



23-Point Bathroom Fall-Prevention Checklist for Aging Parents

A printable home-safety walkthrough — what to check, what to fix, what to call us about.

Use this checklist with your parent's bathroom in front of you. Check off what's already in place. Circle what's missing. Call us about anything marked "call a pro" — the in-home assessment is free.

By A-Team Home Care · ateampa.com

(215) 490-9994

Free in-home RN safety assessment in Philadelphia, Bucks, Montgomery, Delaware & Chester counties.

Why this checklist exists

Falls are the leading cause of injury and injury death among adults aged 65 and older. The CDC reports that one in four older adults falls each year, and the bathroom is where the worst falls occur — wet surfaces, hard porcelain fixtures, narrow doors that block emergency response. Most bathroom falls are preventable with twenty-three modest changes that cost less than a single ER copay. This list pulls from the CDC's STEADI fall-prevention initiative, the National Institute on Aging's room-by-room guide, the AARP HomeFit Guide, and the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

ZONE 1 Floor & Traction

1. Replace the bath mat with a non-slip mat with full-surface suction cups

Cheap mats slide under wet feet. A high-quality rubber mat with cups across the entire base does not.

Under \$50 · DIY

2. Install non-slip strips or a textured mat inside the tub or shower base

Wet porcelain or fiberglass has roughly the friction of an ice rink for older skin. Adhesive strips solve the problem.

Under \$20 · DIY

3. Remove or replace any throw rug with a low-pile, rubber-backed mat

Throw rugs are the single most-cited bathroom trip hazard in NIA fall-prevention literature.

Free / under \$30 · DIY

4. Wipe up water immediately, every time

Keep a small microfiber towel hung at hand height beside the shower. The post-shower puddle has caused more hip fractures than any single architectural feature.

Free · Habit change

ZONE 2 Tub & Shower

5. Install at least one wall-mounted grab bar inside the shower or tub, anchored into studs

Per the 2010 ADA Standards (Section 609): 1¼–1½ inch diameter, 33–36 inches above finished floor, 250-pound point load minimum. Stainless steel is the standard. **Suction-cup bars are NOT a substitute** — they fail under real load.

\$50–\$200 · Call a pro

6. Install a vertical grab bar at the entry point to the tub or shower

The transition step is where most bathing falls occur. The vertical bar gives the senior something to pull against during the step.

\$50–\$150 · Call a pro

7. Add a shower bench or transfer chair

Standing on wet feet for a 10-minute shower fatigues older legs. A chair eliminates the standing-balance failure mode entirely.

\$50-\$200 · DIY

8. Replace the fixed shower head with a hand-held wand on a long hose

The senior can sit on the bench, control the spray, and wash without contortion.

Under \$50 · DIY

9. Convert the tub to a curbless or low-threshold shower if budget allows

The 14-inch step over a tub wall is the highest-risk movement in the home. Removing it removes the risk.

\$5,000-\$15,000 · Call a pro

ZONE 3 Toilet Area

10. Install grab bars beside the toilet

One wall-mounted bar on the strong-arm side, ideally a second on the opposite wall or behind the tank. ADA spec: 42 inches minimum on the side wall, 36 inches behind. Sit-to-stand transfers are the second most-common bathroom fall scenario.

\$100–\$300 · Call a pro

11. Add a raised toilet seat (3 to 5 inches)

Sitting down lower than the knees demands quad strength most seniors no longer have. The raised seat gives the hips a head start.

\$30–\$80 · DIY

12. Place a small contrasting mat at the foot of the toilet

So the senior can see the toilet base in low light. Vision-impaired seniors miss the bowl edge in monochrome bathrooms.

Under \$20 · DIY

13. Keep the path to the toilet clear of trash cans, scales & laundry baskets

The middle-of-the-night trip is the highest-fall-risk moment of the 24-hour day.

Free · Habit change

ZONE 4 Lighting

14. Increase vanity light to 700–1,000 lumens, daylight color temperature

Older eyes need three to four times more light than younger eyes for the same visual acuity.

