



8 Home Safety Improvements to Help Seniors Age in Place

There really is no place like home – so it should come as no surprise that more seniors are choosing to stay there as they age. A recent AARP survey shows that [nearly 80 percent](#) of adults aged 50 and older want to spend their golden years in their own homes and communities.

Thanks to continued advancements in specialized technology and a growing number of community-based resources, aging in place is now a realistic option for more Americans than ever before.

As a growing number of seniors choose to live independently at home, it's important to note that truly aging in place is not about avoiding change. It requires meticulous preparation and forethought.

No matter how well we eat, how much we exercise, or how often we see the doctor, growing old changes us. The physical and cognitive changes that accompany aging may require certain home safety modifications and upgrades for seniors planning to age in place. Individuals who wish to grow older at home but refuse to make necessary adjustments to their home and lifestyle are likely to fail. This refusal often contributes to serious health setbacks, eventually forcing the senior to relocate to an assisted living facility or nursing home.

Although no one can predict all future health needs that come with age, if you plan to age in place, it's crucial to think proactively when possible. For some, only a few modest modifications to their home will be necessary as they age. Others may require larger-scale home modifications if they wish to continue living at home.

Many minor household safety improvements can benefit all adults who plan to age in place and won't break the bank. Here are eight simple home safety measures for the elderly you can start making today.

Free Up Floor Space & Eliminate Fall Hazards

If you plan to age independently at home, open floor space is essential. Assess walking paths into and throughout the house. The more floor space, the better! Part ways with bulky or unnecessary furniture and keep only what you need. Ideally, you should be able to move about with plenty of unimpeded space throughout your home – even if you require a wheelchair, walker, or cane in the future.

Also, assess and eliminate any potential fall hazards throughout the home. It is best to remove area rugs altogether. (Even if it includes the “non-slip” backing, the potential for tripping over the rug risking severe injury is too significant.) Electrical cords should be tucked away against the wall and away from walkways, as well. If you are a pet owner, move all food bowls, toys, and beds somewhere accessible but out of the way.

Upgrade Lighting

Many people do not know that vision and lighting needs change considerably with age. Older adults need more light to see, and poorly lit areas in and around the home can be dangerous. Seniors are more likely to fall or injure themselves in places where lighting is insufficient.



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That is why upgrading existing lights throughout your home and adding more where necessary is crucial. [Nightlights](#) should be installed in the bedroom, bathroom, and hallways. If you don't have them already, consider installing lights outside your house above doors and other entry points. For added security, you can purchase [lights with a motion sensor](#) that come on when they detect movement.

No-Step Entrance

Think about the entrance(s) to your house. If all the access points to your home have a step up or down, you will need to think around adding a ramp to create a no-step entrance. Every home should have at least one no-step access point.

Installing a permanent ramp that lets you enter your home using a walker or wheelchair can be costly. In some cases, a portable ramp may be an alternative. To prevent accidents, look for portable ramps with high-traction surfaces. These portable ramps come in various lengths. Be sure to look at the weight specifications, too.

Update Doorknobs & Faucets

Many people develop arthritis as they get older, and it can make tasks as simple as turning a doorknob more challenging. Round doorknobs and faucets should be replaced in favor of [lever-style handles](#), which are easier for individuals with grip issues.

Install Grab Bars or Railings

With age, strength and balance can become an issue. Grab bars and railings are common modifications that can help seniors with mobility issues navigate their home with ease.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution for installing grab bars in the home – they come in [different shapes and sizes](#). They are generally installed in the bathroom, near the toilet or shower, but can be used anywhere throughout the house. The layout of your home and your height will determine where the grab bars should be installed.

Be sure to purchase bars that are bolted securely into the wall. Some versions of grab bars – specifically for the bath or shower – attach to the wall with suction cups. These have the potential to lose suction and slide down the wall, creating a fall hazard.

Invest in Bathroom Safety Upgrades

Each year, [235,000 Americans](#) make an unexpected trip to the emergency room because of a mishap in the bathroom. More than two-thirds of these injuries take place in or near the bathtub or shower. The bathroom is easily one of the most dangerous rooms in the home for seniors.

Consider purchasing a shower or bath chair for stability while bathing. [There are different options](#) to accommodate specific needs. Consult with a doctor or healthcare provider to determine which version is best, based on your bath or shower layout and potential future mobility changes.



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Also, investing in a raised toilet seat can make it easier to transfer on and off the toilet. There are [various elevated toilet seat models](#) on the market. Again, it's best to talk with a healthcare provider to determine which is right for you.

Explore Aging in Place Technology Options

Continuing advancements in technology allow seniors to stay comfortable and secure at home while providing peace of mind for their families, too. New home-monitoring technologies are more affordable and user-friendly.

Mobile apps like Intrepid USA's [TapCloud](#) patient monitoring platform can remind older adults to take their medication, report changes in their health, and even securely teleconference with their healthcare provider. [Home automation devices](#) simplify everyday tasks like locking doors, turning off appliances, adjusting the lights, setting the temperature, and more. Even the familiar [wearable medical alert systems](#) that allow seniors to call for help in an emergency have incredible new features like fall detection.

With so many new technologies to help you age in place, it's essential to discuss with your healthcare provider and family which options are best for you in the long run.

Home-Based Care Support

Deciding to age in place gives you control over your independence, quality of life, and dignity. However, it does not mean that you are alone in your care.

As healthcare needs change over time, patients and families rely on Intrepid USA to provide a range of in-home services, including personal care, home health, therapy, palliative care, and at-home hospice care services. Intrepid USA collaborates with the patient, their family, and their healthcare provider to develop a personalized care plan to match each patient's unique needs, resulting in better outcomes, increased independence, and enhanced quality of life.

To learn more about how Intrepid USA can support you as you age in place, [fill out our contact form](#) to discuss your options with a Patient Advocate.