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For more information,
contact: Tara Solomon-Smith
Adult Development and Aging Agent, Wildcat Extension District
tsolomon@ksu.edu, 620-724-8233

Simple Home Modifications

Did you know the average cost of care in Assisted Living or full time in home care cost is over \$4,500.00 per month? Maybe you are like me and live in an older home. It is never too early to start thinking about simple home modifications as it is one of the easiest ways to improve our ability to live in a lifelong home!

Why should we consider making some modifications? The goal is to create a safe, livable, and enjoyable space for all of us to not only live in but thrive in! This can also help maintain a sense of purpose and independence which is incredibly important to all adults, no matter what age. Safety and security comes from the familiarity with your own home. Proximity to family, friends, and community, call also be a factor. Accessible long term care could potentially take away from your already built in social and support network. Finally, the cost of alternatives and financial stability plays a role!

Simple home modifications have free, low, medium, or high cost options. All are often cheaper than a month in a nursing home which in 2021 will be up to \$6,000.00. The next question is where to start? First, simply assess your space with a friend or a check list. Start with free or easy tasks and then work your way up, and definitely start early and start now!

Here are some simple, low cost options that you could start with today!

1. **Cut the Clutter:** This is important for fall prevention and could be as simple as a power cord in a spot that is a trip hazard or some items on a night stand that can be moved so that there is room to grab on to when getting out of bed.
2. **Review Entryways:** Having at least one spot to enter the home without steps could mean creating a ramp or something smaller to ease the step over a lip into a doorway. Make sure there is good lighting, check and repair any loose rock or broken concrete, and add a chair or shelf close to your entry so you can set items down while unlocking and opening the door.

3. **Steps and Flooring:**

- For steps, simple patterned and short carpet is best. If steps are not carpeted, add non slip tape and grab bars on both sides of stairs.
- Remove those throw rugs or make sure it has no slip grip backing or purchase carpet tape to keep it down.
- If you are looking at replacing flooring, the National Home Builders Association and others are utilizing the coefficient of friction to show how slip resistant flooring is. A coefficient of friction rate of .6 or higher is optimal which can be found on the packaging or by calling the company.
- Can't replace flooring right now? Check out non-slip paint that increases the coefficient of friction that could be put on tile, in garages, and even wood floors.

4. **Doorways:** Upgrade by widening to 36 inches or add swing away hinges to allow more entry space.

5. **Checking Lighting:** Be sure stairs, hallways, bathrooms and even kitchens are lit at night. Consider purchasing a motion sensed night light. Replace your light switches with 'rocker' switches for increased ease in turning on.

6. **Change Pulls and Knobs:** Improve grab ability by changing round door knobs to lever handles and from round cabinet pulls to D shaped pulls.

For more information, please contact, Tara Solomon-Smith, Adult Development and Aging Agent, tsolomon@ksu.edu, 620-724-8233, or visit <https://www.wildcatdistrict.k-state.edu/home-community/wellnessforlife/index.html>.

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