

TOP 20 TIPS TO FALL-PROOF YOUR HOME



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Published By
CRITICAL BENCH.com
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THE TOP 20 TIPS TO **FALL-PROOF YOUR HOME**

BY CHRIS WILSON, RKC, CPT, SNC

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INTRODUCTION

FEAR VS FREEDOM MINDSET

Albert Einstein is regarded as one of the most intelligent human beings in history. He is also known for one of my very favorite quotes: “Nothing happens until something moves.”

When I think about these words, I get excited. Excited because I absolutely love movement. And the key to all human movement is balance.

When we are infants, our movements are simple and small because our brains and bodies are learning what movement actually is and we don't yet have balance. We go from rocking to rolling and eventually from crawling to walking. And these movement patterns stick with us for an entire lifetime.

A lifetime filled with walking, running, jumping, bending, falling, climbing and more.

From our youth to old age, it is movement that gives us freedom and enjoyment. Sitting idle is not much fun, especially for young people. But the more I think back to all of my years working with clients in their 50s, 60s and beyond I realized that sitting isn't



much fun for them either.

Movement in life is what gives us true freedom and independence. The ability to get up from our beds each morning and tackle the day ahead. To go and get the morning newspaper in the driveway, go to the grocery store, travel to see friends and family or simply to walk around in our neighborhood enjoying a beautiful, sunny day.

I'm purposely painting a picture to shed light on what matters most: Our freedom to move about in this world without fear holding us back. In our younger years we take risks and learn the consequences associated with

those risks. As we mature, we take measured risks based on years of experience and we become wise. We know our limitations and move within them.

But something happens for some older adults who find themselves moving less and less with age. The fears associated with movement creep in and sometimes overtake our greater need to feel connected to the world around us.

This fear is something I wish to shatter for everyone reading these pages. Living in fear is not truly living. It's not a freeing feeling. It's quite the opposite. And it's not what I want for you.

I understand very well this is not an overnight fix. Overcoming a fear-based mindset can take time, especially if you've been there for a while.

I'm confident that with the Neuro-Balance Therapy program and the TOP 20 tips you're about to learn in this special bonus report, you will be able to fall-proof your home and improve your life.

So, let's get moving and give you back the confidence and freedom this life has to offer!

Passing the EYE Test - Tip #1

When's the last time you had your eyes examined?

Did you know your vision is one of the most significant ways we find our balance and proprioception? And as we age, our eyes can lose sharpness and depth perception.

Seeing the world around us, the objects near us and the surfaces we walk on is paramount in our ability to move well and feel confident and balanced. This is precisely why I'm beginning with our eyesight.

From the moment we wake in the morning, our vision guides us throughout our day.

Whether you wear glasses or not, use



contact lenses or have had corrective eye surgery, make sure that this is something you give attention to. If it's been longer than you can remember since your last eye exam, it's time to go again.

Just simply getting your eyes tested can determine how well you move for years to come and save you from unnecessary falls and accidents.

Maybe you need to update your current eyeglass prescription, are a good candidate for a corrective eye procedure or just need to make the most of the eyesight you have.

This is your green light to get going and book that appointment with an optometrist near you. The eyes are your gateway to freedom and regular daily movement and they need regular checkups, especially as we age.

Hearing and Your Balance - Tip #2

Did you realize how vital your hearing is when it comes to your sense of balance?

As you may have already read in the NBT handbook, your sense of hearing is another key variable in your ability to feel balanced.

It is in our inner ear (Vestibular system) that we obtain our equilibrium, spatial awareness and motion. The fluid in our inner ear sends signals to our brain which directly affects our movement and sense of balance.

As with your last eyesight exam, if it's been longer than you can remember since your last hearing test, it's time to go get that done right away. There are plenty of options near you to get your ears checked quickly.

On a side note, this topic is extra near and dear to me because my father was a hearing aid specialist. My dad helped men and women hear better, it's what he did his entire life and for that reason I feel an extra motivation to help people at any age hear better because I intimately understand how this one sense better connects us to the world around us.

