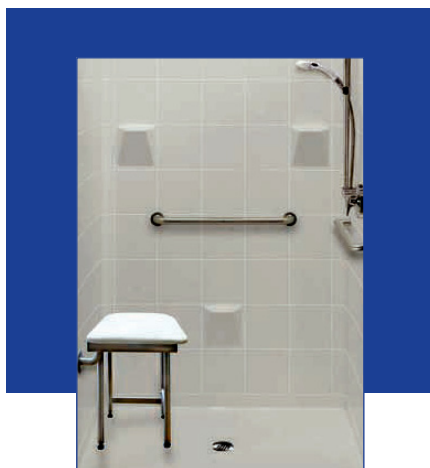


Home Accessibility

Bathrooms

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Universal design helps make homes and communities accessible and extends a person's ability to age in place.

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 bathroom is the place where you want privacy, independence and safety. Projects to make a bathroom more accessible range

from grand complete bathroom remodels to weekend-do-it-yourself projects. The following universal design features can help make your bathroom a safer and more user-friendly space in your home.

Doors

- 36-inch-wide door that opens to outside, or pocket door
- Single lever or u-shaped handle

Lighting

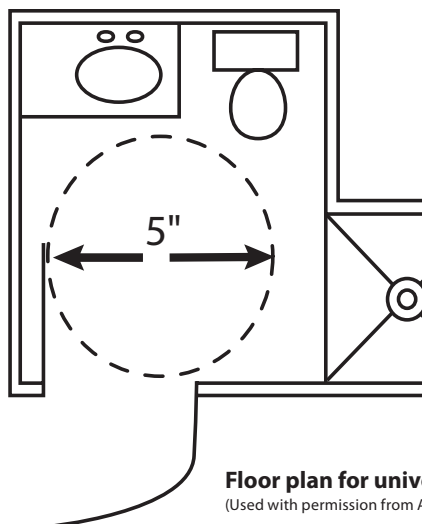
- Well-lit, non-glare (artificial and natural)
- Rocker-style light switches, 42 inches from floor

Flooring

- Reduced-slip tile or non-skid flooring

Floor plan/space

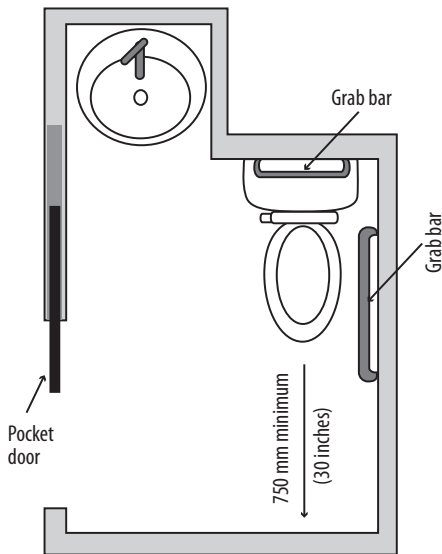
- 5 feet turning radius for maneuverability
- Wall-blocking for future installation of grab bars
- Electrical outlets 18 inches from floor
- Full bath on main level of home



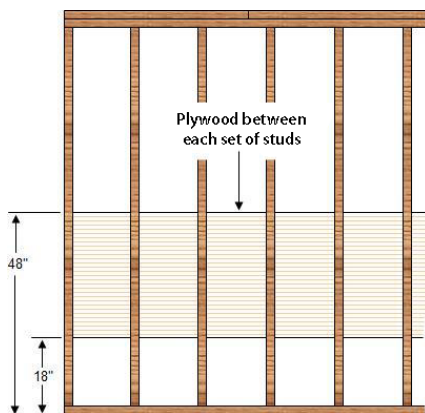
Floor plan for universally designed bathroom.
(Used with permission from Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service)

Grab bars

- Solidly anchored (studs or special anchors specific for grab bars) or professionally installed
- Installed behind and next to the toilet, inside and along-side shower/tub
- No grab bars that attach with suction cups
- No towel racks used as grab bars



Two-piece bathroom with pocket door and grab bars.



Adding plywood on bathroom stud walls to support grab bars.

Grab bars aid in balance, support and safety when transferring from one position to another, such as standing to sitting and vice versa.

Toilet

- Positioned 18 inches from any side wall, tub or cabinet
- 17 to 19 inches from floor to seat for older individuals, lower for children
- Push-button or lever handle flush
- U-shaped or slide-armed toilet paper holder

Shower/tub

- Transfer bench and tub/shower seat
- Single lever faucets with anti-scald controls near entry side of tub/shower
- Push-button dispenser for shampoo, conditioner and liquid soap
- Hand-held showerhead unit with 60 inches of hose
- Shower curtains (as opposed to shower doors)
- No-threshold walk-in or roll-in shower (5 feet x 5 feet) or walk-in bathtub
- Towel bars 48 inches from floor

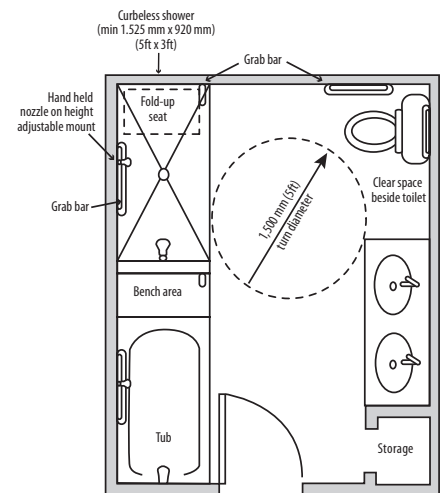
Sink

- Single lever faucets with anti-scald controls
- Pedestal, wall mounted or roll-under sink
- Shallow sink with side mounted faucet
- Insulated hot water pipes or pipes hidden behind panel to provide protection from burns
- Easy-glide or automatically closing drawers

- Rounded-edge countertops
- D-shaped or pull-style handles for cabinets and drawers
- Towel bars, soap and toothbrush holders 48 inches from floor

Miscellaneous

- Full-length and/or tilted mirror that can be viewed in seated or standing position
- Portable self-illuminated mirror set for vanity (for shaving, applying make-up)
- Contrasting colors for walls, floor and toilet
- Telephone jack or carry cell phone



Accessible four-piece bathroom.

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 bathroom accessories are designed to allow people more independence in personal grooming, which leads to a greater sense of self-sufficiency, which can carry over into other areas of life.

The following list of products for the bathroom includes just some of the assistive technology that can make bathing and grooming easier.

- Toilet risers
- Safety support rails
- Tub/shower chairs
- Swivel or stationary transfer bench
- Shower/bath chair with arm rests and height adjustments
- Foldable shower seat
- Hand-held showerhead
- Long-handled bath sponges
- Easy-grip toe nail clippers
- Razor handle extender
- Roll-on lotion applicator
- Long-handled brushes and combs

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 bathroom space.

Related Extension Publications

Home Accessibility: Assistive Technology (FCS4-413)

Home Accessibility: Aging in Place (FCS4-414)

Home Accessibility: Bedrooms (FCS4-415)

Home Accessibility: Kitchens (FCS4-417)

Home Accessibility: Resources (FCS4-418)

References

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