

# Safe Years



**Information for older people and their loved ones on preventing accidents**



People only have one life

**KOTITAPATURMA.FI**

## Safe Years – Information for older people and their loved ones on preventing accidents

### Accident Prevention Network 2020

Finnish Association for Substance Abuse Prevention, [www.ehyt.fi](http://www.ehyt.fi)

Federation of Finnish Financial Services, [www.finanssiala.fi](http://www.finanssiala.fi)

Finnish Road Safety Council, [www.liikenneturva.fi](http://www.liikenneturva.fi)

Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom, [www.traficom.fi](http://www.traficom.fi)

National Defence Training Association of Finland, [www.mpk.fi](http://www.mpk.fi)

Alzheimer Society of Finland, [www.muistiliitto.fi](http://www.muistiliitto.fi)

National Police Board of Finland, [www.poliisi.fi/national\\_police\\_board](http://www.poliisi.fi/national_police_board)

Defence Command Finland, [www.puolustusvoimat.fi](http://www.puolustusvoimat.fi)

Ministry of the Interior / Department for Rescue Services, [www.intermin.fi](http://www.intermin.fi)

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, [www.stm.fi](http://www.stm.fi)

SOSTE Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health, [www.soste.fi](http://www.soste.fi)

Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, [www.kunnat.net](http://www.kunnat.net)

Finnish National Rescue Association, [www.spek.fi](http://www.spek.fi)

Finnish Red Cross, [www.redcross.fi](http://www.redcross.fi)

Finnish Swimming Teaching and Lifesaving Federation, [www.suh.fi](http://www.suh.fi)

Workers' Compensation Center, [www.tvk.fi](http://www.tvk.fi)

National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), [www.thl.fi](http://www.thl.fi)

Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency (Tukes), [www.tukes.fi](http://www.tukes.fi)

Centre for Occupational Safety, [www.ttk.fi](http://www.ttk.fi)

Finnish Institute for Occupational Health, [www.ttl.fi](http://www.ttl.fi)

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# Safe living at home

We spend most of our time at home, which is why we are more prone to accidents there. In Finland, more than 1.5 million physical injuries occur every year. They are most commonly caused by accidents at home or in free time. Most of the accidents concerning older people are related to slipping or falling. Every year, Finnish hospitals treat more than 30,000 people aged over 65 who have been injured at home.

Most of these accidents could have been prevented. Accident-free life is entirely possible at all ages. Accidents can be prevented by identifying dangers at home and caring for one's own health and well-being.



## For older people

Alertness during daily chores and even the smallest improvements to safety are often sufficient means of preventing accidents. When you take care of your health, mobility and ability to function and seek appropriate treatment for your illnesses, you can prevent accidents and the injuries that follow. You should also talk about your health and accident prevention with your loved ones, your doctor, and the people who provide services in your home, such as a nurse or the person in charge of home care in your town or city.

## For the loved ones of an older person

The people close to an older person have an important role to play in preventing accidents at home.

Close relatives know the habits and environment of the older person and can identify places that may be dangerous. It may also be easier for an older person to talk about their fear of falling to a loved one than to a doctor, for example.

This way, matters can be resolved more rapidly, and you can start planning the means of preventing accidents.

Even the smallest measures to prevent accidents are vital. Sometimes, the support of a friend, a talk, taking a walk or cooking together may suffice. It is important to remember that the older person always makes the final decisions about their home. Any changes that improve safety must be made in agreement with them.



# Ability to function improves safety

When you take care of your health and ability to function and seek appropriate treatment for your illnesses, you can reduce the risk of injury and improve everyday safety. Regular exercise, sufficient and varied nutrition, suitable medication and maintaining a good mood are the cornerstones of health.

## Exercise improves health and safety

With everyday activity and physical exercise, you can maintain your ability to do everyday chores safely. Everyday activity includes all the times you move about when doing daily chores. Brisk everyday activity has many benefits for maintaining the ability to function. You can make many choices to increase your everyday activity: such as taking the stairs instead of a lift or walking to the grocery shop.