If by now you're at least considering when and where to get your eye and ear exams, I feel victorious. These two items are really the starting point to fall-proof your life and get you feeling confident with every step.

Footwear 101 - Best and Worst - Tip #3

Shoes make the man. Ever heard that expression before?



Of course, that's pertaining more to one's salary and probable background, but in this case, I'm applying that sentiment to balance and movement.

The footwear you invest in and wear most often greatly impacts how well you move.

If you wear flip flops or go barefoot a lot, you most likely don't "require" a great deal of support in your steps. This probably means you aren't overly concerned with tripping or falling and most likely feel pretty well grounded. This is a good sign.

If you wear a robust walking sneaker like a New Balance, Brooks or Skechers brand sneaker, there is a

good chance you want to feel more supported in your steps. You most likely are willing to invest in a high-quality walking shoe / sneaker that feels sturdy, well made and gives you a sense of confidence.

If you wear dress shoes often, like Oxfords, Derbies or Loafers, there is a good chance again that you are willing to invest in a quality, well supported shoe that's fairly stiff, slightly flexible and fits your foot well. This also means that you care about your appearance which is also a great sign that you're interested in your freedom and connection to the world. You're out and about and wanting to look good. There is nothing wrong with this!

Now, if you are wearing old, rundown running sneakers, cheap under \$20 dress shoes or have no idea what's on your feet right now, it's time for an intervention and a mindset shift.

Your feet are your connection to the earth.

In order to feel supremely confident in your steps, you must be 100% comfortable with your footwear.

Runners buy the best quality sneakers to run in, businessmen and women buy the best quality shoes for comfort, support and style and athletes buy the

best cross training sneakers on the market in order to feel supported and sure with each step.

You need to feel that as well. No matter your age or type of activity, it's critical that your footwear is carefully selected. For a relatively small investment, you can have 6 months to 1-year worth of walking in something worthy of being on your feet. Don't go cheap here.

Purchase something that shouts, "I like to walk and move with confidence!" Just hit the reference section at the end of this bonus report and you can find several quality footwear options to keep you moving well for years to come!

Assistive Devices That Make Life Safer - Tip #4

Canes, walking sticks, railings, ramps and grab bars to name a few...

There are assistive devices all around us and meant to help people at all ages and environments.

Years ago, when I was a young boy, I remember watching the older adults at church walking up for communion. I would see husbands and wives holding each other, old men using canes, clutching the railing as they went up a few stairs or how slowly they walked

from the pew to the altar.

What I failed to recognize is that without the people in their lives or the devices they were using, their life would look completely different. It was the person alongside them, the railing, cane or ramp they used that made life "comfortable" and safe for them.



Much of what we see in the world when it comes to assistive devices are good and helpful things that give a sense of relief to those who need them. The key again is to invest in quality items that will do what they say they will do. Buy trusted brands that hold up and keep you protected.

What good is the railing if it's wobbly or poorly fastened? What good is the cane or walking stick if it can't support your weight? What good is the grab bar if it doesn't properly suction to the bathroom wall?

All of these things have a place

for people at any age and can be extremely beneficial to prevent a fall or catastrophic accident at home. The best thing you can do right now is assess what your needs are in your home and create a list.

If your sense of balance isn't quite where you want it to be, would a walking stick or cane make life easier for you? Would a few grab bars in your bathroom make this space safer for you or a raised toilet seat (more on this later)? Would a railing in your hallway or stairway make you feel better when going up or down the stairs?

All of these questions must be considered for you personally.

Please take a moment and decide what 3, 5 or 7+ items you need right now to help create a safer environment in your home. Often times a trip or fall is averted simply because you've taken action in preventing that from ever happening. Please do this today to make your tomorrow fall-proof.

Alcohol and Your Balance - Tip #5

As you most likely have heard before, alcohol impairs your senses, judgement and motor skills.



I also realize this topic can be extra sensitive for some.

I'm not here to pass judgement. I too enjoy an ice-cold beer or glass of red wine on occasion, but knowing your personal limits and response to alcohol is absolutely necessary.

The fact is, alcohol, no matter what kind (beer, wine, liquor) impairs our mental state and physical response to the world around us.

