Caring for aging parents checklist

Work through it in order. Skip what does not apply. Done with your parent wherever possible.

Stage 1: the first week (safety and facts)

	What to do	Owner
☐	Walk through the home for the common hazards: loose rugs, poor lighting on stairs, no grab rail in the bathroom, a bath or shower with nothing to hold. Fix the cheap things now.	
☐	Write down every medication, dose and time, including over-the-counter tablets and supplements. Photograph the labels.	
☐	Put the doctor's, pharmacy's and nearest family member's numbers somewhere visible, large print, next to the phone.	
☐	Check there is enough food, that it is being eaten, and that the fridge has nothing out of date.	
☐	Confirm how your parent gets to appointments and to the shops, and that they can still do it safely.	
☐	Agree one daily check-in: who calls or visits, and at what time.	
☐	Start a short note each day: what happened, what changed.	

If your parent seems unsafe alone (a fall, a missed medicine with real consequences, a cooker left on, confusion about the day or where they are), call their doctor now. If they are hurt or unwell, call your local emergency number.

Stage 2: the first month (paperwork and people)

	What to do	Owner
☐	Book a check-up with their doctor and go with them if they agree. Bring the medication list.	
☐	Ask the doctor directly: is a formal assessment of care needs the right next step? (See the decision rule below.)	
☐	Find the documents: ID, insurance or health cards, any power of attorney, will and advance care wishes. Note where each one is kept.	
☐	Make a one-page emergency information sheet and leave a copy on the fridge.	
☐	Ask your parent what they want: where they want to live, what help they would accept, and what they would refuse. Write the answers down in their words.	
☐	List the people already involved: neighbours, friends, a church or club, a cleaner, a gardener. They are part of the circle.	
☐	Have the first family conversation about sharing the work.	
☐	Find out what government help exists where your parent lives and whether an application is worth starting now.	

Stage 3: ongoing (the rhythm)

	What to check	How often	Owner
☐	The medication list is current and matches what is in the house	After every doctor visit	
☐	The task list has been reviewed and rebalanced	Monthly	
☐	The family has had its short check-in	Every one to two weeks	
☐	Someone has asked the main carer how they are coping	Every check-in	
☐	The emergency sheet and document list have been re-read	Every three months, or after any change	
☐	Your parent has been asked again what they want	Every few months	

When to ask for a formal assessment of care needs

Ask if any one of these is true:

- ☐ Your parent has fallen, or you are worried they will.
- ☐ They need help with a daily task they used to manage: washing, dressing, cooking, taking medication, managing money.
- ☐ Someone in the family is doing more than they can keep up with.
- ☐ Your parent, or you, are unsure whether staying at home is safe.

General information only, not medical, legal or financial advice. In an emergency, call your local emergency number.
Free from kinshipguard.com/free-printables. Kinship Guard is a shared care app for families on iPhone, iPad and Android.