■ To maintain health and the ability to function, the recommended amounts are brisk activity (such as walking) for a total of 2 hours 30 minutes a week, or vigorous activity (such as skiing or cycling) for a total of 1 hour 15 minutes a week. Activity that improves muscular strength, balance and flexibility twice a week is also recommended. In addition to this, light movement as often as possible is recommended. The recommended amounts of activity can be accumulated from short periods of a few minutes' activity during the week, always depending on what feels comfortable. The importance of sleep and rest should not be forgotten, either.

Older people should work on their muscular strength, balance and flexibility two or three times a week. Many keep-fit exercises involve all of these qualities at the same time. You can also maintain and improve your muscular strength with strength exercises done at home or at a gym. Good exercises for balance include walking in nature, skiing and dancing.

Physical exercise is pleasant and refreshing when you find the right sport or group for you. The sports services and service centres of municipalities, among other actors, organise exercise groups suitable for older people.

Time flies when you are exercising with others – finding a pleasant group or meeting with a friend to exercise is worth it. Moving about in nature is also an excellent option. Foraging for berries and mushrooms or fishing are great ways of maintaining mobility and relaxing the mind.

You can avoid exercise-related accidents and strains when you exercise within the limits of your body and health. You should never exercise when you are ill, but it is important to start moving again when you are feeling better. Long periods of bed rest and immobility quickly weaken the muscles in



the legs, which also makes you more prone to falling, for example.

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The UKK Institute's exercise recommendations for people aged 65 and above are available online at

- [www.ukkinstituutti.fi/liikkumisen-suositus/yli-65-vuotiaiden-liikkumisen-suositus](http://www.ukkinstituutti.fi/liikkumisen-suositus/yli-65-vuotiaiden-liikkumisen-suositus)

The National Institute for Health and Welfare and the UKK Institute have also produced tools to assess the risk of falling:

- [www.ukkinstituutti.fi/en/products-services/tools-to-prevent-falls](http://www.ukkinstituutti.fi/en/products-services/tools-to-prevent-falls)
- [www.thl.fi/ikina](http://www.thl.fi/ikina)

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■ If you are unsure about what kind of exercise is safe for you, please ask a doctor, public health nurse or a physical exercise professional for advice. On courses and in groups, the instructors can guide you on the safest forms of exercise for you and how to improve your general condition, skills and techniques in the sport of your choice. Exercise is safer when you remember not to exercise when ill or intoxicated.

## An active mind

An active and healthy mind is an important aspect of accident prevention. Tiredness, sleeplessness and depression may cause forgetfulness or unsteady and careless movement, and, as a result, increase the probability of accidents.

Depression in an older person may be caused by changes in their ability to function, the loss of their spouse, an incipient memory disorder, or loneliness. The reason for the depression must always be examined so that the right kind of help and support can be offered. Sometimes, medication may help improve the mood, but you should remember to ask the doctor about how the medication affects the susceptibility to falling. A good support network, friends and hobbies support an active mind. It is important to leave home and join others, for example in the hobby or exercise groups offered by service centres.

Sleeplessness or fitful sleep may increase the susceptibility to accidents. If you are having trouble sleeping, there are other solutions available than just medication. Regular bedtimes and wake-up times and following your individual day rhythm help you fall asleep and improve the quality of sleep. Sleep medication may increase the probability of accidents, which is why the need for it should be discussed with a doctor.



### Alcohol recommendations for older people

According to the recommendations, people older than 65 years should not drink **more than two portions of alcohol** at a time. The weekly consumption of alcohol should not exceed seven portions.



Upper limit recommended in the Alcohol Programme of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

### Alcohol increases accident risk

To avoid accidents, older people should take special care when drinking alcohol and only consume much smaller amounts than before. The system of an older person reacts to alcohol differently to that of a younger person. Even small portions can intoxicate you and weaken balance, coordination and perception, which also increases the risk of falling.

