

Strengthening Community Connections in Falls Prevention

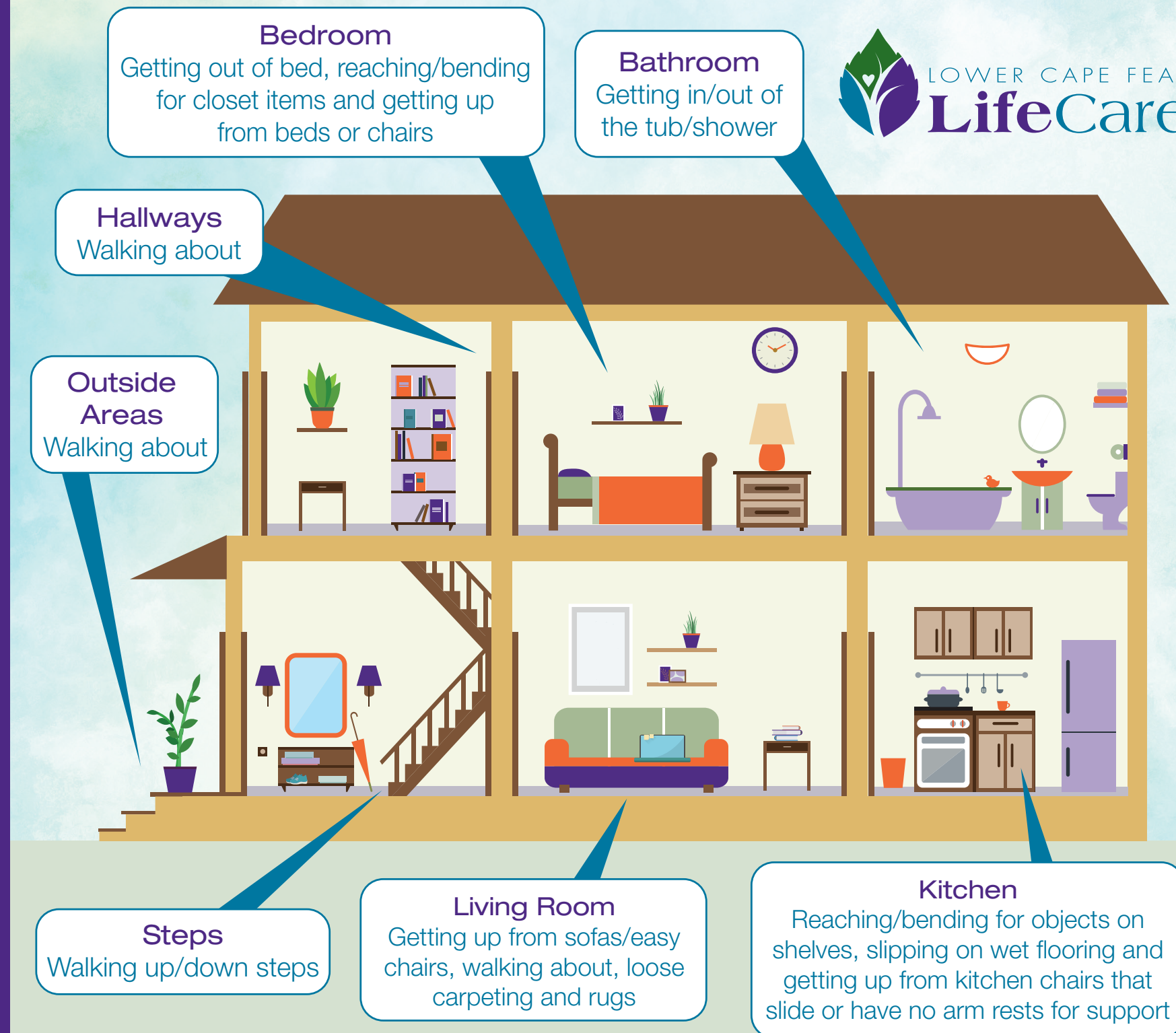
As people age, they develop balance issues, making an injury due to a fall more likely. Spotting and correcting potential fall hazards in the home can keep older adults safe.

A **Matter of Balance** is an eight-week structured group intervention that emphasizes practical strategies to reduce fear of falling and increase activity levels for older adults. Participants learn to view falls and fear of falling as controllable, set realistic goals to increase activity, change their environment to reduce fall risk factors, and exercise to increase strength and balance.

Visit HealthyAgingNC.com and NCFallsPrevention.org for more information.



Local Partners Info. Section



Bedroom
Getting out of bed, reaching/bending for closet items and getting up from beds or chairs

Bathroom
Getting in/out of the tub/shower

Hallways
Walking about

Outside Areas
Walking about

Steps
Walking up/down steps

Living Room
Getting up from sofas/easy chairs, walking about, loose carpeting and rugs

Kitchen
Reaching/bending for objects on shelves, slipping on wet flooring and getting up from kitchen chairs that slide or have no arm rests for support

Fall Prevention Tip Sheet

Use this tip sheet to prevent falls and to help keep older adults safe in the comfort of their own home.

Outside and Walking Areas



50% of all outdoor falls are related to walking activity and in 70% of outdoor falls, people land on hard surfaces

- Remove obstacles from pathways, especially trip hazards such as hoses, outdoor lighting, etc.
- Install handrails or sturdy outdoor railings around deck/patio areas.
- Replace steps with ramp access as needed and/or make sure steps are even and in good shape.
- Paint the edges of the steps with a color contrast or use glow in the dark duct tape.
- Wear correct eyewear and/or sunglasses when walking about outside.



Bathroom

70% of all falls in the home occur in the bathroom

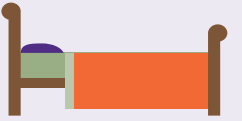
- Install grab bars with color contrast near the tub, shower and toilet located and mounted properly.
- Ensure nonslip surfaces in tub or shower, good lighting and night lights.
- Place rugs or bathmats with non-slip backing on the floor.
- Add a shower/tub seat and hand held shower head, if possible.
- Add a bedside commode and toilet riser with grab bars nearby.
- Ensure that the bathroom door opens outwards or install sliding pocket door/hanging curtain.

Kitchen



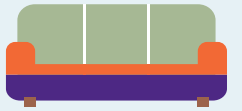
- Place items where they can be reached without use of step stool.
- Clean up spills immediately. Stay off freshly mopped floors until dry.
- Place a water-absorbent, non-slip mat in front of the sink.
- Use kitchen chairs that will allow sitting and standing up more easily.
- Provide a space to sit during food preparation.
- Remove throw rugs or secure them with non-slip backing.

Bedroom



- Place a bedside table with non-tip lamp and room for eyeglasses. Make sure the light is within reach.
- Clear a traffic area from the bedroom to the bathroom. Remove clutter so paths are wide, straight and clear.
- Have a sturdy chair with arm rests to aid in dressing.
- Remove all throw rugs. Use non-slip rugs/mats.
- Increase lighting to and from the bedroom and the bathroom.
- Use a side rail to assist with positioning.

Stairs and Living Room



- Provide plenty of room to move at the top and bottom of stairs with an uncluttered, clear path.
- Repair faulty step/coverings.
- Install carpet or non-slip rubber treads on each step; no loose carpeting/rugs or edges to trip on.
- Attach and secure handrails at the proper height and make sure to use them.
- Wear supportive footwear with slip-resistant soles or gripper type socks.
- Ensure there is proper lighting on all steps, with switches at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Relocate low-lying coffee tables (may be difficult to see).