



# HOME SAFETY

FAMILY CAREGIVERS

National Home  
Safety Month

## HOME SAFETY

### 3 Questions to ask before modifying your home:

1. Would modifications create a safer and higher quality of life for my loved one?

This should be the most important factor when considering home modifications. Will the work done provide a safer place for your loved one? Will it give them more independence, and ultimately a higher quality of life?

2. Are the modifications affordable and provide a long-term solution?

Make sure you or your senior can afford the modifications and that any modifications done will be beneficial for many years. Weigh the costs of different modifications against the long-term benefits. Some home remodeling contractors will offer sliding-scale fees based on income. There are also a variety of organizations that may be able to assist including [Rebuilding Together, Inc.](#) There may also be funds through the [Older Americans Act](#).

<http://togetherwetransform.org/>

<http://www.ncpssm.org/PublicPolicy/OlderAmericans/Documents/ArticleID/1171/Older-Americans-Act>

3. Has a medical provider judged it to be safe for my loved one to remain at home?

Before taking on any home modifications, talk with your loved one's doctor to make sure it is still safe for them to remain at home. The doctor can give you a better idea of their overall health and what he/she thinks will be the best housing arrangement for the individual.

Keeping your loved one safe in their home and able to carry out daily tasks can help maintain their independence and prolong them living on their own. Most individuals over age 50 want to stay in their homes as long as possible. Depending on their mobility and current living conditions, you will have to determine what is the safest and best living environment for them.

The National Association of Home Builders and the AARP have developed the Certified Aging in Place Specialist training designation for remodelers and contractors. Workers have been specially trained in home modifications that can make homes safe for older individuals for the long-term. If you are looking to move your aging loved one into a small, more suitable home, contact a CAP Specialist to help start specific design ideas before a home is fully constructed and designed.

## What Does Modifying Your Home Cost to Keep Your Senior at Home?

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### What Does Modifying Your Home Cost to Keep Your Senior at Home?

Keeping your aging parent or grandparent at home is important to maintaining their independence, but safety is an important consideration. Their home may need to be modified in various ways—large and small—in order for them to continue living there, carrying out their daily tasks and preventing accidents.

Modifying a home can be costly and time consuming. Make sure to research which modifications are most important for the safety of your loved one, how much different modifications will cost and how to go about selecting the right contractor for the job.

#### Top 5 home modifications and estimated costs

1. **Widened doorways:** Doorways that are 36" wide will make it easier for wheelchairs and walkers to fit through. Price varies depending on number of doors and modifications needed.
2. **Installing Ramps:** Adding ramps to the entrance and interior of a home will help seniors with balance and mobility issues and can be worth the cost as a safety precaution. A good contractor should know the right angle and size to build the ramp. Cost can vary from \$800 to \$2200 based on materials and ramp size.
3. **Lowered countertops and sinks:** Having a variety of levels of countertops is helpful if individuals want to sit or stand while working at the counter. Having appliances and the sink easily accessible from a seated position is important for seniors to move around and do things in the kitchen with minimal assistance. A roll under sink is also a great option for individuals in wheelchairs. Costs vary depending on material desired and amount needed.
4. **Bathtub modifications:** Replacing a bathtub with a walk-in shower provides easier and safer entry for your aging loved one than a typical tub. If they have difficulty standing, a walk-in bathtub may work better. Depending on the bathroom space, you may not need additional remodeling and renovation.
5. **Levered door handles and pulls for drawers:** Replace or add handles on drawers and doors with "C"- or "D"-shaped pulls. These pulls make it easier to open doors and drawers and are easy to install. This simple change can make daily life a lot less frustrating and painful for individuals with arthritis or dexterity issues. Handles can vary from \$1 to \$20 depending on style and can be installed fairly quickly.



### TOP 5

Tips to Selecting a  
Credible Contractor

- 1 Select a handyman who is licensed, bonded and insured.

- 2 Choose a handyman who will provide a free, written estimate upfront so you are well aware of the charges.

- 3 Check reviews on Angie's List and Yelp. Get recommendations from friends and family members who have used handyman services.

- 4 Have the handyman outline the specific tasks involved with the work and a timeframe of when the work will be completed.

- 5 Check with your local Chamber of Commerce and Business Bureau to see if any complaints against the contractor have been filed.

(source) [www.handypro.com/top-5-tips](http://www.handypro.com/top-5-tips)



#### Home Care Tip:

A Home Care agency can help by suggesting necessary modifications and can recommend a reputable contractor for the work.



**Ovation**  
HOME CARE