A Practical Home Safety Checklist for Older Adults Living Independently

Living independently as you age brings a sense of freedom and control. Yet it also comes with real concerns about safety, especially if a fall or sudden medical issue leaves you unable to call for help. A well-thought-out safety plan can reduce those risks without turning your home into a hospital ward. The checklist below covers the key areas to review, so you can stay in your own home with more confidence.

1. Check your ability to call for help from anywhere in the home

The biggest worry for many older people living alone is what happens if they fall and cannot reach a phone. A **medical alarm for seniors** solves this by giving you a wearable button you can press from any room. Some systems also detect a fall automatically, so help is summoned even if you are unconscious. Look for a device that works both at home and when you are out in the garden or running errands. A medical alarm that uses mobile networks, like those offered by Familyr, can alert family members or emergency services wherever you go, as long as there is compatible coverage.

2. Review your flooring and walkways

Trips and slips are the most common cause of falls at home. Go through every room and hallway and look for loose rugs, trailing cords, or uneven floorboards. Secure rugs with non-slip tape or remove them entirely. Tuck cables behind furniture or use cable covers. If you have thresholds between rooms, consider a small ramp to smooth the transition. Good lighting is essential, especially on stairs and in hallways at night. A nightlight in the bathroom and along the path to it can make a big difference.



3. Assess the bathroom for slip hazards

Bathrooms are one of the highest-risk areas for falls. Wet surfaces, hard tiles, and the need to get up from a low toilet or bath all increase danger. Install grab bars next to the toilet and inside or beside the shower. A non-slip mat inside the shower or bath is a simple, effective addition. A shower chair or a handheld shower head can make washing safer and less tiring. If you have a step into the shower, consider a small threshold ramp or a walk-in shower if a renovation is possible.

View the location on Google Maps

4. Evaluate your kitchen for safe daily use

Kitchen work involves heat, sharp objects, and often a lot of standing. Make sure frequently used items are stored at waist level, so you do not have to reach up high or bend low. A sturdy step stool with a handrail is safer than climbing on a chair. Check that the stove has an automatic shut-off or a timer; if not, a simple kitchen timer can remind you to turn it off. Keep a fire extinguisher nearby but not too close to the stove, and ensure you know how to use it. If you have a gas stove, make sure the pilot light or igniter works reliably, and never leave a burner on unattended.

5. Test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms

Working smoke alarms are your first line of defence against fire. Install them on every level of your home, especially outside sleeping areas. Test them monthly and change the batteries twice a year, or use sealed 10-year alarms. Carbon monoxide detectors are equally important if you have a gas heater, gas stove, or a fireplace. Place one near sleeping areas and check it regularly. If you smell gas at any time, do not turn on any lights or switches, do not light a match, leave the building immediately, and call your gas supplier from outside.

6. Plan for a medical emergency when you are alone

Even with a tidy, well-lit home, a sudden medical event can happen. A **medical alarm for seniors** becomes your link to help. Choose a system that offers two-way voice calling, so the monitoring team or a family member can speak to you and assess the situation. Some devices also include GPS location sharing, which is useful if you become disoriented while out walking or shopping. A fall-detection feature adds an extra layer of safety, because it works even if you cannot press the button. The Familyr system, for example, sends an SOS alert to up to ten nominated contacts, calling them in a set order until someone answers. It can also be programmed to dial 111 directly if needed.

7. Organise a daily check-in routine

Independence does not mean isolation. A simple daily phone call or text to a family member, friend, or neighbour gives everyone peace of mind. If you miss the check-in, they know to follow up. Some medical alarm services include a similar feature, but a personal arrangement works just as well. You can also leave a spare key with a trusted neighbour and let them know your usual schedule. If you feel uneasy about a daily call, a simple shared calendar or a note left on the door can serve the same purpose.



8. Review your medication management

Forgetting a dose or taking the wrong medication can lead to serious health problems. A weekly pill organiser with compartments for each day and time is a low-cost solution. Set a phone alarm or use a dedicated medication reminder app. If you have multiple prescriptions, ask your pharmacist about blister packs that sort each dose by date and time. Keep a list of your medications and their doses in a visible place, and give a copy to your emergency contact. When you travel or go out, carry a small card with that information in your wallet.

9. Check your lighting and visibility

Poor lighting is a major contributor to falls. Walk through your home at night with the lights off and see where shadows or dark spots appear. Install motion-sensor lights in hallways, bathrooms, and near the front door. Use the highest wattage recommended for each fixture, or switch to LED bulbs that give a bright, clear light. Keep a torch by your bed and in the kitchen. If you have stairs, make sure the top and bottom steps are clearly visible, and consider painting the edge of each step with a contrasting colour.

Familyr is also on YouTube.

10. Secure your home against intruders

Feeling safe also means protecting your home from unwanted visitors. Check that all external doors have deadbolts or strong locks, and that windows have secure latches. A peephole or a video doorbell lets you see who is at the door without opening it. If you are expecting a service person, ask for identification before letting them in. Keep a phone near your bed with emergency numbers pre-programmed. A monitored security system is an option, but many people find that a simple chain lock and a loud alarm on the door are enough.



Taking the time to work through this checklist can prevent many common accidents and reduce the anxiety that sometimes comes with living alone. Each small change adds up to a safer, more comfortable home. For those who want extra reassurance, a medical alarm for seniors provides a direct line to help when it is needed most. Familyr is a New Zealand

company that supplies personal medical alarms with fall detection, GPS location sharing, and two-way voice calling, and it can be reached at 14 Grand View Road, Remuera, Auckland 1050, New Zealand, phone +64 9 872 0345.