It's why operating a motor vehicle is illegal when under the influence of alcohol. If sitting still in a car can be harmful if you're intoxicated, this makes walking to the car even more dangerous depending on your path to get there!

Ultimately, this decision is a personal

one. A decision that can determine your safety and the safety of those around you. The best thing you can do is first to know your limits when it comes to drinking and to hopefully be in the company of others that can help facilitate the best actions for your health and safety.

This is one of those tips / decisions that is completely within your control to make. Preventative measures can be easily put in place ahead of time.

So please make the best decision for you and those you care about. If you enjoy a few drinks here and there, make sure your environment is suitable for the impairment that comes with drinking and be sure your travel arrangements are determined ahead of time.

Medication and Your Balance - Tip #6

This is one of those topics that is wide open with solutions.

As you probably are aware of, most medications or prescription drugs have side effects. Side effects like grogginess, nausea, fatigue, depression, etc. What's super important is that you are well aware of what those side effects are in advance and that

you discuss them with your doctor.

Having a consultation with your doctor to review any and all prescriptions or medications that you're on is highly recommended. Sometimes you may have a few medications that react negatively with each other and leave you feeling dizzy, overly tired or foggy headed.

All of these side effects and others have a dramatic impact on your ability to move well and feel balanced. I urge you to take the necessary steps to consult with your physician or pharmacist to consider alternative options if you're not feeling quite right.

Another consideration is what we've already discussed previously. How does your medication(s) interact with alcohol? This is extremely important for you to understand.



Again, the best advice I can offer is to seek the consultation of a trusted medical professional who understands the Dos and Don'ts associated with your medical history. Please do this right away to feel your best and avoid any unnecessary accidents.

Bright Lights Makeover – Tips #7 and #8

Bright lights equal a safer environment. And safety for you is HUGE.

Dimly lit rooms should be a thing of the past for you unless you're going to sleep, sitting in your chair watching television or doing some kind of meditation.

A dark or poorly lit space is not helpful for anyone looking to avoid or prevent falls. If you notice, most public places like hotels, retail stores, grocery stores and beyond are very well lit. They are this way because they are doing everything in their power to help you best navigate your surroundings safely.

When it comes to your home, this can be done fairly simply and can quickly eliminate lots of potential slips and falls.

The best thing you can do right now is to again create a list of all lights inside and outside your home. Give

them a rating from 1 to 10. 1 being poor and 10 being excellent. This simple assessment can radically help to illuminate your most commonly used pathways making your life safer.

So, first, (tip #7) consider all of the exterior areas of your home like the garage, porch, driveway, etc. and determine if there needs to be more lights added, better lights installed (higher watt bulbs) or it is satisfactory.

Next, (tip #8) consider all of the interior areas of your home like the living room, hallway, bedroom and other common areas. Typically, the kitchen and bathrooms are very well lit thus the reason I didn't cite them. Again, determine if there needs to be more lights added, better quality lights installed or if the area is satisfactory and meets your needs.

Having well-lit spaces outside and inside your home can instantly change how well you see the world you move in most, your home. Make your home the safest place on the planet!

Up & Down Stairways – Tips #9 and #10

If you live in a home with no stairways, this STILL applies to you.



Even if your home has few or no stairs, the tips offered here are beneficial to you for life outside your home.

Moving up and down stairways can be scary for some. If you're unsure about your steps and a flight of stairs is before you, this can be downright frightening for some older adults.

The key here, besides strengthening the legs and improving your balance with the NBT program, is to take things ONE STEP AT A TIME with confidence.

In life, when we see the whole picture, the task can feel daunting. I get it. I've been there before in many areas of my life.

The best thing to do is to focus on the step in front of you and making that one step the best step possible. Remember,

you swallow an elephant one bite at a time so take your time and do things right.

When moving up some stairs or a flight of stairs (tip #9), move slowly and be sure your foot is fully on the step before picking up the back leg. For this brief moment, you're on one leg on a surface area that's fairly small.

The other thing to consider is where your hands are... Are they holding firmly on the railing? Are you attempting to carry something? If so, I urge you to at least use one hand to hold the railing. Here is where your upper body strength comes in very handy and can help you avoid a misstep. A firm grasp of the railing can save you from a fall.

