

home assessment for what ails you

If your parent has difficulty walking or managing stairs:

- Make sure the driveway has a smooth, non-slippery surface.
- Floors should also be smooth and non-slippery.
- Stair surfaces should be slip-resistant.
- Build a ramp with handrails to the front door, or a side entrance if it's convenient.
- Create knee space under stoves and sinks, so sitting is possible.
- Throw out the throw rugs and area rugs to prevent tripping.
- Widen doors to accommodate a walker and/or wheelchair.

If your loved one has impaired balance or coordination:

- Install a phone in the bathroom.
- Keep a bath seat in the tub or shower.
- Install handrails on both sides of stairways.
- Replace traditional shower with walk-in.
- Equip the bathtub with a transfer bench.
- Or install a bathtub with a side-door for easier entry.
- Put grab bars near the bath and toilet.
- Consider changing sharp-edged counters to rounded edged.

If your parent has limited reaching ability:

- Build upper kitchen cabinets no more than 48 inches from the floor.
- Keep cabinet shelves no more than 10 inches deep.
- Equip kitchen with pull-down shelving.
- Make sure stove has controls in the front.
- Get a sink with side controls.
- Equip shower with hand-held nozzle.
- Organize closet so everything's accessible.
- Install pull-down closet rods.

If your parent has limited hand and arm strength:

- Change cabinet handles for easy grip.
- Change door handles to levers.
- Make sure they have an automatic garage door.
- Consider smooth countertops so they can easily slide heavy pots.
- Get appliances with push-button controls.
- Install lever faucet handles on sinks.
- Install a long-reaching spray hose to fill pots on the stove.

If your loved one uses or will likely be using a wheelchair:

- Create single-level living space: bathroom, bedroom, kitchen, living.
- Build a ramp to the front door.
- Make sure door threshold is 1/4 inch or less.
- Keep walkway and driveway smooth but not slippery.
- Widen doorways.
- Make sure halls are wide enough.
- Change walk-in closet to a wheel-in.
- Make sure there's plenty of space around toilet for transferring.
- Change shower to wheel-in.
- Buy a hand-held shower head.
- Keep floors smooth and carpeting low-pile.
- Install counters that accommodate wheelchair height.
- Create knee space under sinks and stovetop.
- Use a Lazy Susan for easier access in cabinets.
- Make sure microwave oven is no more than 48 inches from the floor.
- Get an oven with side-swinging doors.
- Organize closet to make everything accessible.
- Install pull-down rods.
- Change electrical outlets to 27 inches above floor.
- Create enough floor space for easier maneuvering throughout home.

If your loved one has limited or failing eyesight:

- Make the edge of the counter a different color than the top.
- Change the light bulbs to a higher wattage.
- Put lights in all the closets.
- Make sure walkways, entrances, and stairways are all well-lit.
- Paint steps a different color.
- Make the edge of the step a different color than the step's surface.
- Use felt tape or rubber bands to distinguish medicines or different foods.
- Mark stove controls clearly.
- Install under-cabinet lights over the kitchen counters.

If your parent has suffered hearing loss:

- Increase volume on phones.
- Buy phones and doorbells that flash light.
- Buy special adapter for television.
- Get smoke detectors with strobe lights.

Home remodeling and modifications that can be helpful for specific difficulties your aging parent or loved one might face. 