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Is Your Home a Lifelong Home?

Small improvements today can make your home a good fit as you age
by **The Hartford (Paid Content)**, August 1, 2019 | Comments: 0



SHUTTERSTOCK
Universal Design makes living in your home more comfortable.

Does your home fit you and your needs today? Is it likely to do so in the future? Stay in the home you love and love the home you're in. The design of your home is key to fulfilling that goal. And remodeling is the perfect opportunity to integrate design ideas that will allow you to live comfortably in your home for a lifetime.


Universal Design means creating an environment that's easy for everyone to use – regardless of age, size or ability. Three words capture the spirit of space that has been remodeled with Universal Design in mind: adaptable, easy and open.

- **Adaptable** Makes your home flexible and versatile to meet the needs of everyone. Features and spaces can easily be changed or adjusted as needed. *Example: adding pocket doors under a sink that can slide back and forth to allow for storage or to accommodate a wheelchair.*
- **Easy** Means the features like drawers, faucets and handles in your home are easier to use. *Example: replacing cabinet shelves with pullout drawers makes reaching for items easier.*
- **Open** Ensures there is ample room to maneuver or use the features in a room. *Example: eliminating thresholds between rooms to maximize the available space for people with varying abilities to use.*

Universal Design goes beyond accessibility and includes style at the very core. Start with two of the most important rooms in your home – your kitchen and bathroom.


Design ideas for the kitchen and bathroom

It's easier than you think! Here are some smart ideas and solutions to help you incorporate Universal Design into your kitchen and bathroom when you remodel. These are the types of changes that can improve safety, function, flexibility and accessibility so you can live more comfortably in the home you love.




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Kitchen improvements for better function and safety.

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Kitchen Remodeling Ideas

1. **Appliances** – Consider a wall oven, which can reduce the need to bend with hot or heavy items, or a refrigerator with side-by-side doors or a drawer on the bottom for easy reach.
2. **Cabinets and Cupboards** – Install pullout drawers rather than fixed shelving to access items easier and if you do have shelving consider adjustable-height units or adding a lazy Susan in corner cupboards.
3. **Sinks and Faucets** – Replace your faucet with a single-lever handle over dual handles for simple operation. Look for one that is pressure-balanced to help regulate the temperature to 120 degrees or lower to avoid burns.



THE HARTFORD

Bathroom improvements for better function and safety.

Bathroom Remodeling Ideas

1. **Tub and Shower** – Consider installing lighting over the bathtub and shower to improve safety. Also, adding a built-in or fold-down seat will allow you to sit as you shower.
2. **Flooring** – Select flooring made of materials that are slip-resistant, even-surfaced and easy to maintain. Also, create as much open floor space as possible to make getting around easier.
3. **Grab Bars** – Install properly placed and supported grab bars in your tub/shower area so you can steady yourself. Some styles double as decorative towel bars, but can withstand weight.

Universal Design is good for everyone at any age and is easy to incorporate into your home.

Another step that can keep you protected and save money is bundling your auto and home insurance with AARP® Auto & Home Insurance Program from The Hartford.

(Home insurance not available in all areas.)

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