When traveling down a set of stairs (tip #10), things can get even more dangerous. Now gravity is really working in your favor which requires you to work even harder at controlling your steps and slowing the movements down. Speed is not what we're after here. It's about safety which most likely means slowness on your part.

Do not rush this. Hold the railing securely. Focus on the next step. Maybe even consider counting your steps making each one a touch more thoughtful and important to the bottom.

Another thing to consider is installing ramps where you can. If you have 2 to 3 stairs to climb in and around the home, think about investing in a sturdy ramp that eliminates the steps altogether. It's not for everyone but in areas like the garage or porch, this can be a fantastic option.

Hallway Travel – Tip #11

The hallways in our homes can often times be the most dangerous areas of the house. It's because of 4 main reasons: frequency of use, poor lighting, change in floor surface and lack of railings.

This may not be obvious to some of you but this absolutely needs careful consideration when it comes to fall-proofing your home.

So, as you've done previously, make a list of the hallways in your home and rate the 4 things I've mentioned above. On a scale of 1 to 10, rate how frequently you use a particular hallway, how well-lit is that hallway, is the flooring different (i.e. carpeted, hard wood, tile, area rug) and is there anything to hold onto?

Once you know the answers (ratings) for all of the hallways in your home, you can determine how you are to proceed.

By now the area may be well-lit since you already did that (tip #8) but there's a good chance the flooring in the hallway is different from another room or there's nothing good to hold onto.

Begin your makeovers with the most frequently used hallways since you use them every day, several times per day. The goal here is to make every single area of your home a safe space to move in.

Bathroom Makeover – Tips #12 and #13

Slips and falls can happen here without any warning!

The bathroom(s) of your home must be made to suit your needs. Some are big and some are small but they all have the potential for a nasty accident.



Most bathrooms have tile flooring that gets wet and slick near the toilet and near the tub or shower. This room also typically has one or more small rugs to absorb the water coming out of the shower, but those too can become hazards.

First, let's be sure that the flooring is best suited for you (tip #12). Be sure to update your rugs to slip resistant backing and remove any rugs that curl up at the corners. Everything should be secure to the floor to prevent tripping. Also, be sure to use nonslip mats inside the shower or bathtub so that you're not sliding around while bathing.

Secondly, add as many grab bars as needed (tip #13). Add one or two near the toilet to help you stand and sit down. Add one or more inside the shower / tub area to give you maximum security while bathing.

And if needed, add another grab bar outside of the shower / tub space to help you better step in and out of the bathtub.

If the floor surfaces and hand holds are properly addressed in your bathroom(s), this environment will feel much safer and keep you from unwanted harm.

Bedroom Makeover – Tips #14 and #15

The most personal space in your home. Your bedroom is where you rest and must feel most at peace. So, safety here is at an all-time high.

Traveling from the bedroom to the bathroom in the middle of the night has been cited as one of the most dangerous places or pathways in your home due to frequency, time and obstacles.

But I have great news! We are going to fix that and make it the most secure! I want to focus on two things you can quickly do to eliminate unforeseen accidents.

First, let's consider your "night lighting" if you haven't already (tip #14).

You may be someone who enjoys a completely dark bedroom environment as you sleep and I totally understand. My wife does as well. But nonetheless, a nightlight of some kind can be super helpful when you take those late-night steps to the bathroom.

So, if a standard nightlight is not something you want, at least consider using a handheld small flashlight or light from your phone (flashlight

button). If you can visually improve your surroundings, you very quickly reduce the chances of taking a nasty spill in the dark.

Secondly, declutter your room (tip #15) as soon as you can!

Many of us have items in our way clogging up the path from the bed to the bathroom. Perhaps it's a laundry basket, oscillating fan, chair or something else. Be sure to move these items from your pathway to improve the space you have to move in.

The less you have to trip over or move around, the better your chances of safely moving in the middle of the night and getting back to bed safely.



Floor Surfaces – Tips #16 and #17

Feeling more grounded may be easier than you think... if you're willing to keep things tidy and secured.

