



HOME ACCESSIBILITY CHECK LIST

If you have someone with limited abilities who is planning to visit in your home or is presently living in your home, you will want to make your home as barrier-free as possible to assist them in moving with ease around your home. A barrier-free home is also a definite asset for anyone dealing with limitations in mobility when recovering from surgery, strokes, heart attacks and broken legs. Many features make the home more pleasant for family members of all ages and abilities and fit into the universal living concepts for life cycle housing. The following list of questions and chart allows you to conduct your own site survey to determine what barriers may need to be modified in your home. Additional tips are included in each section for enhancing for your home easy living.

EXTERIOR

- Yes No 1. Is the lot located near public transportation, churches, shopping and medical facilities?
- Yes No 2. Are approaches to the house and connecting patios or decks well-lighted, with focus lighting at steps and walking hazards? (Motion detector lights and yard lights with automatic timers will enhance home security.)
- Yes No 3. Are decks or other additions to the house built to match existing floor levels, without steps that impede movement?
- Yes No 4. Are there benches, chairs or other types of seating outside?
- Yes No 5. Is there any shelter from rain or sun provided in the yard?
- Yes No 6. Is there a telephone easily accessible to the outside area?

Additional Tips For Easy Living:

- Automatic sprinklers for the lawn can eliminate the chores of moving hoses and sprinklers. Buried water supply lines also eliminate the tripping hazard of having garden hoses strewn about the walks and yard.
- Raised garden beds and hydroponic gardens let the less abled pursue garden hobbies while eliminating stooping and bending. Small-plot gardening helps retain the satisfaction one gets from gardening but can eliminate the need for extensive cultivation, weeding and watering.

- Fiberglass ground cloth on gardens or planting beds let water through while discouraging weed growth.
- Ground covers, such as cedar or redwood chips or bark, add visual interest to the yard while reducing the need to water and weed. Mulch used on garden areas will also reduce yard work.
- Ask experts to test the lawn and bring it into proper pH balance to reduce the need for expensive chemical additives. Monitor the use of watering and fertilizers to keep the lawn in good health while reducing yard chores.
- Choose building materials for long life and low maintenance. Brick, stucco, and aluminum and vinyl sidings require little maintenance. Warp-free steel or fiberglass doors provide superior insulation, do not require an extra storm door and are maintenance-free.

PARKING

- Yes No 1. Is there off-street parking close to your home?
- Yes No 2. Is there a need for a specified parking space with a sign designating it as reserved for the handicapped close to your front door?
- Yes No 3. Are the spaces at least 12 ft. 6 in. wide and do they have 48-inch space next to them?
- Yes No 4. Is the parking area surface firm and smooth? (If not, what kind of surface does it have? _____)
- Yes No 5. Can a person travel from the parking area to the front without having to climb any steps or go up a steep slope?
- Yes No 6. Is the walkway smooth, firm and at least 48 inches wide?
- Yes No 7. Are there any other hazards that could interfere with the use of a wheelchair, walker or crutches?

ENTRANCES

- Yes No 1. Is the entrance door at least 36 inches wide with a clearance of at least 32 inches?
- Yes No 2. Are there any steps that one must climb to get to the front door?
- Yes No 3. Is there a front stoop or porch at the entrance measuring at least 5 feet x 5 feet?

- Yes No 4. Is the threshold at the front door no more than ½-inch high?
- Yes No 5. Does the front door have a lever handle? (If not, describe the type of opener:
_____)
- Yes No 6. Is the front door easy to open?
- Yes No 7. If there is carpet on the floor at the inside entrance to the home, is it a low-level, tightly woven style backed by a commercial ¼-inch pad?
- Yes No 8. If there is smooth surface flooring at the inside entrance, is the surface non-slippery even when wet?
- Yes No 9. If loose (scatter) rugs are used, do they have a rubber backing and lie flat on the floor (no curled edges)?
- Yes No 10. Is there enough space in the foyer to move around? (A wheelchair needs at least a 5 foot diameter circle of space to turn around.)
- Yes No 11. Is there enough light at the entrance for safety and for those with reduced vision to see clearly?
- Yes No 12. Are shrubs and trees near entries well trimmed so that they do not provide a hiding place for intruders?

Additional Tips for Easy Living:

- Consider using keyed push-button entry locks to avoid fumbling with house keys.
- Lever-type door handles are easier to operate than are the more common round door knobs. Round knobs can be slippery and hard to turn if gripping strength is limited.
- Avoid using thumb-latch doors. These are difficult to operate for those with arthritic hands or loss of hand strength.
- Build a shelf by the entry door so you have a place to put packages while you negotiate the entry. The shelf can be one that folds away when not in use.
- Garage doors should have automatic lights and openers so that nighttime entry is easier and safer. Some garage door openers have multiple functions, so you can also operate lights inside the house to light you path on entry.
- Don't block steps or porches with potted plants or other objects that might be tipped over in the dark.
- Provide secure handrails at any exterior steps and porches. Keep concrete slabs sealed to aid water runoff and avoid having ice or puddles forming on steps, walk or drives.
- Equip entry doors with peepholes or with closed-circuit video, so visitors can be identified before the door is opened.

