

# Home Modifications Increase Senior Safety



**Stop worrying about a loved one's safety; home modifications help elderly homeowners age in place.**

Home modifications are changes you make to your home or the house of a parent or relative so that [aging in place](#) is safer and more comfortable. Here are answers to four top home modification questions:

## 1. How do I know if home modifications are necessary?

Particularly if an aging parent lives alone, other family members may not be aware of the struggles their loved one is having. Make a point when visiting to observe how Mom or Dad gets around the house. Input from the doctor and other health care professionals may give you insight on your parents' abilities and areas of difficulty. If you have concerns, it is probably time to consider an assessment. Find a contractor who specializes in home modification and who will coordinate with their health care team.

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## 2. What are the most important home modifications?

Home modifications that will help you or your loved one stay safe fall under three categories:

- **Safety:** Anything that presents a fall or other safety hazard should be taken care of immediately.
- **Accessibility:** Those modifications that enhance accessibility should be done as soon as possible.
- **Convenience:** Modifications that are primarily for convenience can be delayed if there are budgetary concerns.

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## 3. How can I prevent my unsteady loved one from falling?

About one-third of adults over the age of 65 fall each year — and of those who fall, two-thirds will fall again within six months.

To prevent falls:

- Check that there are no trailing extension cords, loose throw rugs or clutter that could present a tripping hazard.
- Make sure you have railings or grab bars installed wherever practical. Having hand holds in place before they are needed will get you in the habit of reaching for them, so that when you need them the habit is already ingrained.
- Consider replacing slippery flooring with a nonslip alternative.

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## 4. How can I avoid falls in the bathroom?

The [bathroom can prove dangerous](#) for older homeowners. If you have a difficult time getting in and out of the bathtub, consider having some grab bars installed. Having a strong handhold is especially important in the bathroom, where surfaces are slippery and falls are common.

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In addition, you might want to consider a tub cut that converts your existing bathtub into a step-in shower, or removing the tub and installing a curbless shower. Also, if the floor of the bathroom or the shower is slippery, consider applying a nonslip coating or stick-on treads for a better grip.

Remember, any modification that ensures safety and helps you or your loved one live independently for as long as possible is well worth consideration.

***Are you considering home modifications for aging in place? Share your thoughts and concerns in the comments section!***

**Editor's note:** This is an updated version of an article originally published on Nov. 10, 2014. A version of this article has appeared on Solid Rock Enterprises' [website](#).