



## 10 Simple Universal Design Tips

| Universal Design Feature                   | Description   |
|--|---|
| 1. Grab bars                               | Add grab bars in bathroom in general at: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. tub/shower</li> <li>2. across from toilet</li> <li>3. next toilet</li> </ol> |
| 2. Raised height toilet                    | Replace existing toilet with comfort height toilet<br><br><i>OR</i><br>Add raised toilet seat to existing toilet  |
| 3. Lever handles                           | Replace all or majority of door knobs with lever handles  |
| 4. Railings at stairs                      | Add railings at exterior stairs<br>Add railings at interior stairs  |
| 5. Lighting                                | Add additional task and general lighting  |
| 6. Contrast at stairs                      | Add permanent or semi-permanent contrast at stair treads  |
| 7. Neutralize thresholds at doorways       | Modify thresholds with transition strips or threshold ramps to be ½” or less  |
| 8. Easy access to kitchen storage          | Add pull out shelves, lazy susans, drawers etc., for ease of use  |
| 9. Adjustable height hand held shower head | Replace existing shower head with showerhead with controls that are easy to access and operate  |
| 10. Easy access closet storage             | Add varied height shelving and rods at closets for ease of use  |



## What is the *Homes for a Lifetime – Outreach Project*?

Access Solutions and MAAA (Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging) have partnered to provide information and outreach to consumers to provide resources and support to older adults to continue living independently by implementing simple, cost effective home modifications and/or features to lower the risk of falls and promote active living. The purpose is to provide ideas and resources on how to make their living space safe and livable as they live.

## What is Aging in Place?

Aging in Place is the ability to live in one's own home and community– wherever that might be– for as long as safely, confidently and comfortably possible. Livability may be enhanced and extended through the incorporation of services and features, such as universal design.

## What is Universal Design?

Universal Design is the design of all products and environments to be as usable as possible by as many people as possible regardless of age, ability or situation without the need for adaption or specialized design. It is the idea of making things comfortable and convenient for as many different people at as many stages of life as possible.

## 5 BASIC PRINCIPLES of a Universally Designed Home

1. **Usable** – Designs are uncomplicated, safe, well suited to their purpose, and can be easily used by people with differing abilities.
2. **Adaptable** – The home can be cost effectively and simply adapted to meet people's changing needs over time, or to suit different users.
3. **Accessible** – Everyone can easily access the home and move around freely within it. Particular attention will have been given to transition points such as pathways and doorways, and access to and from transport.
4. **Inclusive** – The design accommodates everyone regardless of age, size, or ability. Groups are not segregated by the design.
5. **Lifetime Value** – Homes and products are not expensive, but they are valuable and remain so over time. What's more, they save the user money, time and energy through effective design. They can be easily adapted for a relatively low cost.

## For more information:

- [Home Modifications Fact Sheet](http://www.aoa.gov/aoaroot/press_room/products_materials/fact/pdf/home_modification.pdf) (www.aoa.gov/aoaroot/press\_room/products\_materials/fact/pdf/home\_modification.pdf)
- [National Association of Home Builders](http://www.nahb.org/reference_list.aspx?sectionID=1217) (www.nahb.org/reference\_list.aspx?sectionID=1217)
- [National Resource Center on Supportive Housing and Home Modification](http://www.homemods.org/) (www.homemods.org/)
- [Center for Energy and Environment](http://www.mncee.org/) (www.mncee.org/)
- [Minnesota Housing Finance Agency](http://www.mnhousing.gov/wcs/Satellite?c=Page&cid=1358904985835&pagename=External%2FPage%2FEXTStandardLayout) (www.mnhousing.gov/wcs/Satellite?c=Page&cid=1358904985835&pagename=External%2FPage%2FEXTStandardLayout)
- [Lifetime Home Project](http://www.lifetimehome.us/) (www.lifetimehome.us/)