Illnesses and medications may strengthen the effect of alcohol. For example, if you are using medication to sleep, fall asleep or improve your mood, always consult a doctor on whether you can consume alcohol. The combined effects of alcohol and medication may be surprising, which you should remember when you are about to drive a car.

### Medication and illness

Do you take several medications daily? Do you feel tired or dizzy after taking your medication? If yes, you should discuss your medication and its effect on accident risk with your doctor, particularly the risk of falling or risk of accidents when driving a car. This is particularly important if you take medication that affects the nervous system, such as sleep, mood or sedative medication, or medication used to treat memory disorders.

Simultaneous use of several medications may also have harmful effects, such as trouble

with balance or movement, which also makes you prone to fall. Ask your doctor to review your medications regularly, at least twice a year. You should never stop taking prescribed medication on your own.

The medication prescribed by a doctor must always be taken in the prescribed doses and at the specified time of day. Taking the medication prescribed by a doctor at the right time may even be a requirement for driving a car safely. A medication dispenser or a dosage service helps with the taking and monitoring of medication. Most pharmacies offer dosage services.

### Safe medication:

- Also discuss any non-prescription medication and other supplements you use with your doctor.
- Only take medication that is prescribed to you.
- Follow the instructions on the medication carefully.
- Return expired or extra medication to a pharmacy.
- Read more about medication and alcohol in the guide compiled by the Finnish Association for Substance Abuse Prevention:  
[www.ehyt.fi/fi/ikaantyneet-1](http://www.ehyt.fi/fi/ikaantyneet-1)





### Nutrition is key

If you eat too little, have long breaks between meals, or have unbalanced nutrition, your mobility may weaken, and you may be more susceptible to accidents and falls, among other effects. Varied and tasty food, as well as sufficient hydration, are important for older people.

The food must contain sufficient amounts of protein, nutrients, vitamin D and fibre. Protein maintains the muscles, which is why it is critical for the mobility of older people. Meat and dairy are good sources of protein. If your diet is not very diverse, you may need a vitamin D supplement, particularly in winter when there is less sunlight.

Older people do not usually need to lose weight or follow a strict diet, unless there are special health reasons for this. It is important to eat varied and tasty food and consume a sufficient amount of liquids, preferably in good company. Dietitians and other healthcare professionals can offer advice on a diverse diet. Having your nutrition evaluated regularly helps you keep fit.

### Fear of accidents

There is no need to be afraid of accidents, but it is natural to be concerned over things that could happen. Caution can help prevent

accidents. However, intense fear and caution may increase the risk of accidents.

If the fear of accidents limits your everyday life, you should discuss this with your loved ones or a nurse. When you think about whether the fear is reasonable and what causes it, you can plan changes that improve safety, such as getting a stove guard or a coffee maker with an automatic switch.

Fear of falling is common, particularly in slippery winter conditions. Using anti-slip guards on shoes or walking with poles or a walking stick make it much safer to go outside. There are several types of anti-slip guards available, and you can find the best ones for you by testing them. Ask a footwear seller or a shoe repairer for advice.

Hip protectors can protect against hip fractures. There are several protector models available, and you can find the most comfortable model by testing them.

During the most slippery conditions in winter, it is wise to not go outside unless absolutely necessary. On these days, you replace a walk with a home exercise or walking up and down the stairs.

Outdoors activities are safer and more pleasant with company. Ask a neighbour or friend to join you! You can also find company for outdoor activities through the 'friend services' of your hometown or city or various organisations.

# Make your home safe

You can make many arrangements at home to help with daily life. Prevention is key to a safe home. You should identify the potential dangers in your home and make the necessary changes to safety well in advance – before an accident occurs.

## Accessible environment

When there are no unnecessary objects or tricky rug corners on the paths across the home, walking about is safe – even if you cannot lift your feet very high. Unobstructed paths in the entrance hall, hallways and stairs also ensure that you can get to safety quickly and safely when there is a fire, for instance. Thresholds should be removed or lowered, and electric cords should be attached to walls so that they are not in the way.

