

Home Safety Audit

Checklist to help reduce accidents
to older people in their homes
50 vital questions for over 50s

Enfield **NHS**
Primary Care Trust

Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum
in partnership with Enfield Primary Care Trust

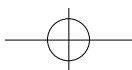
Introduction

During the period 1995 – 1997, 4,609 people over 65 died in their homes from falls alone, 339,000 were seriously injured and 459,000 suffered minor injuries, and the picture is getting worse. Each year, it is now estimated that 4,700 people aged 65+ die as a result of falls; 340,000 people suffer serious injuries and 460,000 from minor injuries.

Add to this appalling record those people killed and injured by electric shock, burns and scalds, those involved in fires etc. and you can see that there is a major problem.

How to reduce your risk of a fall

- | Take regular physical activity to improve strength and balance
- | Get your eyes checked regularly
- | Keep your home clutter- free and well lit
- | Avoid rushing on stairs



Falls In The Home

Falling at home is the major cause of fatal and serious accidents to older people.

Stairs

1. **Are staircases and landings well lit?** Yes No

100 watt bulbs are recommended if the light fitting is capable of taking one of that size.

2. **Is there at least one handrail?** Yes No

It is essential to have a handrail, even on small flights of stairs. They are reasonably easy to fit, parts are available in most DIY shops.

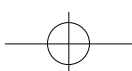
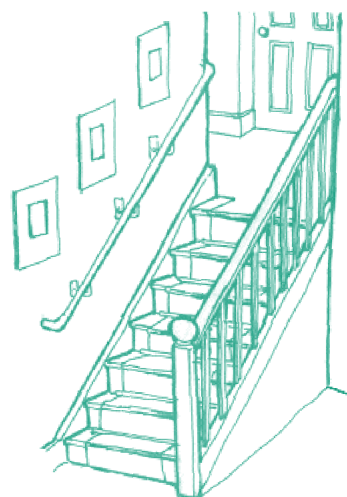
3. **Are the carpets in good condition and not frayed?** Yes No

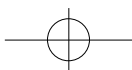
Worn carpets are a major cause of serious falls and should be replaced as soon as possible.

4. **Are the edges of each step easy to see?**

Yes No

A strip of white masking tape on the nose of each stair will help those whose eyesight is not good, but it must be kept in good condition and not allowed to become a tripping hazard.





5. Is there a switch at the top and bottom of the stairs?

If not an electrician can fit one.
Unlit staircases are a major problem.

Yes No

6. Are you wearing long and trailing clothing or unsuitable slippers.

It's easy to slip on the stairs when wearing a long dressing gown or slippers with heels or worn soles.

Yes No

Bathroom

1. Is there a risk of falling on wet vinyl or tiled flooring?

Yes No

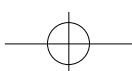
Non-slip mats should be used on the floor, a fitted carpet or carpet tiles.

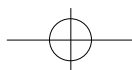


2. Is there a non-slip mat in the bath and a grab rail?

Non-slip, rubberised mats are readily available. Social Services will often help with grab rails where there is a serious problem.

Yes No





Kitchen

- 1. Is there a risk of falling on wet flooring especially near the sink and washing machine?**

Yes No

Check the condition of the floor in these areas, a piece of non-slip matting or a regular mopping may solve a problem.

- 2. Is everything within easy reach without stretching or climbing?**

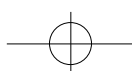
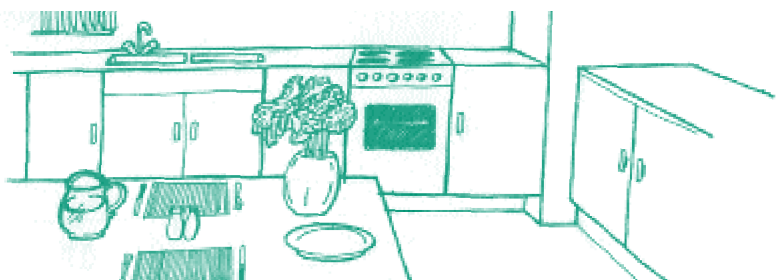
Yes No

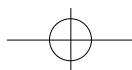
Stretching and reaching above head height can make older people feel dizzy and there is a temptation to climb up on chairs to reach something. Things which are used regularly should be on the lower shelves.

- 3. If steps have to be used are they secure with a handrail and system to keep the legs locked?**

Yes No

Properly designed steps can be used in reasonable safety if you are fit enough. They must be designed with an effective handrail and with an easily applied lock for the legs.





General

1. **Is there a letterbox cage to avoid stooping to pick up letters?**

These are quite easy to fit inside the door, and will stop papers being spread across the floor just inside the doorway.

