

REMODELING TO AGE IN PLACE -

Over my two decades of helping people accommodate their homes to age in place, I've come up with a list of eight fundamentals to consider before undertaking any major projects. As you'll note, there are no universal right or wrong decisions. But there can be issues that aren't always obvious.

As with anything, it's essential to hire qualified and reputable designers and contractors. The best way to find good ones is through personal recommendations. Talk to previous clients about their experience and satisfaction level. Then ask the most important question: "Would you work with them again?"

NO-STEP ENTRY

It's definitely a good idea to have one of these. But there's a host of related issues that go beyond the construction work. Outside, you'll probably want a covered entry to protect you from the elements. And you need good drainage since the doorway will be level with the walking surface just outside the door. Once inside, you'll need space for maneuvering.

If it's too complicated or expensive to create a no-step entry, think outside the box. Could you turn a window into a doorway to enter a larger area or turn a small or underused room into a new foyer? A fringe benefit could be making the living room less of a hallway.



WIDENED DOORS

Expanding the width of doorways is useful to accommodate wheelchairs and walkers as well as people with any kind of mobility issues. Wider doors allow two people to cross at the same time. But altering doorways can be difficult. Challenges include carrying the structural load from floors and roofs above and rerouting wires or mechanical systems that are located in the walls next to the door. You also need a plan for patching the floor space where the walls used to be.

POCKET DOORS

While these space-savers do create more maneuvering room, they present a challenge that most people don't anticipate. First, creating the pocket requires exposing enough wall area for two door widths. Second, as generally installed, pocket doors can only accommodate flat handles, which are difficult to grasp, even by people with full manual dexterity.

Stair glide This is one of the most common pieces of aging-in-place equipment, but it has some drawbacks. The most basic chair lift (the kind that runs straight up and down) costs about \$3,000, installed. But custom units for stairs that have turns and landings can run as high as \$12,000. While glides can be a godsend for people with heart conditions or bad knees, they

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tions to make sure they are still taking their medicines and are not experiencing any side effects.

Danhauer's *free delivery service* is a huge plus for people aging-in-place. We work with those with multiple health conditions, spending time to understand what's going on with them, and act as "a safe option" for anyone requiring health advice.

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