- Do not carpet stairs. Carpet can cause tripping and reduces width of steps. Bare wood interior stairway or wood covered with non-slip vinyl covers is safer underfoot.
- Check stair rails to be sure they are properly secured and will not come loose in case of a fall. Most rails are secured with too-small screws that will fail if a person's falling weight is upon them.
- Handrails should not be varnished and should be small enough in diameter that the average-sized hand can encircle them for a secure grip.

INTERIOR

- Yes No 1. Is the entire home on one floor?
- Yes No 2. If more than one level, is there a bedroom and bathroom on the main or entrance level?
- Yes No 3. Are all halls at least 3 feet wide?
- Yes No 4. Do any objects protrude into the hall (on or above floor level)?
- Yes No 5. Are there any thresholds in the home that are more than ½-inch high?
- Yes No 6. Is there any surface or flooring inside your home that is loose, slippery or has a deep pile carpet?
- Yes No 7. Is there any furniture that is in the way of travel in a wheelchair or with a walker?
- Yes No 8. Do all doorways to all rooms have at least a 32 inch wide clearance between the frames?
- Yes No 9. Is there enough space to move easily around both sides and the foot of the bed?
- Yes No 10. Is there adjustable shelving and rod space in your bedroom closets to accommodate different heights?
- Yes No 11. Are cleaning supplies stored where they can be easily used yet safe from small children?

Additional Tips For Easy Living:

- Always consider easy access when installing doors. Wide doors permit personal entry; bi-fold or sliding doors keep the door from getting in the way.

- Avoid many-layered window covering and draperies. Roll-up shades and mini-blinds are easy to operate.
- Choose D-shaped hardware pulls rather than round knobs or fold-away pulls that may be hard to grip.
- Install smoke detectors in all levels of your house. Have alarms outside bedrooms (in the hall), in laundry and furnace rooms, in the kitchen and in an attached garage. Test each alarm at least once a month.
- Install electrical outlets at convenient heights to avoid having to stoop or bend to reach them. Electrical outlets are placed low to the floor by custom, not as a code equipment.
- Select products that are easy to clean and maintain. Look for non-stain carpets, upholstery fabric with spot-and-stain finishes, no-wax flooring.
- Keep stairs and steps clean and well-lit. Don't store cleaning products or cleaning equipment on basement stairs where they become a tripping hazard.
- Install dimmer switches on all lights. Dimmer switches save electricity, extend bulb life and permit the light intensity to be adjusted easily. Buy switches with lighted toggles you can find in the dark.
- Clean and lubricate hinges, locks drawer tracks, windows and appliance motors to keep them operating smoothly.
- Remove any doors that are not needed for privacy. (Store the doors in a basement or storeroom so that they're available to a future owner.)

KITCHEN

- Yes No 1. Is there a minimum of 48 inches between the kitchen cabinets?
- Yes No 2. Is there difficulty in reaching any of the following when in a seated position:
- Yes No a. Range controls?
 - Yes No b. Microwave?
 - Yes No c. Reaching into the oven?
 - Yes No d. Opening and reaching into the refrigerator?
 - Yes No e. Reaching and operating appliances on the counter?
 - Yes No f. Opening, loading and unloading the dishwasher?
- Yes No 3. Are the lower shelves of wall cabinets no higher than 48 inches from the floor?
- Yes No 4. Can the sink be reached and the faucet turned on and off from a seated position? (Leave leg room under countertops, especially at the sink. This can be done by removing the face from sink cabinets or by eliminating sink cabinets altogether.)
- Yes No 5. Is there a pantry or are there other storage areas that can be easily reached?

- Yes No 6. Is there at least 30 inches of counter space on both side of the cooktop and sink?
- Yes No 7. Is there a minimum of 12 square feet of counter space?
- Yes No 8. Are electrical wall outlets easy to reach and grounded for safety?
- Yes No 9. Does the floor have a non-slippery surface, even when wet? Consider institutional vinyls and ceramic tiles when purchasing.
- Yes No 10. Is there a need for any reaching aids to assist people who have limitations in reaching, bending or stooping:
- a. Knob turners: may be 12 inches to 18 inches long with an attachment that fits over the knob on one end.
 - b. "Push-pullers" allow users to push oven racks in and pull racks out when loaded with hot pots and pans.
 - c. Tongs allow reaching into refrigerators and removing items from high shelves.

