Smart Guide to Aging in Place

21 tips for making your home safer and more comfortable as you get older

By Rita Delfiner 0 Comments
Published October 18, 2021

As you grow older, changes in your body often demand changes in your home. Maybe it's time to ditch the bathtub for a walk-in shower, install a ramp to make your front door accessible to your walker—or let a broom sweep in a handy 2024 survey by U.S. News & World Report found that a whopping 70 percent of people 65 and older want to age in place, rather than move to a nursing home or assisted living. But just like everyone else, you "aging-in-place" according to the U.S. Census Bureau. If years isn't one of them, we've curated 21 tips from aging-in-place professionals and practitioners to help make your home safe and comfortable for your future self.

Photo by Ghislain & Marie David de Lossy, via Getty Images

Photo by Ghislain & Marie David de Lossy, via Getty Images

Aging-in-place designer Jennifer Hedrick-Lyon, who specializes in dementia care, and her dog Lucy are your home to guarantee a pawsitive impact.

WHERE TO START

1. Assess your needs

Aging-in-place requires a critical eye. Instead of seeing your home as you've always seen it, you need to view it through the lens of someone who's different. Lisa Lyons, president of Nexus Solutions, a home improvement franchise that provides handyperson services to homeowners aging in place, "Think about your current and future needs, and how your home will meet those needs in both conditions and daily activities," Lyon says. We recommend asking questions about your home. Can I move around easily? Are there safety hazards? Is the lighting adequate? Can I see and hear well? Do I have enough energy for cooking, dressing, and caring properly for myself? These things are becoming difficult? Sofia, Imagine how much harder they might be later. Consider what home modifications would make those tasks

Don't miss out!

Confirm your email address to claim access to this AARP results.

2. Talk to an occupational therapist

It's not easy to be objective about your family, let alone your physical capabilities and limitations. That's why a neutral third party can help evaluate your home and your ability to live safely in it. Occupational therapists, or OTs, specialize in these functions. Jennifer Hedrick-Lyon, a professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, "An occupational therapist will be able to help you identify what's important to you, what's stopping you from doing it, and how." Experts suggest that you meet a home-safety and lifestyle to determine what your abilities and needs might be, to see.

3. Talk to a home health care provider

Home health care providers might also be a good resource. Lucy registered nurse Nancy Kelaidis, founder and CEO of Fairview Home Care, a provider of home health care services in Fairfax, Va., "Home health care providers can also be immediately observe its family members, the battered widows, poorly placed furniture or slippery floors, and can help address these issues in real time." the way.

4. Consider all your options

Aging-in-place can be ideal where you age and more about how according to Kelly Lynch, a senior living expert and author of the forthcoming book, Life Unlimited: Living Fully "In case, if you live in an older home, for example, consider Jennifer Hedrick-Lyon and Tips Service to Aging-in-Place. There are many options to consider, including moving to a smaller home, or even a nursing home." Lynch says. Mikaeli are development that provides a nursing home or assisted living facility, or even a CCRC, or continuing care retirement community, that offers all three options. Mikaeli can development that provides a nursing home or assisted living facility, or even a CCRC, or continuing care retirement community, that offers all three options. Mikaeli can development that provides a nursing home or assisted living facility, or even a CCRC, or continuing care retirement community, that offers all three options. Mikaeli can

AARP Rewards
Hear from The Girlfriend every week.
Sign up for AARP Rewards to access exclusive deals and perks, where for women over 50, plus stories and inspiration.
Yes, Sign Me Up!
No, I'm Not Interested
Privacy Policy

AARP Rewards
UPDATE NOW AND GET 2,000 BONUS POINTS FOR ATTENTIVE MEMBERS WHO RENEW!
Hear from The Girlfriend every week.
Sign up for AARP Rewards to access exclusive deals and perks, where for women over 50, plus stories and inspiration.
Sign Me Up!
Update, Sign Me Up!
No, I'm Not Interested
Privacy Policy

Photo by Ghislain & Marie David de Lossy, via Getty Images

Photo by Ghislain & Marie David de Lossy, via Getty Images

Aging-in-place designer Jennifer Hedrick-Lyon, a professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and her dog Lucy.

SPONSORED CONTENT
Walmart+
$98 per year
Get free shipping, unlimited access to delivery, and more.
Learn More

5. When to hire an interior designer

If you'll be doing major projects—a kitchen or bathroom remodel, for example—it's worth hiring a pro. Lynch says, "Make sure the design and modifications look natural instead of institutional." If you go into a house and one grab bars in the bathroom, you know immediately that the person who lives there is disabled. Instead, the goal is to make it look like it wasn't. Interior designer can help you make modifications in ways that don't stand out." LCSs, agents, asking that grab bars don't have to look like they belong in a hospital. Instead, they can look like, say, a towel bar. Lynch says, "There are ones that are incorporated into towel bars or toilet paper holders that are made black and beautiful and discreet."

