

Home Adaptation Checklist

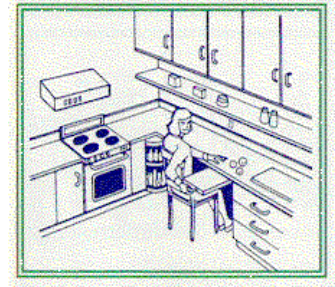


The majority of seniors wish to continue to live in their own homes for as long as possible. However, many homes are not designed to meet their changing needs as they age.

This checklist identifies adaptations that could help prevent accidents and enhance independence. It also gives some guidelines on how to hire a reputable contractor.

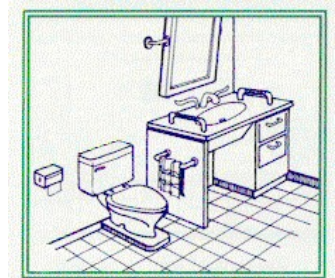
Kitchen

- Install lever-type faucets, or a faucet with a single lever to control flow and temperature.
- Install pull-out shelves under counter to enable you to work from a seated position.
- Lower existing cupboards.
- Install "D" type handles on cupboards or drawers.
- Provide electrical outlets for small appliances in more convenient locations.
- Install a smoke alarm outside, but close to, the kitchen.
- Install a fire extinguisher near the kitchen exit.



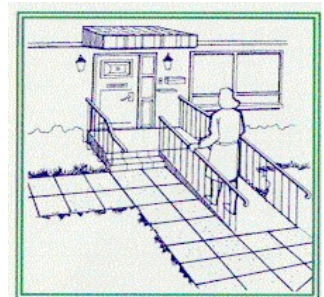
Bathroom

- Install shelves beside basin for storage.
- Install a grab bar within easy reach.
- Install additional light fixtures near the mirror or medicine cabinet.
- Install non-slip flooring throughout the bathroom.
- Install lever-type faucets or a faucet with a single lever to control flow.
- Adjust the hot-water heater or install a device that will prevent the water from reaching too high a temperature.
- Install a hand-held shower on adjustable rod or high-low mounting brackets.



Entrances

- Add a ramp to bypass existing steps.
- Install light fixtures or floodlights to illuminate entrances, steps and walkways.
- Add a grab bar or handle near steps or doorway.
- Install a delayed-action door closer.
- Install lever-type door handles.
- Install easily accessible light switches or sensors to control outside lights.

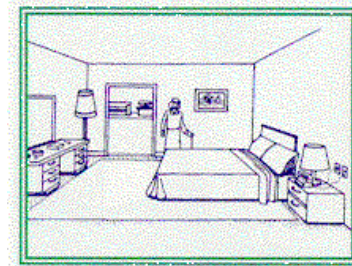


Stairs and Hallways

- Improve lighting in stairs.
- Install two-way light switches at top and bottom of stairs.
- Install or repair existing rails or install new rails.
- Extend handrails beyond the top and bottom of steps.
- Install "swing clear hinges" on doors to widen doorways.
- Install handrails along corridor walls.

Bedroom

- Use a night light to provide a lighted path from the bedroom to the bathroom.
- Free the path from the bedroom to the bathroom from obstacles.
- Relocate bedroom to main floor level.
- If your area does not have 9-1-1 service, keep a list of important contacts near the telephone (police, fire, etc.) in large print.
- Keep a flashlight nearby for emergencies.
- Install a personal response system that would allow you to call for help if you needed it.

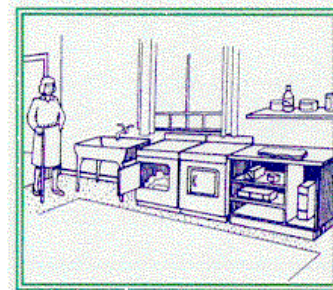


Basement and Laundry Area

- Provide shelves or storage near appliances so that washing supplies can be conveniently located.
- Consider a basement telephone to save climbing steps.

Closets and Storage Areas

- Install bi-folding or accordion doors.
- Add or lower shelves.
- Install lights in closets.
- Add or lower rods.



Finding a Contractor

- Check with friends and neighbors for recommendations.
- Check with local building materials suppliers or hardware stores.
- Consult with the local home builders' association.
- Check with the Better Business Bureau for complaints against any firm you are considering hiring.
- Ask for a reference (past customers).
- Get at least three bids to be sure you are paying a fair price.
- Remember that the lowest bid is not always the best. A very low bid may mean the contractor doesn't know enough about the work to estimate it properly.

The Contract

- Make sure you have a written contract that fully describes the work you want to have done, the price to be paid for doing it, and the start and completion dates of the project. Unwritten assurances are not binding.
- Don't sign the contract unless you agree that it contains everything that you have been promised.