

# Age-in-Place Home Improvements:

A senior's guide to essential home upgrades



Does it pay to renovate your home to accommodate your changing senior needs and abilities?

This guide may help you decide.

# Age-in-Place Home Improvements

According to an AARP study, 90% of people aged 65 and older would prefer to stay in their own homes and never move to a senior living community. Unfortunately, staying at home – commonly called aging in place – can require some significant changes to ensure that every aspect of the dwelling is safe for aging seniors. Failure to do so could result in avoidable illnesses and injuries.

Therefore, we encourage you to use this guide to better understand some of the key changes that may be required to age in place in your own home. As you read through it, consider whether the investment makes sense for you and your loved ones.

## HOME EXTERIOR

### 1. Pathways

Cracks and uneven surfaces in driveways and sidewalks are tripping hazards, as is landscaping that intrudes onto pathways.

#### *You may need to:*

- Repair and/or resurface your driveway
- Repair or replace your walkways
- Install pathway lighting for greater visibility of obstructions
- Remove, replace, or hire someone to regularly cut bushes, trees, or other plants that intrude into walkways

### 2. Entryways

Steps are likely to be problematic for most seniors. In addition, entry doors may be too small to accommodate mobility devices.

#### *You may need to:*

- Install a permanent ramp and hand railings
- Increase the width of your entry door to at least 36 inches
- Replace the doorknob an easy-open lever-style handle
- Update exterior lighting so visibility is high at any time of day or night



Uneven surfaces, steps, and landscaping can all pose hazards as we age and as our mobility changes.

## 3. Garage

You'll need plenty of room for assistive devices, such as walkers, to fit between vehicle doors and walls.

### *You may need to:*

- Enlarge your garage or park only one vehicle in a double-car garage
- Remove all possible obstructions and tripping hazards
- Replace any steps with a garage lift or ramp and hand rails
- Apply a slip-resistant coating over smooth concrete



Tubs and low toilets, as well as lack of room to maneuver with a walker or other assistive device, can make bathrooms dangerous for seniors.

## HOME INTERIOR

## 1. Kitchen

Islands can be obstructions for mobility devices. In addition, countertops and cabinetry may be too high for items to be reached safely.

### *You may need to:*

- Adjust your kitchen's layout to allow space for mobility devices
- Ensure your flooring is slip-resistant
- Replace at least a few base cabinets so some countertops can be lower
- Lower upper cabinets and shelving for easier reach

## 2. Bathroom

The National Institute on Aging reports that about 80% of in-home falls occur in the bathroom. This room may require significant renovations to ensure long-term safety.

### *You may need to:*

- Replace your tub with a walk-in shower
- Install a shower bench
- Install grab bars that can securely hold 250-300 pounds
- Ensure your flooring is slip-resistant
- Replace a low toilet with one that is at least 17 inches high



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### 3. Throughout the house

Depending on the age and design of your home, there are likely many other areas that will need renovation to ensure long-term comfort and safety.

#### *You may need to:*

- Install a stair lift or relocate important spaces, such as laundry room, master bedroom, bathroom etc., to the main floor to minimize stair usage
- Widen hallways
- Enlarge interior doorways, including closet doorways, to at least 36 inches
- Replace doorknobs with lever-type handles for easy opening
- Replace twist-type faucet handles with levered handles, or add sensors for automatic turn-on
- Remove all throw rugs, and replace high-pile carpet with low-pile carpet or nonslip flooring
- Add bed rails and grab bars near the bed
- Ensure that washer and dryer buttons are easy to reach and the tubs can be easily accessed for loading and unloading

### *Does a life plan community make more sense?*

Updating your home for long-term, age-in-place living can be costly. Estimates range from \$10,000 to as much as \$100,000 just for the improvements. When you add that to your basic expenses, staying at home may not be a bargain.

At Aldersgate Village:

- Residences are designed with senior needs in mind, so you may never have to move again
- No maintenance is required
- Housekeeping and on-site laundry services are provided
- An emergency response system gets help quickly if you need it
- Round-the-clock security ensures a safe and quiet community
- We offer the complete range of services for all senior care needs
- Residences are competitively priced compared to your current home expenses and upgrade costs

Want to avoid the hassle and expense of upgrading your home? Contact us to get 30 hours of relocation assistance free when you move to Aldersgate Village!