

Elderly Care House Design for Our Old Age - Elderly Care Home

Updated on April 8, 2016



Design your house to be kid and elderly friendly so that it will be suitable for your old age | Source

Are you planning to build a new house or thinking of renovating your house? If you are, will your design ideas turn your house into a suitable home for your old age or will it be a problem?

Kid and Elderly Friendly Home - Senior Living Homes

Take advantage of this rebuilding and renovation stage to turn your house into a home of the future. A place that is comfortable, safe and secure for everyone. Your house features should be comfortable and friendly for your kids when they are still young and as they grow older. It should also be right for you as a young parent as well as when you get older. Designed as your future senior living home!

Needs of Older People & People with Disabilities

Problems with some of the existing house designs are narrow entrances and doorways, which make accessibility with wheelchairs difficult. Stairs are narrow and steep, and kitchens and bathrooms are not so easily accessible. These possible design oversights do not look at the needs of older people or for people with disability.

For Senior People

Consider the following simple design options to turn your present house to a home that will be safer and more secure for your old age.

1. Door Knobs Handles?

A door handle used for opening or closing a door can either be in the form of the doorknob (round) or door lever. It comes in various designs, shapes, and functions. Some can even make a simple plain door look grand and expensive. However, some designs can also be difficult for children as well as for older adults suffering from arthritis and this can be stressful.

Door Levers

Use door lever instead of the doorknob as the lever will be easier for children and older adults to use. In fact, it is also easier to use if your hands are wet and slippery or if you are carrying something with both hands. In which case, you can still open the door with your arm.

2. Good Lighting for Safe and Secure Home

Properly lighted areas will ensure a safe and secure home. You do not want to suffer the agony of a bad fall because of poor lightings. Lightings should be ample, but not glaring as it will affect mobility for the elderly.

- Pay close attention and provide sufficient lightings to outdoor areas, reading areas, bathrooms, stairways and in work spaces such as garage and kitchen
- Fix under the cabinet lights to cooking area and kitchen counter
- Install light switches at both bottom and top of stairways
- Use large **rocker-type light switches**, as it is easy and convenient especially if you are arthritic. When your hands are full, you can always use your elbow to switch on the lights! It may cost

more than a conventional light switch, but it is more user-friendly to the young and old

- **Night-lights** are useful when you need to move around at night like going to the bathroom in the wee hours of 4am. You do not want to trip over something on the floor!
- **Emergency lights** will be handy when there is an electrical blackout and should be fixed along the stairways, kitchen and exit doors
- Lastly, install a sufficient number of windows to **bring in natural lights** into the house. As people get older, the benefits of sunlight therapy are tremendous as it is a cure for [depression in old people](#). It is also a source of vitamin D, important for better absorption of calcium. Sunlight can also be brought into your house through glass doors and skylights

3. Plug Points Position

If you suffer from a backache, you will know how painful it can be by just bending over to switch on your computer or any other electrical items.

Plug Point at Table Top Height

It will be easier to plug or unplug an electrical device from plug points placed at a tabletop height, instead of 1-foot from the floor. This is especially so when you are older or suffer from a backache. It may look terrible in terms of interior décor, but if fixed properly, it can still be presentable.

Additional Plug Point

Eliminate the use of extension cord as people, whether young or old, might trip over it. Install additional plug points if you foresee more usage within that area.

4. Hearing Problems

Hearing can be a problem as we age and installing devices that such as smoke detectors with a strong strobe light instead of just sound will assist people with hearing problems.

Doorbell should be audible in all rooms and for additional security, buy an intercom that doubles up as a doorbell.

Telephone with adjustable volume control and with large number keypad will be useful for people with vision, hearing or dexterity problem.

5. Safety in Bathroom

- Wet bathroom floors can be a danger even for the young. Therefore, choose floor tiles that are non-slip. If you have bathroom mat, buy the non-skid type.
- Grab bar or handrail is another useful device to install as it helps you move around easily when getting in and out of shower area or when using the toilet.
- Toilet bowl and seat should be about 17-inches high as it will be less stressful on your knees and back. However, it may not be kid friendly and to overcome this, place a non-slip step to help your child use the toilet.
- Bathroom door should open outwards and not into the bathroom area. If someone falls and is near the door, you can still go in and help. Alternatively, you can fix a folding door.
- You may want to consider installing a telephone extension in your bathroom; should someone get into difficulty he/she can call for help.
- Level style faucet will be easier to use for both children and for elderly people. It will also be easier to control hot and cold water mixer.
- For the shower, a pressure-balanced lever will prevent any possible scalding. Consider installing a hand-held showerhead in addition to a fixed shower head as it will be easier for people with limited mobility.

6. Kitchen Design Layout

An ideal kitchen layout should be in the form of 'kitchen triangle' i.e. the working distance between cooker, fridge, and sink. The bigger the triangles, the more walking you need to do. For the elderly, a smaller triangle will

reduce the walking and will be less tiring for them. You will need to compromise on this kitchen layout to meet your current needs and your future requirement, as you get older.

A wall oven, fixed at a suitable height, will be easier to use without having to bend over to use it.

7. Steps at Main Entrance

When possible, design your house with no steps at the main entrance. The door opening and hallway width should be at least 3.5 feet wide. This is to allow for easy wheelchair movement.

Have it well lighted and placed a bench near the entrance. I find this useful as it helps me place things that I have in my hand while I unlock the main door. The bench can also be a place for you to sit while you tie or untie your shoelaces.

8. Stairway Handrail

Install a handrail on both sides of the staircase and extend it beyond the first and last step. The step should also have a different color scheme or design, to mark the edge of each step.

If you are building a new house, design your stairway with a gentle incline. This will take up more space, but it will be easier to use, as you get older.

9. Interior Design Styles

In addition, consider the following design style issues that will affect the elderly:

- If you like to have rugs or carpets over your marble or tiled floors, place carpet underlay to prevent slipping and tripping over them
- Older people may suffer from impaired contrast perception. Hence, you have to introduce high contrasting color to the foreground and background. For example, toilet seat must contrast with the floor colors, a drop in floor level should have different colored tiles or floor finishes indicating the drop, and chairs should be of different color to the floor to ensure better visibility of the chair's edge.