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Is Your Home Fit?

What if a home could be suitable for any resident, of any age or physical ability? We all deserve a safe, livable, and enjoyable space to not only live in but also thrive in!

Barely one percent of the nation's housing supply contains any "universal design" elements such as a sink that can be reached from a wheelchair or a step-free/ramp entrance that helps a parent who is pushing a stroller, a teenager with a sports injury, or anyone carrying heavy grocery bags. The reality is few people have the resources to build their perfect home.

There is good news, with ideas and modifications that can make a home safer, more comfortable and a better "fit" for its residents — of every age. The following is a condensed version for ideas throughout your home provided by NC State Extension's and AARP Home Fit Guide, full details can be found at <https://bit.ly/3SPz6d8> and <https://bit.ly/3rJvpu5>.

Entrances, Exits, and Hallways

- There is a small piece of furniture next to the door to place objects while unlocking/locking the door.
- Steps are in good condition and are free of objects.
- Steps have non-skid strips. Carpeting on steps is securely fastened and free of fraying or holes.
- Sturdy handrails are on both sides of stairway and are securely fastened.
- Light switches are located at the top and bottom of stairways and at both ends of long hallways.
- There is a tote or basket with a handle at both the top and bottom of the staircase to use while carrying items up or down the steps
- It is easy to see the leading edge or nosing of each stair tread while walking downstairs.
- Doors have lever-action handles instead of round knobs.
- Door thresholds are low and beveled or there are no thresholds.

Kitchen/Bathroom

- The range and sink areas have adequate light levels.
- There is an established surface for working while seated.

- Kitchen wall cabinets are not too high to be easily reached or there is an adaptation to help reach items.
- Oven controls are clearly marked and easily grasped, and are located on the front or side of the oven so that you do not have to reach over the burners.
- Installed lever-, touch- or sensor-style faucets — ideally one that's pressure-balanced, temperature-regulated, and kept at or below 120°F
- Flooring is not slippery and has a non-glare surface.
- Drawer handles and knobs have easy-to-grasp, D-shaped handles
- A handheld or adjustable showerhead is in place.
- Electrical overload protection is provided by circuit breakers, fuses, or ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI). GFCIs prevent electrical shock and are particularly important in areas where water is used, such as kitchens, bathrooms, and outside.
- Smoke alarms are present in the home and are in working order. One way to help you remember to change the batteries is to replace them on your birthday.
- The bathtub or shower has a non-skid mat or strips on the standing area.
- Grab bars are installed on the walls by the bathtub and toilet.
- The bathroom door opens outward.

Living Room/Bedroom

- Electrical cords are placed along walls (not under rugs) and away from traffic areas.
- Furniture is not too low or too deep to get in and out of easily.
- The light switch is located near the entrance.
- There is enough space to walk through the room leaving clear passageways for traffic.
- Furniture, which might be used for support when walking or rising, is steady and does not tilt.
- A lamp or flashlight is kept within reach of your bed. Check batteries periodically to make sure they are working, and keep a spare package of batteries nearby.
- A night light is used to brighten the way to the bathroom at night.
- You have wall-to-wall low pile carpeting or a smooth surface floor.

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