Yes No

2. **Are casters under furniture on a wood or lino floor making them likely to slide as you get up?**

Casters make furniture easier to move but can cause a problem if they slide back just as you are getting up. Either remove them or fit cup shaped carpet savers underneath.

Yes No

3. **Is the bed the right height? When sitting on the edge do your feet reach the floor?**

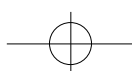
If you are frail, a grab-rail fixed to the bed will help to stop you falling out and assist you in getting up.

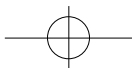
Yes No

4. **Are electric cables trailing across the floor?**

Cables from electric fires or blankets should be re-routed around the edges of the room. These items should be checked most carefully. Bedclothes falling onto heaters are a major source of fires.

Yes No





5. Are runners and mats slip-resistant? Yes No

The use of double sided adhesive carpet tape is one way of doing this.

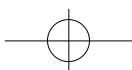
6. If you fall do you have a system for calling assistance? Yes No

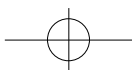
A monitored personal alarm is a good way of doing this. These are obtainable from Enfield Community Alarms.
(See telephone number below).

Useful Phone Numbers

Age Concern Enfield is running a Handyperson service for older people living in the Borough of Enfield. They may be able to carry out some improvements around the house that will make it safer and more secure.

Age Concern Handyperson	020 8351 1671
Enfield Community Alarms	020 8367 3521
Enfield Council	020 8366 6565





Cuts, Burns and Scalds

Burns and scalds can have serious long term effects.
Faulty electric appliances and smoking in bed
causes 20,000 fires each year.

Bathroom

1. **When taking a bath do you run cold water in before adding hot?**

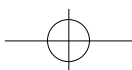
Always check the temperature before getting into the bath.

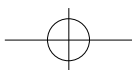
Yes No

2. **Are there mains powered electrical appliances e.g. an electric fire in the bathroom?**

This is extremely dangerous and should be removed immediately! There are some special heaters available for bathrooms but they should be sited carefully – wet hands and electricity doesn't mix!

Yes No





Bedroom

1. Do you smoke in bed?

Yes No

This is a most dangerous thing to do and should be avoided at all costs. If you absolutely must smoke get a deep ashtray and make sure that cigarettes are put out properly.

2. Have you checked your electric blanket?

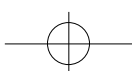
Yes No

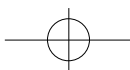
If it's more than three years old it should be serviced. Before buying a new one make sure it has 'overheat protection'. This causes the electricity to be cut off if it gets too hot.

3. Do you take a drink to bed at night?

Yes No

Try using an unbreakable container, glass can fall off bedside tables and break leaving broken glass on the floor.





Kitchen

1. **Are the handles of pots and pans turned away from the front of the cooker?**

Yes No

Always turn the handles to the side so that you cannot knock hot pans as you pass.

2. **Is there a clear space near the cooker so that hot pans can be put down safely?**

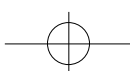
Yes No

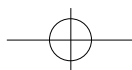
Make a clear space before picking up the pan and, preferably use a pot stand to prevent the pan burning the work surface.

3. **Can you use a timer to remind you that you have left something cooking?**

Yes No

It is easy to forget or become distracted when cooking. A simple battery alarm will tell you when cooking is complete.





4. If you have a gas cooker or water boiler is the pilot light still on?

Always check to see that pilot lights are functioning. If you smell gas ring the emergency number at the back of this list!

Yes No

5. Do you use a pressure cooker or deep-fat fryers?

These can be very dangerous, always read the instructions carefully and never leave them unattended.

Yes No

6. Are clothes or kitchen cloths being dried over a grill or cooker?

This is an obvious source of fires and also means that you have to lean over the cooker to place them and collect them afterwards.

Yes No

7. When cutting or chopping food, is there a non-slip mat to prevent dishes and boards from moving?

Non-slip rubber pads are now readily available.

Yes No

8. Are areas where food is prepared properly lit?

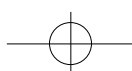
Look at areas where you prepare food. Do you stand in your own light? Consider a small strip light under cupboards etc.

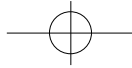
Yes No

9. Do you have oven gloves for getting food out of the oven?

The gloves that protect the arms are the best ones to use.

Yes No





General

1. Have you checked your electrical sockets?

Yes No

- a) remove plugs which are not being used at night
- b) don't overload sockets – remember one plug, one socket.
- c) use the correct fuse.
- d) if fuses blow, lights flicker or brown scorch marks appear on sockets or plugs have your wiring checked by an electrician.

2. Is your chair too close to portable heaters?

Yes No

If it is, you could easily set your clothes or the chair on fire, especially if you fall asleep.

