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Creating a Safe Home Environment for Stroke Survivors in the Mid-Cities

Returning home after a stroke can bring comfort, but it may also reveal new challenges. A loose rug, dim hallway, or frequently used item on a high shelf can make everyday movement more difficult.

Creating a safer home starts with looking at familiar spaces through the lens of your loved one's current abilities. The goal is to support independence while reducing avoidable hazards—not to take over every activity or change everything at once.

Practical adjustments such as clearing pathways, removing throw rugs, securing larger rugs, and making lighting easier to access can help create a more supportive recovery environment.

What Readers Will Learn

- Why a personalized home safety assessment matters after stroke.
- How to review pathways, rugs, lighting, and bathroom access.
- Ways to make everyday essentials easier to reach.

- Why equipment and assistance should follow rehabilitation guidance.
- How non-medical home care can support safe daily routines.

Start With a Personalized Home Safety Assessment

Before buying equipment or making major changes, ask the rehabilitation or discharge team about a home safety assessment. An occupational therapist can help determine which modifications fit your loved one's abilities, routines, and living environment.

A professional assessment can help families consider:

- How the survivor enters and exits the home.
- Space for prescribed mobility equipment.
- Access to the bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen.
- Bathing and toileting arrangements.
- Stairs and changes in floor level.
- The location of frequently used items.
- Which daily activities require assistance.

When feasible, reviewing the home before discharge can give families time to make changes before their loved one returns.

Clear the Routes Used Every Day

Begin with the paths your loved one uses most often: from the bed to the bathroom, from the living room to the kitchen, and from the main entrance to frequently used rooms.

Helpful changes include:

- Moving furniture out of walking paths.
- Removing shoes, bags, laundry baskets, and pet toys from the floor.
- Routing cords away from walking areas.

- Keeping doorways and hallways free of clutter.
- Replacing or repairing worn and torn flooring.
- Checking that mobility equipment can move through the space.

Essential routes should be easy to navigate without stepping around obstacles.

Ask the therapist to review narrow spaces and turns rather than assuming that a clear-looking route will work with a walker or wheelchair.

Remove Loose Rugs and Secure Remaining Floor Coverings

Rugs can make a room feel comfortable, but loose edges and slipping surfaces can create tripping hazards.

Removing throw rugs and securing larger rugs can help reduce these hazards. Worn or torn surfaces should also be repaired or replaced.

Walk through the home and check for:

- Small rugs near entrances or beds.
- Curled rug corners.
- Loose runners in hallways.
- Carpet edges that lift.
- Floor coverings that shift underfoot.

Securing a rug does not make it suitable for every survivor. Ask the rehabilitation team whether removing it altogether would better fit your loved one's mobility needs.

Improve Lighting Before Movement Becomes Difficult

Good lighting helps make obstacles and floor changes easier to see. Pay attention to entrances, hallways, stairs, bathrooms, and the nighttime route between the bed and toilet.

Consider:

- Placing a lamp within easy reach of the bed.
- Adding nightlights along frequently used routes.
- Improving lighting near steps and doorways.
- Making light switches accessible.
- Replacing burned-out bulbs promptly.
- Keeping cords from added lamps out of walking paths.

An accessible bedside lamp and nightlights can make it easier to see before moving through the home. Make lighting improvements without introducing new floor hazards from extension cords or poorly placed lamps.

Make Bathroom Safety a Priority

Bathrooms combine wet surfaces, tight spaces, and movements such as stepping into a tub, turning, sitting, and standing. These tasks may need additional support after a stroke.

Depending on the assessment, appropriate features may include:

- Securely installed grab bars near the toilet and bathing area.
- Nonslip surfaces in the tub or shower.
- A shower chair or tub transfer bench.
- An appropriately selected toilet support device.
- Clear access to towels and personal-care supplies.
- Adequate lighting.

Ask the rehabilitation team to recommend equipment and placement. The right arrangement should support how your loved one actually gets into the bathing area, sits, stands, and transfers—not simply match a generic checklist.

Keep Frequently Used Items Easy to Access

A home can be free of clutter but still difficult to use if everyday items require bending, stretching, or reaching into high cabinets.

