

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Keeping A Home Safe For Years To Come

(NAPSA)—Apparently, there really is no place like home. According to a recent AARP study, roughly 90 percent of Americans age 50 and older wish to stay in their current home and community as they age.

However, staying in your home may require updates or changes to ensure that it remains a safe and comfortable environment for years to come. Low lighting, stairs with no handrails, loose area rugs, entrances with many steps, and hard-to-grasp faucet handles and doorknobs are just a few features that make staying in your home more difficult as you grow older. Fortunately, homes can be updated, often in easy and inexpensive ways.

“We know people love their homes, and want to stay in their homes for as long as possible, which is why it’s important to make simple changes to your home,” says Elinor Ginzler, Director of Livable Communities at AARP. “There are easy and inexpensive ways to update your home to accommodate everyone and you don’t have to be an expert. The earlier you start identifying and planning for improvements, the better your chance of enjoying your home for years to come.”

The following tips can make



There are ways to keep your home a safe place to grow old.

your home safer and more comfortable:

- Install handrails on both sides of all steps (inside and out) and secure all carpets and area rugs with double-sided tape.
- Install easy-to-grasp shaped handles for all drawers and cabinet doors.
- Use brighter bulbs in all settings and install night-lights in all areas of night activity.
- Add reflective, nonslip tape on all noncarpeted stairs.
- Install lever handles for all doors.
- Place a bench near entrances for setting down purchases and resting.
- Install closet lights, as well as adjustable rods and shelves.
- Install rocker light switches; consider illuminated ones in select areas.

Local hardware stores carry many of the products to make these simple updates. For more extensive renovations, homeowners should consider hiring a contractor who is licensed, certified and bonded to do work in that particular location.

A Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS) is a professional designation signaling that contractors have had specified additional training, but homeowners should still ask for documentation that the contractor is licensed or certified and bonded.

If you’re looking for a new home, be sure to assess its livability before you buy. Is there a step-free entrance into the central living area of the home? Are the doorways wide enough for wheelchair accessibility? Do the rooms provide enough maneuvering space for a stroller or a walker? Make sure that your house fits both your current and future needs.

To learn more or to get a copy of AARP’s new publication, “Home Modification: Your Key to Comfort, Safety, and Independent Living” (also available in Spanish), visit www.aarp.org/homedesign or call (888) OUR-AARP and mention the publication number, D18524.