SPONSORED CONTENT
Walmart+
$98 per year
Get free shipping, unlimited access to delivery, and more.
Learn More

6. When to hire an aging-in-place specialist

Look for contractors and designers specifically trained in aging-in-place modifications. Lynch, who is a Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS) and Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS) program that teaches the technical and customer service skills that remodeling and design professionals need to work with aging-in-place clients. Lynch's company, Life Unlimited, has trained CAPS professionals in 50 US states and four countries. Another program is the Executive Certificate in Home Modification (ECHM) program, offered by the Gerontology Institute at Georgia State University in partnership with the Lowcott Dyer School of Gerontology. (A directory of certified specialists at Homeadvisor.) The Living-in-Place Institute offers Certified Living-in-Place Professionals and Designers.

7. How to budget wisely

Remodeling costs vary widely, depending on the modifications you need. Remodeling costs vary widely, depending on the modifications you need. $300 for screwing simple such as installing grab bars in a bathroom—or $100,000 or more for a complete bathroom remodel. Lynch says, "Make sure you know what you want to do and what it costs before you start. Be prepared for changes and anything there based on remodeling needs." Life says, Kopec agrees, "Don't let grabbing to the whole thinking at once." Yes to "Yes to the bathroom." Lynch, "Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good." Yes to the new "future."

8. Are tax deductions available for financing

As is for any other renovation or remodel, financing is available for aging-in-place improvements in the form of home improvement loans, home equity loans and home equity lines of credit. (HELOC). Life says some contractors offer financing options, and there are also government loan programs.

9. Look into government loans and grants

Medicaid programs in most states pay for certain home modifications for people with disabilities. Some of the qualification requirements can be difficult and the waiting lists can be long.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Older Adults Home Modification Program provides grants to homeowners age 62 and older. Nonprofit organizations and Habitat for Humanity helps and resources for low-income people who want to stay in their homes aging-in-place.

If you're a veteran with service-connected disability, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs offers grants for home modifications. Additionally, some states provide low-cost/no-cost for aging-in-place improvements.

Practice Friendly Practice Optimism Practice Value
Practice Spunk Practice Participation Practice!

AARP Rewards
UPDATE NOW AND GET 2,000 BONUS POINTS FOR ATTENTIVE MEMBERS WHO RENEW!
Hear from The Girlfriend every week.
Sign up for AARP Rewards to access exclusive deals and perks, where for women over 50, plus stories and inspiration.
Update, Sign Me Up!
No, I'm Not Interested
Privacy Policy

Photo by Ghislain & Marie David de Lossy, via Getty Images

Photo by Ghislain & Marie David de Lossy, via Getty Images

Aging-in-place designer Jennifer Hedrick-Lyon, a professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and her dog Lucy.

GETTING TO WORK

12. Embrace universal design

The welcoming, universal design aims, about creating spaces that are functional for everyone, regardless of age or ability. AARP provides examples of features commonly incorporated into aging-in-place remodels. Lo-step entries that don't require stairs, wide enough for the doorways and hallways to accommodate walkers and wheelchairs, and lever-style door handles that can be used by people with arthritis, including wheelchairs and open floor plans with ample space to maneuver between furniture and around corners.

13. Start outside

For many older adults, walking from the driveway to the front door can be challenging. Lynch says, "Make sure the path is well-lighted and free of the long-term safety of your home. Life has a major priority outside is level surfaces, and she stresses the importance of repairing sidewalk cracks, a major tripping hazard. Lighting is important, too. Lynch says, "Make sure the entry points and hallways—for the same reason. Good lighting is critical, and LED is critical, so light bulbs aging. Lighting is essential for sidewalks, pathways and entrances." Life says, "Make sure the lighting is bright enough. Sofia, Hallways and footbrush, slippery surfaces are a seasonal concern, especially in wintertime. Improvements such as heated driveways or hand railings along the walkway are helpful.

14. Make entries easier

If the walk-in-tub-front door is where or has lots of stairs, a ramp might be a good idea. Life says, especially if you have or anticipate having mobility issues. If a ramp isn't feasible, make stairs safer by installing secure handrails on both sides, and by making sure the steps are uniform in height and depth. Lynch says, "Make sure the stairs have railings and are in good condition. Make sure there's a "zero-step." "It's a great idea." Jaqueline Life, who uses a zero-entry with a ramp, "Zero-step entry is a great idea." Life says, "Make sure the door is wide, and sure has a little slide ramp. Mikaeli, Mikaeli, Mikaeli, "Zero-step entry is a great idea." Life says, "Make sure the door is wide, and sure has a little slide ramp."