



Fire-Proof Your Home

CHALLENGE
Make your home fire-safe.

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read *Fire-Proof Your Home*.
2. To complete the Challenge, take steps to fire-proof your home on at least 22 days this month.
3. Keep records of your completed Challenge, in case your organization requires documentation.

Expect the Unexpected

The wife of country music star Trace Adkins tied a yellow ribbon around a tree outside their Tennessee home as a meeting place in case of a house fire. Then the couple reviewed a basic escape plan with their three young daughters. It was a simple plan inspired by fire prevention lessons taught at school by the local fire department. But they never thought they would need it.

When Trace Adkins landed in Alaska for a two-day concert, he heard the news. His wife, Rhonda, was on the way home when she saw a plume of black smoke. Their home was on fire, and their children were in there. Fortunately, when Rhonda arrived, her children, the nanny, and the family dog were safe and waiting under the tree.

An estimated 374,000 home fires occur in the United States every year. But not everyone has an escape plan like the Adkins family. Tragically, home fires claim the lives of about 2,650 people a year and injure another 13,000. Most home fires can be prevented. This month, take the challenge to Fire-Proof Your Home.

- Check or install smoke detectors.** This is truly lifesaving. Most home fire deaths occur either in homes without a smoke detector or in homes where the smoke detector didn't work.



- Test your smoke alarm once a month.
- Replace the batteries twice a year.
- Install new smoke alarms in your home every 10 years.
- Create an escape plan.

- Map out two escape routes from every room.
- Store an escape ladder or rope on upper floors of your home. Establish a meeting place outdoors in a safe, open area in front of your house and away from the fire. Post a notice on your front door that tells fire fighters how many pets are inside.
- If a fire occurs, get out first, then call for help.
- Practice your escape plan twice a year with everyone in your home.

Draw a layout of your home on paper.
Mark all the rooms in your house. Use this worksheet:
<http://tinyurl.com/8o5ppbn>

- Cook safely.** About 155,000 home fires a year start in the kitchen. In 59 percent of these cooking-related fires, something on the stove burns out of control. Thanksgiving Day is the peak day for home cooking fires.

- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. Never leave home with the stove or oven on.
- If food is simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling, check it regularly and use a timer. Keep anything that can catch fire – oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels, curtains – away from the stovetop.



- Keep a lid nearby to smother small grease fires. To smother the flames, slide the lid over the pan, and turn the stovetop off. Or pour baking soda on small grease fires.
- Never use water to douse a grease fire. It will actually spread the fire.
- For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.
- Never use aluminum foil or metal in a microwave oven. If you have a fire in a microwave, leave the door closed, turn it off, and unplug it.

Tips to Teach Kids Fire Safety
<http://tinyurl.com/26hrpem>

Clean out dryer lint. More than 15,000 fires are caused each year by dryer lint. Lint build-up reduces airflow in the dryer's exhaust duct. Lint can also accumulate on the heating element, making conditions ripe for a fire.

- Clean the lint trap on your dryer after each cycle.
- Use a vacuum to clean the exhaust duct at least once a year.
- Keep the exhaust duct from being pinched between the wall and dryer.
- Never run your dryer while you are out of the house or asleep.

Avoid overloading outlets. After the Adkins family fire, investigators found that the blaze was caused by an overheated power strip in the garage. Many home fires are caused by overloaded outlets, especially during the holidays when people decorate their homes with lights.

- Don't use extension cords on a permanent basis. And never run extension cords under carpeting or bedding.
- Never plug more than two home appliances into an electrical outlet at once.
- Avoid plugging large appliances (refrigerators, microwave ovens, heaters, air conditioners) into the same outlet or circuit.
- Fix loose wall receptacles, loose wires, and loose lighting fixtures.



Think like a fire fighter. Fire fighters spend many hours learning how to put out fires. They also teach people about fire prevention. Look for potential fire hazards and ways to better protect your home.



- Never leave burning candles unattended. And keep them away from things that can burn.
- Keep a fire extinguisher on each floor of your home. Make it easy to get to. And learn how to use it.
- Store fuel and other flammable chemicals in proper containers and away from your home.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys inspected once a year.
- Turn portable heaters off when you leave a room or go to bed.

Limit smoking indoors. Every year, almost 1,000 people are killed in home fires cause by cigarettes. It's the leading cause of home fire deaths.

- If you smoke, smoke outside. Or quit. Most deaths result from fires that start in living rooms, family rooms, or bedrooms.
- Keep cigarettes, lighters, and matches up high and out of the reach of children. If possible, keep them in a locked cabinet.
- Use a deep, sturdy ashtray. Keep it away from anything that can burn.
- Never discard lit cigarettes in potted plants, landscaping, or things that could ignite easily.
- Never smoke where medical oxygen is used.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Don't smoke if you're sleepy, drowsy from medication, or intoxicated.

Many people think a home fire will never happen to them. But U.S. fire fighters respond to one home fire about every 60 seconds. Some fires can smolder for hours. Others can engulf a home in flames in minutes. Take these steps to fire-proof your home. It can help protect what matters most to you.

Are your home and family fire-safe?

1. **Yes** **No** Do you have a smoke detector in every bedroom?
2. **Yes** **No** Do you have a fire escape plan?
3. **Yes** **No** Have you tested every smoke detector in your home in the last month?
4. **Yes** **No** Do you have a fire extinguisher on each floor of your home?
5. **Yes** **No** Have you checked electrical cords, outlets, and power strips for safety hazards?

Turn page upside down for your score.

Score = Total the number of times you answered **Yes**.
5 – Excellent. Review your fire safety plan regularly.
4 – Good. Look for additional ways to protect your home from fire.
3/2 – Fair/Poor. Re-read the guidelines in this Health Challenge to fire-proof your home.
1/0 – In Danger. Act now to make your home fire-proof and protect your family.

Learn to Use a Fire Extinguisher
<http://tinyurl.com/93ok72o>



Sources:
 Cable News Network. 2011.
 U.S. Home Structure Fires. 2011.

Burn Prevention Network
 U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
 Energy Education Council
 U.S. Fire Administration

National Fire Protection Association
 Fire Equipment Manufacturers' Association
 Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council





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Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the number of days you take steps to fire-proof your home.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of days you made time to make your home fire-safe. To complete the Challenge, you must meet the goal on at least 22 days out of the month. Then keep up this practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:

HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes

SUN.	MON.	TUE.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.	Weight & weekly summary
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_____ Number of days this month I took steps to fire-proof my home

_____ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking or biking

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____

