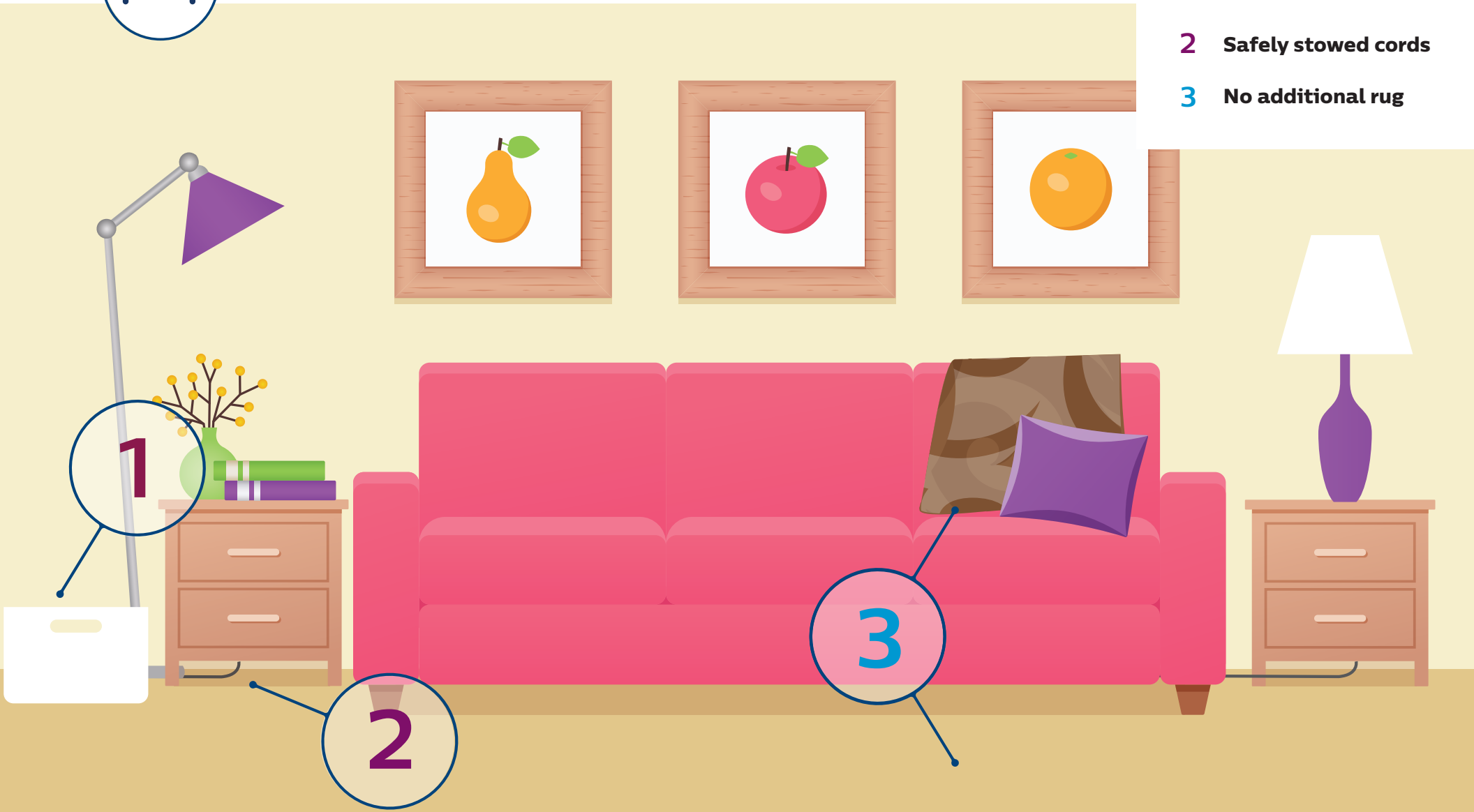
**2** Cables, cords and wiring in open spaces are easy to trip over.