\$20–\$60 · DIY

15. Add a motion-activated nightlight or floor-level light strip from bedroom to bathroom

Eliminates the fumble for the wall switch in the middle of the night.

\$15–\$50 · DIY

16. Use a separate motion-activated light inside the bathroom

Turns on automatically when the door opens. No reaching for a switch with one hand on the doorframe and one hand half-asleep.

\$20–\$50 · DIY

17. Keep a flashlight in the bedside table for power outages

A power-outage bathroom trip in pitch dark causes a fall that the rest of the house was set up to prevent.

Under \$20 · DIY

ZONE 5 Grab Bars (Installation Standards)

18. Have grab bars professionally installed into wall studs — never drywall alone

A bar pulled off the wall mid-fall causes a worse injury than no bar at all. Hire a contractor, an OT-trained installer, or call your local Area Agency on Aging.

Call a pro

19. Choose a grab-bar finish your parent will actually accept

Modern brushed nickel and matte black finishes look like towel rails. Resistance to grab bars is largely aesthetic; resolving the aesthetic resolves the resistance.

Same cost as standard bars

ZONE 6 Faucets & Water

20. Replace round faucet knobs with single-lever or paddle handles

Arthritic hands cannot grip and rotate a small round knob. The lever takes one push.

\$40–\$120 · DIY or pro

21. Set the water heater to 120°F

Prevents scald burns. The AARP home safety checklist and the American Geriatrics Society both flag scalds at 130°F+ as a serious senior burn risk.

Free · DIY

22. Install an anti-scald (thermostatic mixing) valve in the shower

Older skin burns faster and recovers slower. The valve adds about \$150 in parts and prevents a hospitalizable burn.

\$50–\$200 · Call a pro

ZONE 7 Communication & Behavior

23. Install a waterproof emergency-call button or keep a charged cell phone within arm's reach of the toilet and shower

If the fall happens despite every other change, the time to first call for help determines the outcome. A senior who lies on the bathroom floor for six hours has worse outcomes than one who calls within ten minutes.

\$30–\$100 · DIY

When DIY isn't enough — call A-Team

- **Your parent has already fallen once.** CDC older-adult falls data is clear: one fall significantly raises the risk of another. Don't wait. We'll do a free RN home assessment and identify the specific risks in your parent's bathroom.
- **You're not local enough to install bars yourself.** Our partners install ADA-compliant stainless-steel bars into studs — the only kind that work. We can also help your parent qualify for PA Community HealthChoices waivers that may cover home modifications.
- **Bathing has become unsafe even with modifications.** A-Team Home Care provides RN-supervised personal care, including bathing assistance. Companion care is available for parents who need supervision during their routine but aren't ready for full personal care.

The 3 changes that deliver the most safety

If you can only do three things this weekend, do these. Then add the rest over the following weeks.

1. Grab bars at toilet & shower

Professionally installed into studs, ADA-spec stainless steel. Two bars, \$200–\$400 total.

2. Shower bench + hand-held wand

Eliminates the standing-balance failure mode that causes most bathing falls.

3. Motion-sensor nighttime lighting

Bedroom-to-bathroom path light that turns on automatically. Removes the middle-of-the-night fumble.

Free in-home safety assessment

An A-Team RN walks your parent's bathroom with you, scores every change on this checklist, and tells you exactly which professionals to hire (and which steps are still DIY). No obligation. No sales pressure.

(215) 490-9994

Or visit ateampa.com/contact · Available across Philadelphia, Bucks, Montgomery, Delaware & Chester counties.

Sources used to build this checklist: CDC STEADI (Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths, and Injuries) · National Institute on Aging room-by-room fall-prevention guide · AARP HomeFit Guide · 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design (Section 609 grab-bar specifications) · American Geriatrics Society senior burn-risk guidance.

Medical disclaimer. This checklist is general educational information, not medical advice. For care decisions specific to your loved one, call A-Team Home Care for a free RN assessment.