Additional Tips For Easy Living:

- Countertops are most useful if their height is varied. For example, a low counter by the sink for preparing salads or vegetables is needed for a person in a wheelchair but useful for any cook.
- Pull-out trays permit better access than standard shelving and doors/drawers on cabinets. Install baskets and swing-out organizers, rather than shelving, in base cabinets. These organizers increase the storage capacity through better organization and brings food items and utensils within easy reach.
- Don't have countertops and floors of matching colors. A clean color break between two surfaces helps those with reduced vision to distinguish where the counter edge ends.
- Install wall-mounted ovens and microwaves, keeping in mind the best height for wheelchair access.
- Use all electric cooking appliances. Persons with a poor sense of smell may not detect gas leaks.
- Equip all kitchen electrical outlets with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI's).
- Select a cooktop with staggered burners, so you won't have to reach over a hot front burner to get to a back burner.
- Cooktops should have controls at the front or side of the unit for easy accessibility by a seated person. Special controls can often be added by your gas or electric company to assist those with reduced vision.
- Hot water dispensers at the sink will reduce the danger of burn injuries, simplify snack and beverage preparation.
- Keep countertop appliances such as toasters or toaster ovens in appliance garages to prevent

- damage to the appliances or burn injuries to the cook. Do not let appliance cords hang loose.
- Be sure there is adequate task lighting to prevent accidents and burns in the kitchen. High level lighting is a must at the sink and cutting board and around cooking appliances.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen.

LAUNDRY AREA

- Yes No 1. Are the controls for the washing machine and/or dryer easy to reach?
- Yes No 2. Are both the washing machine and dryer easy to load and unload?
- Yes No 3. Is there enough space to fold your clothes when you get them out of the dryer?
- Yes No 4. Does the floor have a non-slippery surface, even when wet?

BATHROOM

- Yes No 1. Does the doorway to the bathroom have at least a 32 inch clearance?
- Yes No 2. Is there enough space for a wheelchair to move about and to slide under the lavatory?
- Yes No 3. Can a person reach the sink faucets while in a seated position? Consider having a wall-mounted countertop with an abbreviated vanity or no vanity cabinet underneath.
- Yes No 4. Is the bottom edge of the mirror 40 inches from the floor?
- Yes No 5. Is there a shelf placed at 40 inches from the floor?
- Yes No 6. Is there a clear 36 inch wide path to the commode?
- Yes No 7. Is there a clear floor space of 32 inches x 48 inches adjacent to the commode?
- Yes No 8. Is the rim (seat) of the commode at least 19 inches from the floor?
- Yes No 9. Is there a grab bar at least 32 inches long on one side of the commode and a grab bar at least 24 inches long along the rear wall of the commode? Be sure all grab bars are well anchored, with screws into wood framing, not just into plaster or drywall.

- Yes No 10. Are the heights of these grab bars between 33 inches and 36 inches from the floor?
- Yes No 11. Is there a minimum space of 1½ inches between the wall and the grab bar?
- Yes No 12. Are the grab bars at least 1⅓ inch minimum to 1½ inch maximum in diameter?
- Yes No 13. Is there a grab bar on the control side of the bathtub that is at least 24 inches long?
- Yes No 14. For tub without seat: Is the grab bar at the side of tub at least 24 inches long and between 25 inches and 27 inches in height?
- Yes No 15. For tub with built-in seat: Is the grab bar at least 42 inches long and between a 25 inch minimum and 27 inch maximum height?
- Yes No 16. Is there a 12 inch x 1¼ inch diameter grab bar set at the head of the tub (required only if a built-in seat is provided)?
- Yes No 17. Is the tub surface non-slippery?
- Yes No 18. Is there some provision for built-in or portable seating in the bathtub? (Bars and seats to aid tub entry are available at hospital supply stores.)
- Yes No 19. Is there a hand-held shower-control spray in the tub?
- Yes No 20. Is there a separate temperature control unit?
- Yes No 21. Is there a roll-in shower unit that is designed for a wheelchair?
- Yes No 22. Is there a regular, curb-free shower-stall unit in place with at least a 32 inch doorway clearance?
- Yes No 23. Does the shower-stall floor have a non-slippery finish?
- Yes No 24. Are the shower controls between 38 inches and 48 inches from the floor?
- Yes No 25. Is there a built-in seat inside the shower unit?
- Yes No 26. Is the towel bar set at a height of 36 inches?

Additional Tips for Easy Living:

- Lavatories and toilets can be wall-mounted, which permits them to be positioned for wheelchair accessibility and easy floor maintenance.
- Provide enhanced lighting for those with reduced vision. Light should be bright enough to read prescription labels to avoid taking the wrong medicine or wrong dosage.
- Drawer pulls and round door knobs on vanities should be D-shaped for better gripping.
- Install non-slip flooring. Ceramic tile flooring can be perfectly safe if you choose the type used in hospitals and laboratories. These offer the resistance to dirt and stains, easy cleaning and low maintenance normally associated with ceramic tile floors, with good traction underfoot.
- Provide plenty of ventilation so that steam and moisture do not collect and make fixtures or floor slippery.
- If building new or remodeling your present bath, have the plumber offset water faucets and shower controls so they are near the front edge of the tub or shower stall, rather than having them centered over the tub.
- Turn water heater thermostat down to prevent accidental scalding.
- Faucets should have lever handles for easy control of water temperature and flow.
- Install the medicine cabinet so it is not centered over the sink but allows easy access for a wheelchair occupant.

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