



American Stroke Association®
A division of the American Heart Association.

Together to End Stroke®

Caregiver Tips for Preventing Falls After Stroke

A Guide for Family Members and Friends

THERE'S HELP — AND HOPE — AS YOU NAVIGATE THIS

When you care for a survivor of stroke, thinking about preventing falls is a priority. Falls are common after stroke, but there are ways to reduce the risk.

We're here to help you take this one step at a time. You don't have to become an expert overnight. Start with what feels manageable. Ask for (and accept!) help. Build from there.

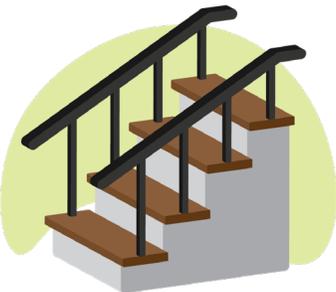
CREATE DAILY SAFETY ROUTINES •

Simple routines can help reduce fall risk and build confidence. Regular check-ins and reminders become second nature.



Start Each Day with a Safety Check:

- » Are your loved one's mobility aids working properly?
- » Is your loved one's footwear non-slip?
- » Is your loved one feeling OK? Dizziness or fatigue may raise the risk of falls.



Throughout the Day:

- » Encourage your loved one to move slowly when changing positions.
- » Suggest your loved one use grab bars and handrails even when they feel steady.
- » Remind your loved one to take breaks to avoid getting too tired.



Medications

Many survivors of stroke take more than one medication. Some of them may have side effects that can increase risk of falling. See our [Common Medications That Raise Fall Risk](#) fact sheet for examples and what to watch for and do to reduce that risk.

ENCOURAGE USE OF MOBILITY AIDS •

Using a cane, walker or scooter can take some getting used to. Survivors of stroke may have mixed feelings about using mobility aids.

Be Patient with the Adjustment:

- » Keep mobility aids within easy reach.
- » Getting used to new mobility aids takes time. Avoid rushing the survivor.

Celebrate Progress:

- » Praise and encourage continued use of mobility aids.
- » Focus on the positive and what activities your loved one is able to do with the mobility aid (support your loved one at home for continued use).
- » Have ongoing conversations with therapy team providers to celebrate progress.



WATCH FOR CHANGES THAT SIGNAL HIGHER FALL RISK •

Some changes experienced by survivors of stroke may increase their risk for falls. You may notice changes coming on slowly or suddenly. Seeing these signs and getting help early can prevent falls and injuries.



Physical Changes to Notice:

- » Is it harder for your loved one to get up from a chair or the bed?
- » Is your loved one dizzy or feeling unsteady?
- » Is your loved one stumbling or having near-falls more often?
- » Is your loved one less stable when walking? Is your loved one stepping more slowly?



Emotional and Behavioral Changes to Notice:

- » Avoiding activities your loved one used to do
 - » Your loved one saying they're afraid they'll fall
 - » Refusing to go places or do things "just in case"
- A fear of falling can raise the risk of falls. See our [Fear of Falling Fact Sheet](#).*



When to Alert the Health Care Team:

- » Any actual falls, even minor ones
- » Two or more near-falls, such as stumble or loss of balance, in a short period
- » New or worsening balance problems
- » Sudden changes in ability or confidence

SUPPORT WITHOUT TAKING OVER •

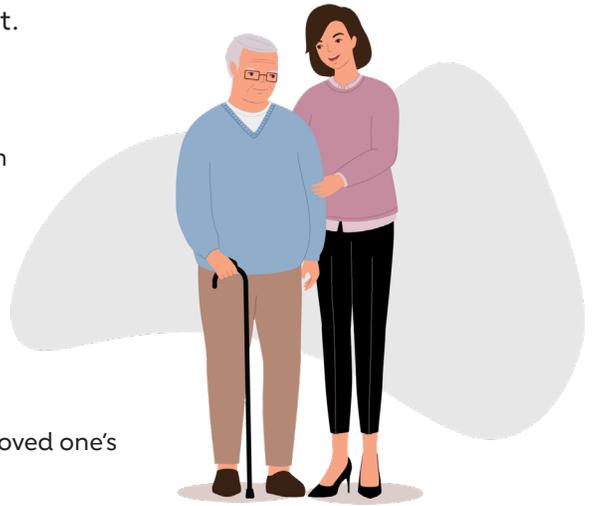
Every situation is different. It takes time to learn what works best.

Ask Before Acting:

- » Check if your loved one wants help before jumping in.
- » Give your loved one the opportunity to try tasks on their own when it's safe and appropriate.
- » Letting your loved one try tasks on their own can boost both confidence and strength.

Be Patient with the Process:

- » Frustration is normal. Some days will be better than others.
- » Recovery and adjustments take time.
- » You may need to repeat things. The stroke may affect your loved one's memory and thinking.
- » Your loved one's abilities may vary from day to day.



MAKE THE ENVIRONMENT SAFER •

One of the best ways to prevent falls is to make your home safer. See our additional resources for help:



[Home Safety Checklist](#)



[Home Safety Solutions: Before and After](#)



[Bathroom Setup](#)



[Post-Stroke Bathing Safety Checklist](#)

YOUR WELL-BEING MATTERS •

Caring for someone can affect your own well-being. You deserve to feel well and do things you enjoy. This can seem hard when there's so much to do, but it's important. When you take care of yourself, taking care of your loved one is easier.

Practical Self-Care:

- » Ask others to help so you can take breaks.
- » Keep your health care appointments.
- » Join a support group. Relating with other caregivers helps your well-being.
- » Don't try to handle all of it alone. Most caregivers need help.

Expert Help Options:

- » Social workers can help connect you with community resources and support services.
- » Home health services may provide help.
- » Respite care can give you longer breaks when needed.

Remember:

You're doing meaningful, important work.

It's completely normal to feel uncertain at times.

Even small safety steps can help avoid bigger problems.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

- » [Fear of Falling Fact Sheet](#)

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