

NAVIGATE HOME

In-Home for the Long Run

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Most people as they age want to stay in their homes and with a bit of help, they can with confidence.

Perhaps you are one of the millions of Americans who would love to stay in their homes well past retirement and into your golden years. Or maybe mobility and physical challenges are occurring earlier than you had planned. There are a wide range of in-home solutions available to make your home safe, now and for the future.

With the aging population increasing more than ever before, adult children of aging parents worry that mom or dad may be susceptible to potential risks at home, especially in certain heavy use areas of the home. Simple tasks in the home at some point become more challenging and present an increase in risk for injury. The most common areas for risk are the bathroom and shower. A fall while performing daily activities will raise concerns about their continued ability to stay safe and independent at home. Reducing safety risk is possible.

Each area of the home should be taken into consideration, especially those areas that are used most often. For those facing daily mobility challenges, everyday movements around the house can prove to be difficult. Wheelchair and walker users are frustrated by common barriers like narrow doorways, stairways, tight hallways and inaccessible bathing or shower facilities just to name a few.



Stair Lift

Before you feel compelled to put the “For Sale” sign in the front yard, take a few moments to sit down with your loved ones and consider a few things. There are many ways to make your home safer and more livable. Some involve simple changes that might make you say, “Why didn’t I think of that?” Taking a room by room approach, there many possible solutions for improved safety, mobility and accessibility. The goal is to find the right solutions at the right time to help you stay in your home as long as you wish, and on your own terms as your age and physical conditions evolve.

One primary area of focus is on ways to lower the risk of slip and falls. What you need to know about falls—

- One in three adults 65 and older falls each year.
- 20-30 percent suffer moderate to severe injuries that make it hard to get around or live independently.
- Older adults are hospitalized for fall-related injuries five times more than they are for injuries from other causes.
- Taking care of your overall health and well-being can help lower your risk of falling, so can safety equipment in your home, particularly in the bathroom.



Bathroom Grab Bars & Support Devices

The installation and use of proper assistive and safety devices are highly suggested to reduce risks of falls.

Here are some key ways to prevent slip and falls in general and around the home:

- Use a cane or walker to steady yourself, especially later in the day when fatigue sets in.
- Wear rubber soled shoes, low heeled shoes to support your feet.
- Install and hold handrails and grab bars in stairways and though out the house.
- Do not stand on a chair to reach items on shelves; reacher devices are available to assist.
- Carefully consider the safety of your bathroom with items such as grab bars, raised toilet seats, transfer benches and other safety devices.

These is just a few examples of relatively easy solutions to implement. However, it's highly recommended to consult professionals to help assess your environment, personal situation needs and for proper installation. Often, initial consultations are free of charge.



Walk-In Bathtub

Each living area of the home should be part of the discussion. Topics like simple removal of rugs and hallway runners, to more functional improvements such as stairway lifts and walk-in tubs can occur as part of the consultation.

Because some of these home modifications can come with a price, one must consider these improvement costs against the cost of a sale of a home and other related moving expenses in their thought process. Oh, and don't forget that the cost of some of these home safety improvements can be far less than the medical and rehab expenses post injury.

Home is where the heart is, so they say. Understandably, emotions and memories run deep when it comes to decisions about home and loved ones. The conversations are not always easy, but important to have at some point. Know that there are options to put into play if aging in-place at-home is your preferred choice.



Advocacy & Support



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Housing



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