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Property Brothers' Top Home Improvement Tips for 50+ Adults

HGTV stars Drew and Jonathan Scott on how they set up their homes, and their parents' home, for aging in place

As told to Matt Alderton, AARP | Published July 22, 2025



The Property Brothers, Drew (left) and Jonathan Scott, recently started focusing on home improvement for older adults, including their parents.



As hosts of nearly a dozen home renovation TV series and specials — including *Property Brothers* and spinoffs like *Brother vs. Brother*, *Don't Hate Your House*, *Backed by the Bros* and their newest show, *Chasing the West*, premiering July 30 — twin brothers Drew and Jonathan Scott, 47, have helped hundreds of homeowners renovate, reimagine and repair their neglected and underachieving houses.



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Now that the handsome HGTV heroes are approaching 50, projects older homeowners might consider are top of mind. The brothers just renovated a 1928 Spanish bungalow for their parents, Jim and Joanne Scott (91 and 80, respectively), who relocated to Los Angeles from Canada last year to be closer to their children and grandchildren.

Here are the dynamic duo's home improvement hacks to help aging in place go a whole lot smoother.

Make the essentials easy to reach

JONATHAN: If you're getting new appliances, you might as well build in something like a [microwave](#) drawer or an under-the-counter microwave at waist-height that can be loaded from the top so you don't have to reach up for it as the years go on. That's a sleek upgrade that'll hold up if you ever want to sell, too. I'd also avoid finishes that are hard to clean, like a marble countertop. Retirement should be about enjoying your home, not fussing over scratches and spills.

DREW: Upgrade your corner or low cabinets with pullout shelves and organizers. They'll put less strain on your back because you won't have to dig around for what you need. They also enhance the function and storage in the kitchen overall, which is a benefit for anyone. We put them in my mom and dad's kitchen, and I have them in mine, too.

JONATHAN: We know you've heard it before, but [bathroom safety](#) precautions should be a priority. Comfort-height toilets are totally worth it. Make sure to add grab bars or benches where necessary, including other spots around the house. There are some really stylish options these days, so they won't even take away from your decor.



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Keep projects small and manageable

JONATHAN: Every year, do a walk-through of your home and take note of places that could use a small refresh. It could be something as simple as applying a fresh coat of paint, swapping a light fixture or installing a new mailbox. But taking on bite-sized projects over time is a lot easier to manage than handling it all at once if you ever want to sell. Plus, when your home looks good, you'll feel great.



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Make lighting a priority

DREW: Install motion-activated night lighting around the house. At minimum, get some plug-ins for the bathroom and main hallways. But there are even sleek options now for things like stair rails, under the cabinets and anywhere else you want to avoid fumbling around for a light switch.

This is a little thing, but go through your house and replace all your light bulbs with LED bulbs, or swap the fixture altogether. ... They're more energy-efficient and last longer, so you won't have to get the ladder out every year to change that one hard-to-reach fixture. You can also spring for smart lighting, which I personally love because you can control everything from your phone. Makes it really easy when you don't want to get out of bed to turn out the lights.

Embrace tech to stay a step ahead on maintenance, safety

JONATHAN: One of the most expensive and unexpected problems are leaks. I have the Phyn Plus Smart Water Assistant with auto shutoff in my home and at my parents' house, and it's saved us several times when they couldn't hear water rushing because the tap was left on. It's got features like alerting you to leaks and other problems, allowing you to turn off your water automatically or do it for you in the event of a leak, and monitoring water usage and activity overall. So, if you share access with another family member or neighbor, they'll be able to see if you haven't used water all day, which may be an indication of a need for a welfare check. [Editor's note: Jonathan Scott is part of the investor group that owns Phyn. Other comparable leak detector brands include Flo by Moen, Flume 2 and H2Wise.]

And set calendar alerts for yearly maintenance appointments. You can call on pros to do cleanings and checks on your HVAC, roof, gutters and other big-ticket spots. But you can also tackle some low-maintenance projects like weatherstripping around windows and doors, and replacing your smoke detector batteries. I set my reminders to recur once a year — or more frequently, if need be — so I don't even have to think about it.

DREW: Don't ignore all the great [smart home options](#) that are out there now. Smart smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, plus the leak detector with auto shutoff that Jonathan mentioned before, can send urgent notifications to your phone if there's an issue. Smart thermostats can help you save money and energy by monitoring and adjusting your usage. There are even smart climate systems that'll offer room-by-room temperature control. I'm a huge fan of keyless entry, too. It's a lot easier than fumbling around for keys and adds an extra layer of security.



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The Property Brothers with their parents, Jim and Joanne Scott. The twins recently helped their parents update their new home.

Consider setting up a nice outdoor space

DREW: When we work with homeowners, a dream backyard is almost always at the top of their list, which was true for our parents, too. Whether you're big on entertaining or just like to have your morning coffee outside, projects like patios, pergolas and decks are almost always worth it for your personal enjoyment and resale opportunities. We set up Mom and Dad with an outdoor kitchen, dining area and fire pit, and they absolutely love it. The pizza oven gets a lot of good use.

Upgrade to an electric or induction range

JONATHAN: Gas ranges are becoming less popular for many reasons. But one major thing is people forget to turn them off, which can cause a fire. I have an [induction range](#) in my house — they're much safer since there are no open flames or potential for gas leaks. The surface doesn't get as hot, either, which is great for a house with grandchildren, or even to save yourself some burns.

Secure your flooring to prevent falls

JONATHAN: Area rugs are awesome for design, noise reduction and comfort. But you definitely want to make sure they're properly secured. Rug mats, grippers or double-sided carpet tape are key to preventing accidental slips and falls. I don't want to say how many times I've ended up sliding around the floor. Just make sure anything you get is labeled as safe for hardwood, if that's what you have.

Upgrade to doorknobs with levers

DREW: Another small upgrade with big impact is to swap out doorknobs with levers. They look great style-wise, but they're also easier for homeowners with grip problems or arthritis. It's an easy mini makeover with a hint of future-proofing.

Matt Alderton is a contributing writer who specializes in health and wellness, travel and technology. His work has also appeared in USA Today, Forbes and The Washington Post.

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