



Simple Home Modifications that Support Aging at Home

Most of us want to continue to live in the homes we love as we age. But our homes don't always work for us if our physical needs change. Here are some simple things you can consider changing in your home if you want it to work for you long into later life. Think about making these changes *before* you need them or as you're making general improvements to your home. Access, safety and comfort should be priorities.

Access

One key consideration is access to and around your home. Here are some things to consider.

- Building patios or decks on a level with the main floor
- Installing flush thresholds throughout the home
- Consolidating all living areas on the main level
- Replacing conventional shower or tub with a curbless shower or walk-in tub
- Converting one set of outside stairs to a wheelchair accessible ramp

Safety

These are some simple steps you can take to make your home safer.

- Adding handrails to all indoor and outdoor stairways – sometimes on both sides
- Adding grab bars in the bathroom
- Putting a shower safety seat in place
- Installing a hand-held shower wand
- Replacing standard toilets with high seat models
- Adding more lighting in low-light areas, especially stairways
- Replacing slick surfaces with non-slip flooring
- Eliminating throw rugs and other tripping hazards

Comfort

Here are some steps that can increase comfort in your home.

- Cover your parking area and entryway to limit snow and ice
- Replace door knobs and faucet handles with lever-style hardware
- Add seating at work areas in the kitchen
- Replace materials such as wood siding with low-maintenance materials
- Convert garden areas to low-maintenance landscaping or try raised gardens
- Install an energy efficient, programmable heating and cooling system
- Install "D" type pulls on kitchen and bathroom drawers

Maine is home to many certified "Aging in Place" Specialists who offer home assessments and modifications. For those who can't afford to pay for repairs and modifications, check out MaineHousing's Home Modification and Repair Programs to see if there's one that can assist you. www.mainehousing.org.