**3** A loose throw rug or blanket on the floor is easy to trip over.



# Much better

- 1 Uncluttered floor
- 2 Safely stowed cords
- 3 No additional rug



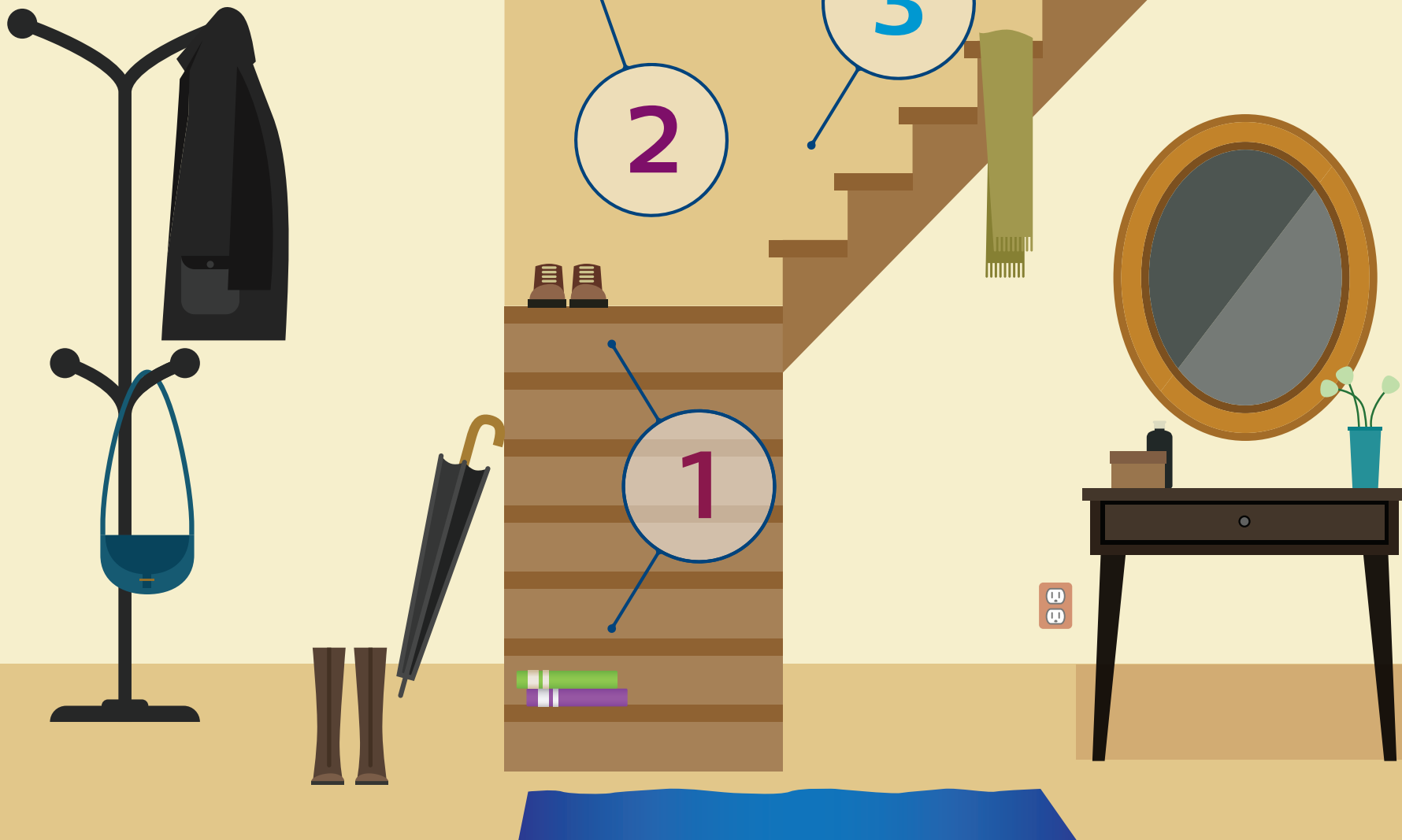
1 Moving objects off the floor clears your path.

2 Running cords behind or under furniture makes walking safer.

3 Removing or securing rugs makes moving around the room safer.



# Stairs: needs improvement



**1** Loose items on stairs and landings are easy to trip over or slip on.

**2** Shadows and dim conditions increase the likelihood of missing steps or slipping.

**3** Without a handrail, even a small misstep can turn into a major fall.



## Much better

- 1 Secure handrail
- 2 Clear stairway
- 3 Bright lighting



**1** Keeping items off the stairs allows you to focus on the steps and reduces loss of balance from trying to avoid items.

**2** Adding ceiling lights with switches at the top and bottom of the stairwell, or automatic light- and motion-sensors stairway lighting ensures you can see where you're stepping.

**3** Installing a secured handrail at the proper height provides support and improves balance.

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