Moving from room to room in your home must be thoughtfully done. No longer can you take for granted what you're stepping on or where you're stepping as you move throughout your home.

When we're younger, we spend very little if any time considering things such as floor surfaces and our safety. We feel sure on our feet and confident enough to avoid a fall should we kick the leg of a chair, corner of the rug or catch our toe on the shoe we left in our path.

But hazards like these are exactly what we must concern ourselves with once we realize that one bad fall can be catastrophic and result in a life-changing injury or worse.

I have a few simple, but super effective changes to help create the safe environment you deserve.

First, as previously mentioned when it comes to the bathroom, all loose area rugs and/or carpeting MUST be

secured to the floor with double sided tape or a good quality slip-resistant backing (tip #16).

Another option is also to simply remove as many rugs as you can in the areas you travel most. Obviously, this decision may take some consideration, but remember that your safety and livelihood is far more important than a decorative rug.

Secondly, as previously mentioned when it comes to your bedroom, all floors should be kept clear of clutter and obstacles (tip #17). This may be items like shoes or sneakers, a dog or cat toy, small potted plants and power cords to name a few things.

Having less obstacles in your way and fewer rugs scattered around your home is a great strategy for ensuring safe travels each day.

Strong as a Grandparent – Tip #18

Feeling strong is not just for young men, athletes and bodybuilders.

The muscles of the body must always be tested, contracted and stretched no matter if you're a 20-year-old college student or 65-year-old grandmother. Physical strength is as essential to life

as mental and emotional strength. We need them all to live a full, well rounded life.

This physical strength serves us very well in common household chores like carrying a laundry basket, moving a dining chair, vacuuming, bringing in the groceries or opening a can of tomato sauce.

All of these tasks sound simple but without some actual physical strength, performing these tasks may be too much or too demanding resulting in frustration and possible injury.

The best thing you can do is follow an exercise schedule (beyond just the NBT Level I-III programs) that provides some level of total body



resistance training combined with some cardiovascular (heart) activity. Some of the most popular approaches is a 2 or 3 day per week workout plan that can be modified or intensified every 6-8 weeks based on your results.

As stated in the opening of this report, nothing happens until something moves. That something is YOU. You need to move every day in order to solidify and strengthen your muscles, bones, organs and of course, your sense of balance.

