

Does your home meet your needs for Independence and Safety?

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for SP Ableware

When it comes to a no-cost or low-cost, *"Do it yourself"* approach is possible. No-cost solutions may include:

- Decreasing clutter to increase accessibility.
- Clear electrical cords from pathways to avoid tripping.
- Remove loose area rugs that can cause falls.
- Re-arrange furniture to allow accessibility of a walking device or wheelchair.
- Set the water heater temperature at 120°F to save energy and avoid burns if sensory deficits are present.
- Open window treatments to allow more natural light in the home
- Use a stool or rollator (walker with seat) to sit and perform daily activities or homemaking tasks to conserve energy, reduce risk for falls and reduce lower back pain.
- Ensure sure your house number is clear and visible for emergency services to locate your home faster.
- Organize and keep frequently used items within reach to minimize bending.



Low-cost solutions may include:

1. Add nightlights in hallways and bathrooms to maintain a degree of visibility at night.
2. Install Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Consider one with light alert for deaf clients.
3. Install grab bars in the shower and near the toilet to assist with support and safety during transfers.
4. Modify doorknobs by adding knob grips or replace with lever handles for better grip.
5. Retrofit cabinets with pullout baskets or drawers to facilitate access of kitchen items needed. These can be used in the bathroom cabinets as well.
6. Consider durable medical equipment (DME) to promote safety and independence these include 3 in 1 commode, shower chair, shower bench, hand-held shower and walker with seat. Some of these items may or may not be covered by your insurance.



A GUIDE TO HOME MODIFICATIONS

According to AARP, "nearly 90 percent of people 45+ want to remain in their current home and community for as long as possible." A home not always can continue to meet your needs as we age due to either a disease, illness, permanent injury, disability or physical limitation. Home modifications can be the answer to minimize or eliminate physical barriers allowing you to continue your daily routines and recreational activities of your choice.

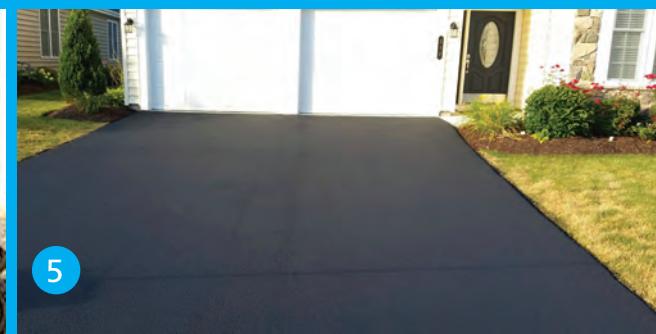
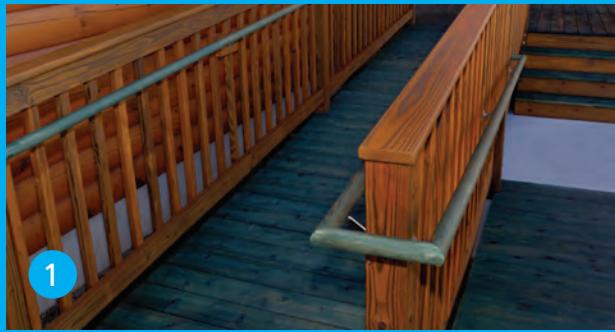
Home modifications can be categorized in two groups: simple (no-cost or low-cost) or complex (expensive). When home modifications fall under the expensive category they more likely involve structural changes to the home such as moving walls, widening doors and hallways, adding ramps, etc. In this case you'll want to consider hiring an experienced contractor that can address your special needs. The National Association of Home Builders (local, state or national offices) keeps a roster of builders by



region who have a certification in Aging in Place "CAPS" by going to <http://www.nahb.org/en/find/directory-designee> or email at designation@nahb.org.

Complex or expensive home modifications may include but are not limited to:

1. Building a ramp
2. Remodeling a bathroom to include elimination of tub and replace with a barrier free shower stall.
3. Remodeling of the kitchen. May include changes to cabinets with dropdown cabinets or shelves, wheelchair accessible sink, installation of double ovens and/or a microwave drawer for accessibility from a wheelchair or standing position.
4. Remodeling of entrance and doorways for seamless transitions to facilitate mobility with a wheelchair or rolling walker.
5. Other structural changes to the sidewalk, home, garage and garden.



Accessibility

Regardless if you own or rent, being able to enter and exit the home without struggles should be your primary goal.



Similarly, being able to access different rooms within the home such as a bathroom, kitchen or bedroom gives you a sense of freedom and independence. Adopting environmental modifications will improve accessibility. Keep in mind that in case of an emergency such as a fire, accessibility becomes number one priority for first responders.

Safety



Home maintenance is the key to maintaining safety in the home. Anything from checking

smoke detectors in alternate seasons or annual a/c-furnace inspections can reduce the risk of equipment malfunctioning when you most need it.

Independence

Independence means being able to do not just the things you have to but also the things you want to in a safe manner and routinely.



When you experience independence your quality of life is much richer and satisfying.



Courtesy of TODOS (Network of OT Hispanic Providers)

Consulting with an Occupational Therapist

Occupational Therapists (OT's) with home modification expertise are available in private clinics and practices near you but also in nursing homes, outpatient clinics, medical centers, rehabilitation centers and home health agencies. The Occupational Therapist may have additional professional designations such as CAPS (Certification in Aging in Place Specialist offered by National Association of Home Builders) or SCEM (Specialty Certification in Environmental Modifications through the American Occupational Therapy Association).

The licensed Occupational Therapist will:

1. Review your medical history including progressive diseases and conditions that may continue to impact how you perform your daily activities.
2. Discuss your needs and wants, budget & financial parameters and other criteria necessary for you to maintain your independence and safety at home.
3. Assess your abilities/limitations; (physical, cognitive, emotional, social and community support).
4. Assess your home for accessibility, safety, risk for falls, adequate lighting and emergency preparedness. As well as, observe and analyze your interaction with your home environment.
5. Provide you with solutions and recommendations that fit your needs and budget.
6. Collaborate with a general contractor, builder and/or handyman to ensure the changes meet your needs.
7. Provide necessary training and education including caregivers.





The following organizations can be of assistance with home modifications:

- **American Society on Aging**
- **Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access**
- **Center for Universal Design**
- **Gerontological Society of America**
- **International Council on Active Aging**
- **National Association of Home Builders**
- **National Council on Aging**
- **National Institute on Aging**
- **National Resource Center on Supportive Housing and Home Modification, which includes the Do-Able Renewable Home**

Additional Resources

- <https://www.aota.org/-/media/Corporate/Files/AboutOT/consumers/Adults/AginginPlace/Remaining-in-Place-Aging.pdf>
- <https://www.aota.org/-/media/Corporate/Files/AboutOT/consumers/Adults/AginginPlace/Remaining-in-Place-Aging.pdf>
- <https://www.aota.org/~/media/Corporate/Files/AboutOT/consumers/Adults/Falls/Falls-Prevention-Tip-Sheet-LARGE-PRINT.pdf>
- <http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/documents-2015/HomeFit2015/AARP%20HomeFit%20Brochure%20Flat.pdf>
- <http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/documents-2015/HomeFit2015/2-AARP%20HomeFit%20Worksheet-Room-by-Room%20List.pdf>
- <http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/documents-2015/HomeFit2015/>
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