Look at where your loved one keeps:

- Clothing and personal-care supplies.
- Frequently used dishes and utensils.
- A phone and charger.
- Glasses and other daily essentials.
- Items needed for approved home activities.

Arrange these items where they can be reached comfortably, while keeping counters and bedside areas organized. Avoid encouraging someone to climb or overreach to retrieve an item.

Keeping frequently used kitchen items on accessible shelves can reduce the need for unsafe reaching. An occupational therapist can help tailor storage and accessibility changes to the survivor's particular needs.

Match Assistance to the Care Team's Recommendations

Home modifications are one part of a safety plan. Families also need clear guidance about which activities their loved one can manage and where assistance is required.

Before helping with walking, bathing, or transfers, ask the rehabilitation team to explain:

- Which tasks can be completed independently.
- Which require supervision.
- Which require trained hands-on assistance.
- What equipment should be used.
- What to do if a task becomes difficult or unsafe.

A transfer is movement between surfaces, such as getting from a bed to a chair. Do not assume that new equipment alone makes a transfer safe. Home adaptations should be selected around the survivor's abilities and the assistance available.

Reinforce a Safe Daily Routine

A safer environment works best when the household also follows a consistent plan. Families can make safety part of everyday routines by checking that:

- Walking paths remain clear.
- Lighting is available before the survivor moves.
- Prescribed equipment is accessible.
- Frequently used items are returned to their designated places.
- Recommended assistance is available for activities that require it.

Home adjustments and daily routines can work together to support safer mobility, confidence, and independence.

Involve your loved one in these decisions whenever possible. Explain why a change is being made and ask whether it makes the task easier or creates a new difficulty.

Revisit the Setup as Recovery Continues

The first home arrangement may not remain the best one throughout recovery. Keep track of places where movement feels difficult, equipment that seems awkward, and tasks that require more help than expected.

Share those observations with the rehabilitation team. Home safety should reflect the survivor's individual situation rather than follow a one-size-fits-all approach.

A fall, near-fall, or change in mobility should prompt a conversation with the care team about whether the environment or assistance plan needs reassessment.

How Always Best Care of the Mid-Cities Can Help

Contact Always Best Care of the Mid-Cities to discuss available non-medical in-home support that complements your loved one's recovery plan.

Depending on local services and the individualized care arrangement, assistance may include:

- Companionship.
- Meal preparation.
- Light housekeeping.
- Transportation.
- Personal-care support.
- Help maintaining organized daily routines.

Explain any walking, transfer, or supervision needs before arranging care so the team can determine what assistance it can safely provide. Non-medical home care does not replace a professional home assessment, physical therapy, occupational therapy, or medical treatment.

Practical support can help families maintain the home setup and routines recommended by the healthcare team while giving family caregivers needed relief.

Frequently Asked Questions

What should we address first when preparing the home?

Start with essential routes and activities: entering the home, reaching the bathroom, getting to the kitchen, and moving around the bedroom. Clear obstacles, remove loose throw rugs, and check lighting.

Is securing a rug enough to make it safe?

Not always. Removing throw rugs may be the safer option, while larger rugs may need secure backing or another appropriate method to prevent movement. Ask the rehabilitation team whether a remaining rug is suitable for your loved one's mobility and equipment.

Which bathroom modifications may help?

Depending on individual needs, options may include grab bars, nonslip bathing surfaces, a shower chair or transfer bench, and toilet support equipment. Professional guidance can help determine the right setup.

Who can help us decide which changes are necessary?

Ask the rehabilitation or discharge team about an occupational therapy home assessment. An occupational therapist can recommend modifications suited to the survivor's abilities and home environment.

Can home care replace rehabilitation?

No. Non-medical home care can provide practical assistance around the recovery plan, but clinical rehabilitation and equipment recommendations remain the responsibility of qualified healthcare professionals.

Build Safety Around Everyday Life

A safer home begins with practical changes that fit your loved one's needs. Clear pathways, secure floor coverings, accessible lighting, appropriate bathroom features, and reachable essentials can make daily life more manageable.

Ask the rehabilitation team about a personalized home safety assessment, then contact Always Best Care of the Mid-Cities to discuss in-home assistance that complements the recovery plan and supports your family's daily routine.

Contact Always Best Care of the Mid-Cities at (817) 380-9208 to learn more and schedule your free consultation.