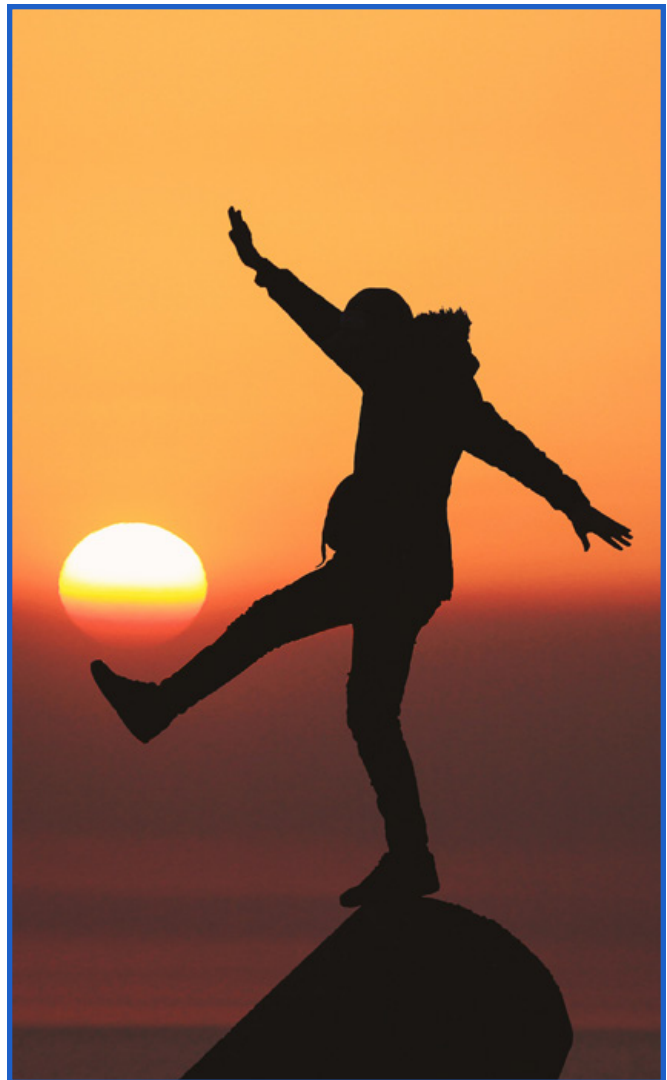
The Great Outdoors – Tip #19

There's nothing quite like being outside in the fresh air, getting some sunshine and fully appreciating nature.

Now if you're more of a homebody, I completely understand. Don't feel obligated to head outside if you're truly not interested. Especially considering that this special bonus report is focused on fall-proofing your home and living space.

These last two tips are a bit more outside the box.

But to be complete and share my love of nature, I felt compelled to add your own backyard and neighborhood to this top 20 list. We can even venture a



touch farther out if you'd like, into your back woods or local town / county park for some easy trail walking.

These areas are terrific for helping to inspire movement and improve your ability to move well and feel balanced on uneven terrain. Just be sure you're either doing this with a friend or family member or when you head out, let someone know where you're going and for how long so that they can check in with you. And bring your cell phone and/or emergency response device

with you (discussed next).

The freedom of being outside is a terrific boost for your mood and provides you with several healthy forms of activity from walking and hiking to swimming and biking. There's no need to give these things up if you love them. Remember, our aim here is to live a more fulfilling, independent lifestyle.

Emergency Response System – Tip #20

The last tip is one you're very familiar with.

After decades of popular commercials on television promoting this lifesaving device, you still possibly never considered one for yourself. By now we've all seen the, "I've fallen and I can't get up" commercials a dozen or more times.

But what exactly is it?

An emergency response system is a small, simple device that you carry with you wherever you go. This can be in the form of a necklace, bracelet, watch or keychain and with the press of a button, it can dial 9-1-1 to alert emergency services and other emergency contacts that you've fallen or gotten injured in some way and need immediate assistance.

Having something like this, especially



for those who live alone, can be a lifesaving decision.

Just think, if you never have to press that button, that's great news indeed. But if you ever actually need this emergency response system to save your life and you don't have it, that would be seriously unfortunate for you and for those that love you.

Decide what makes sense for your life and if necessary, discuss this with close friends or loved one who may offer perspectives you never considered. Getting immediate help after a fall could be the difference between life and death.

CONCLUSION - LIVE YOUR BEST & SAFEST LIFE



My hope for you is that you've decided to take action in your life.

To set yourself up for success. To make decisions that can help improve your quality of life and help protect you from unnecessary injuries or extended time living in pain from an avoidable fall or accident.

There's a lot here to consider.

Please take your time and re-read any sections that are especially important to you. Your eyesight and hearing may be in terrific shape but you now realize that your indoor / outdoor lighting needs a major overhaul and your

bathroom needs a serious makeover to make it safer.

Or maybe you're on some prescription medications and aren't fully aware of the side effects or you've never really invested in quality footwear.

That's what this special bonus report is for, to help inform and encourage simple changes in your life to fall-proof your home and keep you safe, healthy and free from the fears that hold many people back.

It's time to move and live your best life. So, get moving today!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris Wilson specializes in all kinds of strength modalities; especially functional fitness exercise designed to restore balance and stability which improves body movement patterns. Chris has been passionate about exercise and human performance for decades and is a lifelong advocate for staying strong in body, mind and spirit.



Chris became a Certified Personal Trainer in 1999 with the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) and has trained over 15,000 hours with clients of all ages, especially older adults and seniors. He's also certified with the American Sports & Fitness Association (ASFA) in Balance and Stability Instruction, is a certified Russian Kettlebell Instructor (RKC) and a Specialist of Sports Nutrition with the ISSA.

Chris resides in the sunny Clearwater area of Florida with his wife Samantha and their beautiful children Kellan and Camryn.

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