Keep entrance halls and hallways free of loose objects. Cabinets along the walls for shoes and clothes make it easier to tidy the entrance hall. Place a sturdy seat near the door so that you can easily put your shoes and anti-slip guards on and take them off.

A rug corner or a slippery rug are all too common causes of falling. Rugs are also difficult for mobility aids.

This is why you should choose low-pile rugs with non-slip undersides, or use separate anti-slip materials under the rugs. Also check the material on the underside of the rug. Some materials make the floor under the rug slippery when the rug is removed to refresh it outside, for example. Sometimes, it may be best to stop using rugs completely.

Going up and down the stairs is easier when the steps are clearly visible and distinguishable. You can glue colourful anti-slip stickers to the steps to increase visibility and prevent slipping.

Stairways should also have sufficient lighting. Install light switches to both the top and the bottom of the stairs. Lights with motion sensors make stairways safer. Adjust the lights on your path so that they stay on long enough for you to reach the top or bottom of the stairs, even if you have to rest in the middle.





## Non-slip floors

You can improve the floor materials of your home. Do not wax the floor so that it is too slippery. Dust also makes the floor more slippery – cleanliness also prevents accidents! A stone floor can be treated with an anti-slip substance.

Anti-slip socks are helpful if the floors are slightly slippery. Your indoor shoes or slippers should be firm and have a strap around the heel.

## Sufficient lighting

Sufficient, non-glare lighting both indoors and outdoors improves safety and makes everyday life easier. In a well-lit environment, it is easier to see the space and the paths across it and do daily chores.

You should have a sufficient number of light switches around the home. Switch on the lights in advance before dark so that you do not need to fumble about in the dark. Lights with motions sensors are useful both indoors and outdoors. Keep a light on your path to the toilet and the kitchen. This way, moving about at night is safer.

Good lighting does not glare and dazzle you. You can reduce the glare by reflecting the light into the room via the ceiling or a wall. Blinds effectively reduce the glare from the sun. When coming inside from bright daylight, stand still for a moment so that your eyes adjust to the indoor conditions and moving about is safer.

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■ By taking care of your vision, you can prevent falls and other accidents. Regular appointments with an optician or ophthalmologist and changing your glasses as needed also improve your safety. Also remember to clean your glasses. Useful aids if your vision is weakened include a phone with large keyboard, a watch with large numbers and a magnifying glass with a light.

## Safe bathroom

In the bathroom, safety can be improved by installing support rails on the shower walls and by the toilet and the washbasin. The person in charge of aid equipment in your municipality can help with placing the support rails. If standing in the shower feels difficult, or you feel off balance when closing your eyes in the shower, you need a shower chair. A folding chair attached securely to a wall is the safest choice. This kind of chair will not slip away, and it can be folded when it is not in use.

The best floor materials for bathrooms are slightly coarse. You can improve the safety of ordinary tiles or plastic floors with anti-slip mats. You should have one in the shower, in the bathtub and on the floor where you step down from sauna benches. In the shower, washing liquids and supplies should be close at hand in a basket from which they cannot fall out.

Always protect the sauna heater with a robust wooden rail. The sauna is not a place for hanging laundry or storing things. It is best to have company when bathing in a sauna. This way, help is close if you start feeling dizzy or need support for climbing on the benches. Remember to drink plenty of water while enjoying sauna since dehydration may also cause dizziness.

Only use electric devices that are designed for wet spaces in the bathroom. Do not touch an electric socket during a bath or shower as this may cause an electric shock.

## Safe kitchen

Cooking is fun, but things like careless use of a stove may increase accident risk. Electric stoves are the most common cause of fire out of all household appliances.

Caution is always key when using a stove. Always turn off the stove after use or if you leave the kitchen, even for the shortest time. Remove pans and pots from the stove right after the food is ready.

A stove guard is an excellent aid. It monitors the temperature and use of the stove. If the stove gets too hot or is on for too long, the guard switches the power off. The guard can be installed on both old and new stoves. You can buy or rent a stove guard.

