

Home Accessibility Modifications for Aging in Place



Image via [Pexels](#)

Most seniors want to stay in their home and hold onto their independence for as long as possible. In fact, according to the 2012 The United States of Aging Survey, about [90 percent](#) of senior respondents had the intention of staying in their homes for the foreseeable future—or at least five to ten years.

Of course, life has a way of throwing a big ol' wrench in our plans. As we age, our health, coordination, and [mental faculties](#) generally deteriorate. Simple acts we used to do with ease are all of a sudden much more complicated, and navigating your home begins to take a little more time. That's why if you want to age in place, it is important to prepare your home by making [modifications](#) that assist with accessibility and mobility as you grow older. Making renovations and preparations ahead of time allows you to continue living in your home while also catering to your needs as an aging senior.

Bathroom Safety for Seniors

The kitchen may seem like the most dangerous spot in the house with its knives and fire hazards, but believe it or not, most household accidents happen in the bathroom. In fact, The New York Times called the [bathroom](#) “the most dangerous room in the house” in a 2011

write-up. Many falls happen in the bathroom because of moisture and slick surfaces. [Falls](#) are one of the biggest threats seniors face and are the “leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries for older Americans.”

To help keep seniors safe, there are various modifications one can make in the bathroom:

- Install a handheld showerhead and bench in bathtubs that make bathing simpler. Avoid taking baths that involve getting down and up in the tub.
- Grab bars give you something to hold on to when you need to get up. Place one by the toilet and one by your shower bench. It also doesn't hurt to put one along the wall just in case.
- Non Slip surfaces are your friend. You can find decals that help with traction or replace your current floor material with something that is [slip free](#).

More Home Safety Tips for Seniors

Even if you aren't in a wheelchair or use a walker, getting up and down stairs becomes more difficult as we age. Consider installing safety ramps over steps to make them easier to navigate. As our eyesight deteriorates, it can become harder to read labels on store-bought items. Buy a label maker that prints large, bold lettering and start to label items yourself so you always know what you have. Aging causes a decrease in circulation as well as fat loss that make us feel cold more often. Help keep your heating bills down while staying comfortable by having your home re-insulated and your windows and doors sealed to ensure air isn't leaking in or out.

The Other Option

If making all the modifications you need costs a small fortune or your house is too large for you to handle, there is always the option of finding a new home. Many seniors choose to downsize where they live as they age so they have less to maintain and a smaller space to navigate. This can also be a chance for you to relocate to a place you'd rather be—like closer to grandchildren! Talk to your family about the options available when making this big decision. To get an idea of what it might cost to buy a new home, review listings in your area.

Most people want to stay in their own home as they age, but sometimes the home we have isn't ready for the challenges of growing older. Making modifications ahead of time helps those who want to age in place, but if your house is just too much to maintain, it may be worth it to [downsize](#) and find a new home.