THE CAREGIVER'S CHEAT SHEET TO:

Made with our friends at CareScout

Home Sweet Home:

Aging in Place Edition

(A home safety checklist for the stage of life when *sweet* means *safe*)

The biggest hazards at home are the boring ones (hi, rugs and midnight bathroom trips).

They're easy to miss because they've always been there. Here's how to make sure **the house keeps up with them.**

First: The Big Picture Safety Scan

Walk the house once with these questions in your back pocket.

- [ ] Could someone trip here?
- [ ] Is there something to grab for balance? And would it actually hold?
- [ ] Does this still work with a cane, walker, or slower gait?
- [ ] Would this be hard to navigate at night?
- [ ] If help was needed right now, could it be reached quickly?

Next: The Room-by-Room Walkthrough

Where everyday hazards tend to hide.

1. Lighting (the Most Underrated Fix)

Falls love the dark.

- [ ] Motion-sensor lights for nighttime trips
- [ ] Light switches easy to reach (especially from bed)
- [ ] No burnt-out bulbs pretending they're not
- [ ] Optional (but delightful): voice-activated lights *(We're looking at you, Alexa)*

Quick win: Nightlights in hallways, bedrooms, and bathrooms

2. Emergency Access

Because stuff happens.

- [ ] Phone within reach of bed and main living areas
- [ ] Emergency contacts programmed and easy to access
- [ ] Medical alert device (wearable, fall detection, etc.)
- [ ] Smoke detectors working
- [ ] Carbon monoxide detectors installed
- [ ] Spare key with a neighbor or in a lockbox

Quick win: Phone charger where they actually sit or sleep

3. Bedroom Check

This is where "getting up" and "sitting down" matter a lot.

- [ ] Bed height easy to get in and out of
- [ ] Light accessible from bed (or voice-activated)
- [ ] Frequently worn clothes easy to reach (no step stools)
- [ ] Phone nearby (worth repeating)

Quick win: Clear pathway from bed to door/bathroom

4. Bathroom Check

This is the fall-risk MVP of the house.

- [ ] Grab bars near toilet and shower/tub
- [ ] Shower bench or stool if standing is tiring
- [ ] Handheld shower head
- [ ] Raised toilet seat or toilet handles
- [ ] Floor dries quickly (or at least doesn't become an ice rink)
- [ ] Water heater set to 120°F or lower

Quick win: Non-slip mat in tub or shower

5. Kitchen Check

The heart of the home. And also… fire.

- [ ] Stove knobs easy to see and turn off
- [ ] Auto shut-off features if available
- [ ] Enough food stocked to avoid risky over-reaching or skipped meals
- [ ] Clear walking paths (no cords, no clutter)

Quick win: Frequently used dishes within easy reach

6. Living Rooms, Hallways & Stairs

Anywhere with movement deserves attention.

- [ ] No cords across walkways
- [ ] Furniture arranged with clear paths
- [ ] Sturdy handrails on stairs
- [ ] Two handrails if stairs are used often
- [ ] Stairs well-lit (top and bottom)

Quick win: No loose rugs (or they're secured with non-slip backing)

Extra Considerations for Dementia Caregivers

If cognitive changes are part of the picture:

- [ ] Medications, cleaning supplies, alcohol locked or secured
- [ ] Sharp objects stored safely
- [ ] Stove safety knobs or auto shut-off
- [ ] Door locks placed out of direct line of sight (to reduce wandering)
- [ ] Monitoring tools if needed (GPS, fall alerts, etc.)

Before You Bring It Up

Nobody loves hearing their house needs fixing, especially from their kid. This part is hard for them too. A few things that help:

- → **Make it a team project,** not an inspection.
- → **Offer choices,** not mandates. (They pick the nightlight.)
- → **Connect safety to what they want:** staying home, on their own terms.

Instead of:	~~"If you fall, you'll have to move."~~
Try:	**"I want to make sure this house keeps working for you. Let's look at a few things together."**

This isn't a hostile takeover. **It's a safety check for the house, with everyone's input and veto power intact.**