Only a qualified electrical engineer may install a stove guard. A safety stove is also a great option. Its timer automatically turns off the power after a specific time.

Do not store any flammable materials near the stove, such as paper towels, oven mitts or potholders, or tea towels.

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### You can improve the safety of your kitchen with several small actions:

- Ensure that the cooktop is well lit.
- Keep the most commonly used kitchen supplies and ingredients close to hand. If you do need to reach into the upper cupboards, consider getting a safety stepladder. A safety stepladder has wide steps and a support rail onto which you can

hold when climbing up or down the ladder.

- Follow the use and care instructions of electric appliances. Unplug them after use. Check the condition of the appliances regularly and replace faulty ones.
- Only run the dishwasher or laundry machine when you are home. Keep the water valves closed when the machine is not in use.

### First aid supplies

A well-equipped first aid kit may save you in the event of an accident. Check the location and contents of the kit regularly so that the supplies can be found quickly and easily when needed.

After you have used any of the contents of the first aid kit, replace them with new supplies as soon as possible so that the kit is always ready to be used.

First aid kits with the necessary supplies can be bought from the Red Cross, camping shops, safety equipment shops and department stores.



Safety also involves keeping your first aid skills up to date. When you have the skills, you know what to do if you or a person close to you has an accident. First aid instructions need to be revisited every now and then. You can purchase first aid guides from the Red Cross ([www.punaisenristinkauppa.fi](http://www.punaisenristinkauppa.fi)) or read them online ([www.redcross.fi/learn-first-aid/first-aid-instructions](http://www.redcross.fi/learn-first-aid/first-aid-instructions)).

### Use aid and safety equipment

A chair with higher legs makes it easier to get up, and extensions on the legs of the bed make it easier to get out of bed. Aid equipment makes everyday life more secure, from the small kitchen tools to mobility aids, such as wheel walkers.

You should discuss the loaning of safety equipment with local aid equipment services or the home care staff. They usually have plenty of practical experiences of what aids are the best and most functional.

Equipment is sold by various companies, most of which operate online. You can see and learn about the equipment at various information and service points before making the purchase decision.

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#### More information about safety devices:

- [www.valli.fi/tyomuotomme/ikateknologiakeskus/selvitykset-ja-tutkimukset/](http://www.valli.fi/tyomuotomme/ikateknologiakeskus/selvitykset-ja-tutkimukset/)



### Useful phone

It is worth saving important numbers on your phone. These include the emergency number, the number of the local health station or doctor, and the numbers of family members and friends. Also keep these numbers in your address book on your nightstand, for example. Save the phone numbers of the people closest to you on your mobile phone using the format "ICE + name" (ICE = In Case of Emergency). This way, you can ensure that your loved ones are reached quickly in an emergency.

You should charge your mobile phone often and keep it with you, in your pocket or a pouch, even at home. A safety phone and a connected alarm wristband are good investments since they make it easier to call for help quickly in an emergency. However, the wristband is only useful when worn, so you should wear it even in the bath, shower or sauna.

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#### Calling the emergency number:

Have the emergency number 112 in a visible spot in your home, for example on a bulletin board or by the nightstand. Call the emergency number if:

- you are having a seizure or suspect you are having one
- you are severely injured
- you have accident
- you notice a fire.

When calling the emergency number, it is important that:

- you calmly answer the questions asked
- you act according to the instructions given
- you only end the call when you have permission to do so.

You should also download the **112 Suomi** mobile app and give the app permission to locate your phone. With the app, the information about your location is automatically transmitted to the emergency response centre. This helps the response workers process your call and send help.



## Take care with fire and cigarettes

Caution is key in preventing fires. Fire needs to be handled carefully, and you should never leave lit candles unsupervised.

Always place candles on a steady non-flammable surface or press them tightly into a candle holder. The best place for candles is in the middle of a table – make sure that a ceiling lamp or anything else is not directly above the candle. A windowsill or the edge of a bookcase are not good places for a candle. LED candles are excellent alternatives to real candles.

