

HOME FOR LIFE

DON'T BE FORCED FROM YOUR HOME BECAUSE OF A HANDICAP OR ACCIDENT

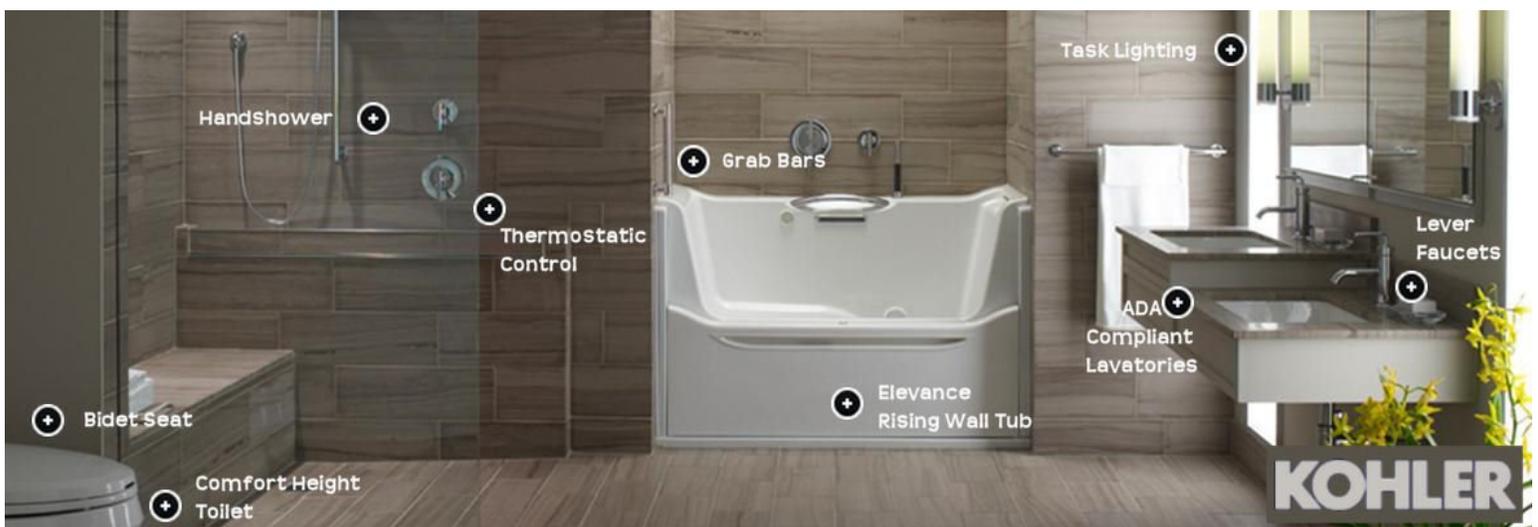
There are steps you can take to enable you to continue independent living with limited mobility or physical challenges. With some basic renovations, you can maintain independence and restore freedom. Aging in place incorporates user friendly products that look good but are also easy to maintain. Products must be easy to grip or grasp and easy to operate. Here are some ideas to consider.

BASIC CHANGES

Increase doorway widths to 32-36" inches to accommodate walkers and wheelchairs and don't forget the door at the walk in closet. You may need to reverse the swing of some doors or even change some to pocket doors. Change door knobs to the lever variety. Consider adding railings to hallways and both sides of the steps. Certainly add an electric chair to get you from floor to floor if this is the biggest drawback in staying in your home. Glue or tack down a wedge shape piece of wood to function as a ramp over high door thresholds and rearrange furniture to allow for a turning radius for wheelchairs. Try to have 30" x 48" of clear floor space to maneuver a wheelchair. Definitely remove throw rugs before they live up to their name! Be sure to have working smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers.

IN THE BATH

Remove the tub and install a 5' walk in shower with a seat and low or no thresholds. A tub can always be put back in once your house sells, but chances are the next buyer will love the large shower. Change the faucets (kitchen too) to lever style and "Rite Temp" to prevent scalding. Change taller shower faucets to a hand held with a spray, they are also great for cleaning. Put them on a bar to slide up for taller bathers or lower when needed. Don't forget to add grab bars in the shower and toilet area too. Very popular are "comfort height" commodes; 18" high similar to a standard chair height but so much easier on the knees. Install a towel rack accessible to wheelchair users. Change the vanity to a pedestal or wall hung sink and the floor to non slip materials.



IN THE KITCHEN

Purchase front control and front access appliances. New “drawer” appliances are easier to access and include dishwashers, refrigerators and freezers. Install a microwave on a shelf you can easily reach. Add some low towel racks. Install lower electric outlets and light switches to 48” and add some under cabinet lights for better visibility. In the refrigerator, put the most used items on the back of the door. Rearrange cabinets putting the most used items in the base cabinets. If you’re changing cabinets entirely – consider sliding doors and drop leaf shelving. Remove the cabinet under the kitchen sink so a wheelchair can roll right under and insulate the plumbing well to protect legs from hot pipes. A countertop height of 32” is recommended.

Federal grants may be available for some renovations – check with the Dept. of Health & Human Services, HUD or the Dept. of Veteran Affairs.

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