3. Are heaters placed where they can't be knocked over?

Yes No

Place heaters away from regular access ways. Never move a portable gas or paraffin heater while it is still on.

4. Are clothes drying on heaters or guards?

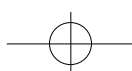
Yes No

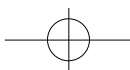
These can set fire easily, put them on a clothes horse in a safe area.

5. Do you have an open fire?

Yes No

Only burn suitable fuels on open fires and have your chimney swept each year.





6. Do you have a mantle shelf over the fire?

Don't place things on the mantle shelf which may make you stand too close to the fire. Mirrors set over the fire should be moved to a safer place.

Yes No

7. Do you have a smoke alarm?

These are essential. Place it where you can hear it easily and check it monthly.

Yes No

8. Do you have a gas fire?

Your gas company should carry out a free gas check if you are over 60 years old. Contact your gas company for more information.

Yes No

9. Are air bricks and ventilators free from obstruction?

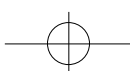
Ventilation is important in rooms where fuel-burning heaters are used.

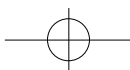
Yes No

10. Have you planned an escape route in case of fire?

Escaping from a fire will be easier if you have already planned your escape route and know where to go. Having keys for front and back doors readily available will help you get out of the house.

Yes No





Medication, Fumes & Poisons

Most people have to take medicines at some time, it is important to deal with all medicines safely.

1. **Are your medicines properly labelled and stored out of reach of children?**

Yes No

If labels are hard to read, get someone to re-label them so that you know what you are taking and always keep them locked away where children can't reach them.

2. **Do you have a list somewhere in the house showing what medication you are on?**

Yes No

The 'message in a bottle system' available from Age Concern is a good way of doing this.

3. **Does your medication make you feel dizzy?**

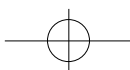
Yes No

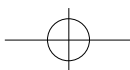
Check with your doctor or pharmacist to see if there is an alternative.

4. **Do you use gas, bottled gas, solid fuel or paraffin appliances?**

Yes No

If you do then there is a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. A carbon monoxide alarm will give an indication of a build up of fumes.





5. Do you use any chemicals in the garden e.g. rat poison, bleach, turps, weed killer etc?

Yes No

These must be clearly marked and, either kept in their original container or one which is clearly marked with the contents. Never keep chemicals in old lemonade bottles!

Questions for older people

Do you have a list of emergency numbers close to your phone?

Yes No

Copy a set of numbers, like the ones below, stick it up near to the phone so that it can be easily seen in an emergency.

Is there someone nearby who you can contact in an emergency?

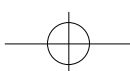
Yes No

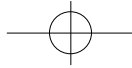
Try to have someone living nearby, a relative or neighbour who can get to you quickly in an emergency or use a monitored personal alarm.

Do you take some form of physical activity?

Yes No

Try to do some form of exercise physical activity, even just walking regularly will make you less likely to fall.





Emergency Numbers

Gas - If you smell gas	0800 111 999
NHS Direct	0845 4647
Police, Ambulance or Fire Brigade	999

Police – non-urgent inquiries call:

Edmonton	020 8807 1212
Enfield	020 8363 1212
Ponders End	020 8366 1212
Southgate	020 8886 1212

September 2003



FREE PRIZES

for completing the Home Safety Audit

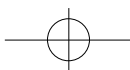
Checklist to help reduce accidents to older people in their homes

50 vital questions for over 50s

1st prize - £50 voucher
2nd prize - £30 voucher
3rd prize - £15 voucher
10 runners up prizes - £5 vouchers

Enfield **NHS**
Primary Care Trust

Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum
in partnership with Enfield Primary Care Trust



Home Safety Audit

The Home Safety Audit has been devised by Enfield Borough over 50s Forum in partnership with Enfield Primary Care Trust as part of implementing the National Service Framework for Older People. The Home Safety Audit can be used by friends, neighbours, relatives and all who care for older people. The competition is only open to people who live or work in the London Borough of Enfield. Please keep your completed audit forms for future reference and return THIS form to:

**Derek Friggens, Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum,
59 Gloucester Road, Edmonton N18 1HW.**

Completed forms will be eligible for a free draw for Marks and Spencer vouchers. **Forms must arrive by the 1st December 2003.**

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. I have made changes to my home as a result of doing this home safety audit. | Yes / No |
| 2. I am more aware of the risk areas of where falls can occur in the home as a result of doing the home safety audit. | Yes / No |
| 3. I am now doing more physical activity as a result doing the home safety audit. | Yes / No |
| 4. I will now be doing more regular home safety checks as a result of this audit. | Yes / No |
| 5. I feel more confident of not falling as a result of the home safety checks I have undertaken. | Yes / No |

Name

Address

Telephone