Smoking is a major fire hazard. You should never smoke when lying in bed or on a sofa. If you smoke, do so outside where possible. Always put out the cigarettes carefully and do not leave half-smoked cigarettes on the edge of an ashtray. Be particularly cautious when smoking if you are consuming alcohol or taking medication that makes you tired. Falling asleep holding a cigarette is a common cause of a fire.

## Life-saving smoke alarm

Every floor of a house or apartment must have at least one functional smoke alarm per 60 square metres. The safest method is installing one smoke alarm in the entrance hall and one in each bedroom.

Check the batteries of all smoke alarms once a month and replace them at least once a year, if you are using regular batteries. With an additional device, the batteries of the smoke alarm can be placed at a suitable height on the wall, which makes it easier to replace them. You should replace the entire smoke alarm at least once every ten years.

## Up-to-date fire extinguishers

Everyone should have a fire blanket at home. Place the blanket on wall in its bag so that it is quick and easy to grab in case of a fire. Learn how to use the blanket in advance.

You can also get a portable fire extinguisher for your home. You need to learn to

use the extinguisher carefully and well in advance. It needs to be stored in a place where it is easily accessible.

The extinguisher should be checked at a qualified extinguisher shop every two years. People living in a house are responsible for maintaining the building and the related equipment.

- Make sure that the people living in and regularly visiting your home know where the fire equipment is stored.
- Ensure you know the exit routes from your home. Make sure you are not obstructing the routes with stored objects. Also make sure that you can use the exit route quickly with any aid equipment you may have.

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## In the event of a fire:

If there is a fire in your home:

- Go outside.
- Close the doors behind you as you exit.
- Help others exit.
- Call 112 from a safe place.
- Instruct professional assistance to the scene.
- When exiting, take the stairs. You may become trapped if you use the lift.

If there is a fire in a neighbouring apartment or the stairwell:

- Stay in your apartment and keep the door closed. Smoke is lethal and kills rapidly.
- Never enter a smoke-filled hallway!
- Call 112.
- Seal the gaps in the door with a damp cloth or similar.
- Wait for the rescuers on a balcony or by an open window.
- Draw the rescuers' attention to yourself by shouting or waving your hands.

# Moving about outdoors

Moving about daily, including outside the home, is vital. Still, it may be wise to switch to indoor exercise during slippery winter conditions. Check the weather via the local news or subscribe to weather warnings on your phone. During winter, move carefully and wear suitable shoes. When it is dark, remember to wear a reflector.

## Do not fall

When going outside, it is best not to rush. Reserve sufficient time and move with caution. Good planning is worth it: What is the safest route? Which roads are usually cleared of snow and gritted first? Are there any resting spots along the route? Which buses have lower floors? Is there a service bus available that could pick you up closer to your home? Should you take a taxi if the roads are very slippery? Weather warnings for pedestrians can also be found on the website of the Finnish Meteorological Institute ([www.fmi.fi](http://www.fmi.fi)). In some cities, you can subscribe to a free SMS service that will warn you of slippery conditions on [liukastumisvaroitus.fi](http://liukastumisvaroitus.fi).

To prevent slipping and falling, the clearing and gritting of paths should be taken care of. If necessary, you can request that

your municipality take care of the winter maintenance of public areas or streets. In the case of a yard or similar area, the owner of the property is responsible for maintenance.

In the yard, guard rails provide support and improve safety. Outdoor lighting also increases safety.

## Safe footwear

Good shoes are the most essential safety equipment for pedestrians. Particularly in winter, shoes should have the following qualities: soft sole material, pattern-heavy soles, groove depth of 5–8 mm, and low, wide heels. Some shoes also have ‘traction soles’, the qualities of which are similar to the friction tyres used in cars.



Photo: THL



Photo: Ville-Veikko Heinonen/Liikenneturva



### Use anti-slip guards

In slippery conditions, anti-slip guards are a priceless help. The roads are the most slippery when the weather suddenly turns warmer after below-zero temperatures or gets colder after warmer temperatures.

