

✓ Low-Cost Options for Aging in Place



Many seniors prefer to stay in their homes as long as possible. Of course, your ability to do this hinges on many factors, including the nature of the challenges you face in your current home. Major home renovations may be required, but there are also numerous inexpensive steps you can take to improve your living situation, including:

✓ SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

Flooring: carpeting is preferable to area rugs because it reduces tripping hazards and can cushion falls. But if area rugs are used, make sure they're secured to the floor.

Handrails: on stairways, add a second handrail along the opposite wall for improved stability.

Footwear: to prevent falls, non-slip shoes are preferable to slippers or socks.

Non-skid safety strips: adhered to the floor of a tub/shower, non-skid strips are preferable to removable in-shower bath mats.

Bathroom grab bars: ideally these should be anchored into the wall, but if that's not possible opt for a safety rail clamped onto the side of the tub.

Quality step ladder: purchase a broad-based heavy-duty step ladder with a hand-hold bar across the top to safely reach items stored out of reach.

Lighting: whether it's making a bathtub brighter or installing motion-activated night lights in the hallway, better lighting can help prevent falls and make hobbies, reading, etc. more enjoyable. Lighting improvements might be as simple as changing the bulbs (to higher wattages or to bulbs that mimic daylight instead of "yellow" soft lighting) or adding battery-operated units.

✓ CONVENIENCE FACTORS

Hand shower: convert a standard fixed shower head into a hand-held system with a flexible hose.

Raised toilet seats: no need to buy a new toilet when a removable seat can be added to most standard toilets.

Mail catcher: mail delivered via a slot in the door may be easier to retrieve than from a mail box, especially if a narrow basket is mounted below the door opening so the recipient doesn't have to pick mail off the floor.

Knobs: replace round door and/or faucet knobs with lever styles, which are easier to turn. Likewise, loop pulls can make drawers easier to open.

Eating: specially-designed cups and eating utensils can minimize food spills, including weighted options that help counterbalance shake-prone hands.

Cooking utensils: lightweight and ergonomically-designed options are readily available now, many offering non-slip handles and bright, attractive colors.

Keep things handy: move often-used items to easy-to-access locations.

Eliminate excess "stuff": having fewer items to store, sort, juggle and handle can make aging in place an easier and more enjoyable proposition.

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