

HOME AUDIT CHECKLIST

Continuing in our goal of STF prevention, this chapter is designed to help you observe and correct risks in each area of your home. Look at each area as if you're seeing it for the first time. Go to stoptheslip.com/book/homeaudit and print a checklist for each room in your home. If you don't have access to a computer and a printer, you can use a blank pad of paper to take notes as you review each area:

1. Start at the doorway or just inside the doorway so you can see the entire room. Make a list of all of the pathways you will take when navigating this room or area. This might be a simple single path such as walk down the stairs or could be a list of several different paths that you might walk as you pass through the room.
2. Walk each of the paths you've listed, cleaning up each STF hazard as you walk or making a note to fix bigger problems at a later time.
3. Now turn out the lights. Are you going to have to walk one of these paths when the sun goes down? Where will pets be sleeping or what might be left in one of these paths? Use nightlights to illuminate those paths that will be used when it is dark.

Here are some things to think about as you review each of area in your home.

Bedroom

Make sure the path to the bathroom or out the bedroom door is clear and safe to navigate even after dark. Do not leave clothes or clutter in these pathways. Make a special note of your pet's favorite place to sleep at night. Remember when you wake up at night you will not be fully alert. Better to plan now so that you will be safe later.

Bathroom

Do the shower and bath areas have nonslip treatment? Are there bathmats or shower mats with a good nonslip backing outside each shower area? When you step off the bathmat are you walking onto a nonslip surface? Make sure that towels and dirty clothes are not left on the floor. Keep floors clean and free from soap, shampoo, and conditioners.

Kitchen

Organize your kitchen to keep frequently used items at ground level. If you have to reach up high to bring down items always use a proper stepstool. Keep pathways clear of clutter and clean up spills when they happen. Use a nonslip mat around sink areas. Do not use throw rugs unless they are properly secured using a non-slip product.

Stairways

Keep stairways clean and clear of all clutter. Make sure handrails are solid and secure. Stair treads should be in good repair and treated with a nonslip product. When walking up and down stairs always keep one hand free to hold the handrail. Do not walk up and down stairs in slippery socks. The start of the top of your stairs should be easily identifiable, as people age they may have to mark the start of the stairway with a form of color contrast.

Basement

Keep the basement free from clutter and make sure there are clear safe pathways so you safely navigate around your basement.

Hallway

A hallway is a high traffic area between rooms. The pathway should be clear from clutter and extension cords. All rugs or runners should be secured safely to the floor. Make sure that there are no frayed edges and that all corners stay flatly on the floor.

Living room and family room

Make sure all regularly used pathways are free from clutter and there is enough room to safely walk past furniture. Extension cords should be securely fastened to the baseboards or the floor. Area rugs should be secured to the floor using a nonslip backing that prevents them from slipping. The rug should sit flat on the floor and watch to make sure corners cannot flip up and create a tripping hazard.

Dining room

Your dining room table and chairs should fit comfortably in your dining room. If it's too big, the chair legs will become tripping hazards. Make sure that table runners are safely off the floor. When the dining room is not in use, keep all chairs neatly organized and tucked safely under the table.

Outside

All paths and sidewalks should be level and clean. Keep them free from leaves and shovel them whenever it snows. Use salt or other deicer products whenever the temperature approaches freezing.

Garage

Garage floors are especially dangerous because they get dirty quickly. Your car carries the worst weather conditions inside and even the newest of cars will leave traces of oil under the engine creating a slip hazard. What seems like a large open storage area can become a narrow, trip filled walking path when you park your car. Maintain clean and clear walking paths all around your car so you can safely get from you home to your car and vise versa. You may want to

treat your garage floor with a non-slip epoxy coating. Doors with steps leading into your home should have a handrail or grab bar to make getting in and out of your home safer.

Front and back porches

Porch stairs are very dangerous because they are exposed to all of the weather elements. This means rain, and dew, snow and ice, or even the first frost can make the steps very slippery. If your front porch stairs are not exposed to a lot of sunlight you may also have some very slippery mold and mildew growing on them. Often porches are painted and that can make them even more slippery. If your porch is painted, use nonslip paint or install nonslip treads on the stairs. One caution: peel and stick sandpaper tape will not last on stairs that are exposed to a wide variety of weather conditions. The adhesive fails when the changes in temperatures cause the porch surface to expand and contract. Keep the porch and stairs clean and free of dirt and leaves.