There are several models of anti-slip guard available. Some of the products are fixed to the shoe, while some can be removed. The CE label on the anti-slip guards signals that the product has been carefully inspected. Good anti-slip guards are ones you can put on and take off with ease. When walking on smooth stone surfaces or indoors, the anti-slip guards may be slippery. Shoes with friction soles are a good alternative if using conventional anti-slip guards is not possible. Nordic walking poles with ice picks are also a great aid for preventing falls in winter.

### Reflectors on outdoor clothes

In Finland, a good reflector is a necessity. Wear reflector in a visible spot when moving about in the dark.

You should wear reflectors both on the front and back of the clothes. A reflector vest

is useful in this regard. A safe reflector is CE marked and meets the requirements specified in the standards for safety equipment. On a dark road, a flashlight is useful for increasing visibility and checking the condition of the road.

### Safe car rides

Drivers should also wear shoes with good grip or anti-slip guards, since you may slip when entering or exiting the car. Your fitness to drive may be affected by tiredness, alcohol, medication, illness or emotion. Falling asleep while driving is the most common for older people during the afternoon. On longer trips, take regular breaks and try to drive when you are feeling the most alert. Try to leave in time to avoid rushing.

As you get older, driving in the dark may start to feel more difficult. You can avoid glare by looking diagonally to the right when another vehicle is approaching. A clean windshield and clean and suitable glasses or sunglasses improve traffic safety. If driving in the dark feels uncomfortable, you may wish to only drive in daylight.



Always pay attention to the impact of any medication and follow your doctor's instructions on driving. If you have a seizure, you must never drive a car and must instead call for help. If you have an illness that will reduce your ability to drive safely with time, you and your close ones should discuss when

you should give up driving, and which types of transport you could use. Also consider any transport services available.

There is also aid equipment available for driving. A handle installed on the steering wheel and a turning plate on the seat help with entering and exiting the car. A seatbelt extender helps with fastening the seatbelt.

## Other preparedness

Fraud is increasingly more common. Anyone can be cheated by a skilled criminal, but criminals may be more likely to target older people. The characteristics of fraud include fishing for bank information or login codes, "borrowing" money, or groundless invoices. Fraud via phone or mail is typical. This includes lottery and fundraising fraud.

### Protect yourself against fraud

Fraudsters that wish to enter your home may pretend to be professionals such as maintenance workers, police officers or home care employees. Judging the reliability of a person trying to get inside your home is hard for everyone.

■ *Tietoa ikäihmisille kotona asumisen turvaksi* ('Information for older people to ensure safety at home') produced by Suvanto – For A Safe Old Age and the Finnish Association for the Welfare of Older People.

■ Poliisi.fi

### How to prevent fraud:

- Keep your payment card and its PIN code safely in separate places and never in the entrance hall.
- Set withdrawal and purchase limits for your payment cards.
- Only keep a moderate amount of cash in your home.
- Restrict sales via phone with the Robinson restriction service.
- Prevent the use of service numbers on your phone.
- Do not store the spare key to your home near the door.

More information:

- *Turvaohjeita senioreille* ('safety information for older people') produced by the National Council for Crime Prevention.

Even close family or friends may commit fraud or financial exploitation. Financial exploitation means using or borrowing money or selling property without the owner's permission or a decision on legal guardianship.

With a continuing power of attorney, anyone can decide who will take care of their personal matters if they become incapacitated. You should draw up your continuing power of attorney (as well as your living will and your last will and testament) well in advance, before potential illness. If a continuing power of attorney has not been made and a person needs help to protect their interests, a guardianship can be applied for at The Digital and Population Data Services Agency. The Digital and Population Data Services Agency will assign a guardian, who may be either a public guardian or a loved one of the person in question.

More information about safety at home and accident prevention:  
[www.kotitapaturma.fi](http://www.kotitapaturma.fi)



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Download the 112 Suomi mobile app onto your phone.

Emergency number: 112

Poison Information Centre:  
0800 147 111 (24 h)



People only have one life

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