

Home Accessibility

Bedrooms

Amy Hosier, Family Sciences, and Ashley Osborne, Environmental and Natural Resource Issues



Universal design is also referred to as “design for all people,” “design for the lifespan,” and “design for easy living.”

Universal design is the concept of designing products, services and environments to be used by all people, regardless of age, size, ability or circumstance. Universal design helps make homes and communities accessible and extends a person’s ability to age in place (living in one’s own home for as long as confidently and comfortably possible). Universal design allows independence, safety, control and quality of life at home and in the community today and in the future.

Accessibility and Safety

The bedroom is a place where you can rest, relax and be comfortable. It is a place where you can have privacy and house personal belongings and things that are important to you. Personal grooming and

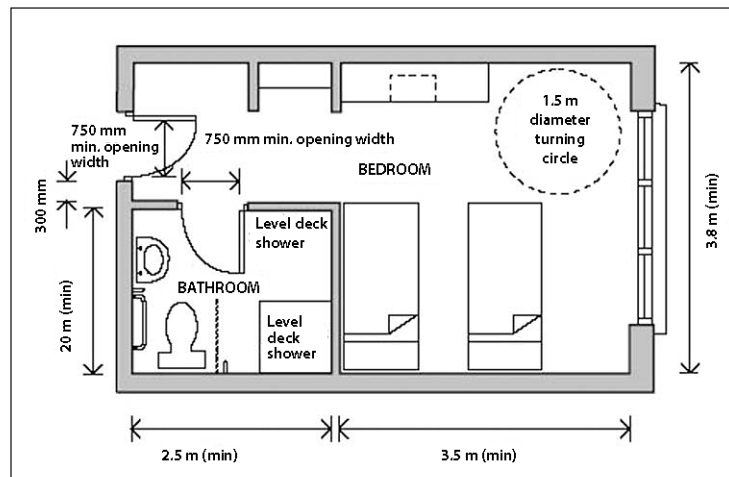
hygiene can also take place in a bedroom. Projects to make a bedroom more accessible range from complete remodels to weekend-do-it-yourself projects. The following universal design features can make your bedroom a safer and more user-friendly space.

Doors

- 36-inch-wide door
- Single lever or u-shaped handle

Lighting

- Well-lit (artificial and natural)
- Two-way light switch by door and next to bed
- Lamp or light source on night stand next to bed with touch control or clapper device
- Night lights in bedroom and on path to bathroom



Example of an accessible bedroom and bathroom floor plan.

Flooring

- Low-pile, tightly-woven carpet or no carpet
- No area or throw rugs

Floor plan/space

- Minimum 5 feet of clear open space on closet side of bed; for remaining sides, minimum of 3 feet of clear open space
- Electrical outlets near bed
- One bedroom on main level of home
- Accessible bathroom adjacent to bedroom or well-lit, clear path from bed to bathroom

Bed

- Grab bars, bed risers or pole systems to assist getting in and out of bed
- Mattress height of not more than 22 inches from floor to mattress

Closet

- Single lever or u-shaped handle
- 36-inch-wide door (avoid bi-fold and accordion doors)
- Fluorescent lighting with switch directly adjacent to and outside closet doorway
- Adjustable rods, shelves and drawers

Miscellaneous

- Contrasting colors for the walls, floor, and fabrics
- Phone on night stand next to bed
- Chair in bedroom with firmer cushions and arms for added support when standing or sitting
- Electrical cords located along walls to eliminate tripping or fire hazards
- Windows approved for emergency exit

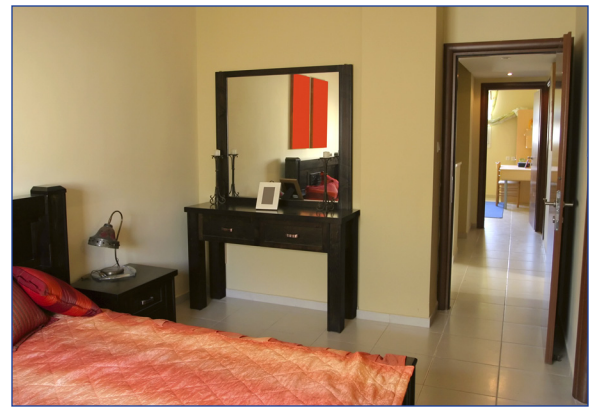
Assistive Technology

Assistive technology includes universally designed products and equipment modified or customized to increase, maintain or improve functional ability. A wide variety of assistive technology is available today, ranging from special computers to writing utensils. Adaptive clothing and accessories are designed to allow people with physical disabilities more independence in dressing, which leads to a greater sense of self-sufficiency, which can carry over into other areas of life.

Many states and local communities offer programs and services that help people with disabilities obtain and pay for assistive technology. Medical professionals, including physicians and physical and occupational therapists, can help you get connected to assistive technology that is right for you.

Evaluation

In all residential situations, assess your needs and determine which modifications and assistive technologies are most appropriate for you. Use the provided accessibility checklist to help you evaluate new accommodations or to determine what updates will improve your bedroom space.



Example of an accessible bedroom. An open area to allow wheelchair access to the bed and vanity table, lamp in reach, smooth floor surface and straight access to other rooms. Door has lever handle.

Related Extension Publications

Home Accessibility: Assistive Technology (FCS4-413)

Home Accessibility: Aging in Place (FCS4-414)

Home Accessibility: Bathrooms (FCS4-416)

Home Accessibility: Kitchens (FCS4-417)

Home Accessibility: Resources (FCS4-418)

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Independence Center of Northern Virginia, Inc.: Empowering People with Disabilities to Live Independently (2009). Retrieved February 10, 2012. www.ecnv.org/FAQs/clothing.html.

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