



*Aging*  
**IN PLACE.**

**Independent Living Design**

*SeaPointe*  
**CONSTRUCTION**  
Design/Build Remodeling Services

# Foreword

**B**y 2030, nearly one in five Americans - 71.5 million people - will be over age 65. Today, more than 35 million Americans are age 65 or above - a tenfold increase in the 65 and over population since 1900. Over the next 20 years, that number will double, and one in every five Americans will be age 65 or older.

Aging in Place allows you to continue living in a comfortable setting and familiar communities with a strong sense of security as you get older. However, Aging in Place requires planning and home modifications to accommodate physical, mental and psychological changes that may occur as you get older.

*"... a well-designed home should "fit" people of all ages."* AARP Recommendation

The purpose of this guide is to provide you with information regarding Aging in Place so you will understand the differences in scenarios in which you should consider the variety of options you have.

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# CHAPTER 1

## What is... Aging-In-Place?

**T**he focus of Aging-In-Place is to help you ensure that you can live in the residence of your choice as you age, while getting any services or support as your needs change.

However, it is more than just that. The goal of an elderly person (or anyone) wanting to age in place should be to maintain and/or improve their quality of life. In order to do that, a good plan that focuses on your quality of life and includes your home, finances, care and other items should be created as early as possible. Your plan should be maintained over time as your situation changes.



## CHAPTER 2

# What is... CAPS?

**T**he acronym CAPS stands for Certified Aging-In-Place Specialist. The educational designation program administrated by the National Home Builders Assn. (NAHB) teaches the technical, business management, and customer service skills essential to home modifications for the those growing older at home. Graduates are required to sign a code of ethics before earning the CAPS professional designation.

Consulting with a Certified Aging-In-Place Specialist during your remodel is not only



advantageous, but it is a great way to ensure the enjoyment of your kitchen or bathroom for many, many years to come. Everyone wants to age in place because as the famous quote goes "There's no place like home."

Sea Pointe Construction has Aging-In-Place certified professionals on staff that will help you maximize your remodeling project and help you navigate the lifestyle changes ahead with ease, convenience and dignity.

# CHAPTER 3

## Aging Changes

**A**ging brings changes to us all. As a person begins their aging in place experience, it is important for them to consider and plan for the changes that will happen to them and what impacts these changes will have on their lives. As we age, our bodies and capabilities change. Examples of changes you may experience are:



- *Reduced vision*
- *Decreased mobility*
- *Reduced hearing*
- *Increased risk of illness*
- *Increased risk of falls due to balance*
- *Reduced mental processing capabilities*
- *Decreased strength or endurance*

These changes happen to most everyone in one form or another. Choosing to have a plan to age in place means you will have a greater chance to control your quality of life and independence.

## Aging Changes

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The impact of these changes can be seen in the daily life of an elderly person. While your physical capabilities lessen and demand attention, this can impact many of your daily activities, such as:

- *Getting around your home easily*
- *Driving safely*
- *Transportation*
- *Socializing*
- *Home upkeep*
- *Health maintenance*

*"Planning presents you with an opportunity to lessen the burden on your family by outlining how and where your needs are met."*



# CHAPTER 4

## Influences On Aging

**N**o matter what type of medical breakthroughs are discovered, the two guarantees in life are aging and taxes. Everyone ages differently based on their genetic make-up, lifestyle and environment. There are three common scenarios that affect one's aging characteristics:

**Genetics:** In this case, genetics includes diseases that people are prone to develop based on hereditary and lifetime longevity.

**Lifestyle:** The largest factor that can affect aging, is lifestyle which can override genetics in determining how one will age. Life decisions are important such as medical care, nutrition, weight, exercise, risk aversion and substance abuse.

**Environment:** A person's home quality, including air and water, humidity, and ozone exposure can have a positive or negative impact on the aging process.



# CHAPTER 5

## Universal Design

**T**he factors of genetics, lifestyle and environment are the driving factors behind the surge in Aging-In-Place requests. The design of products, services, and environments that are usable by all people, regardless of age, ability or situation is known as Universal Design.

Universal Design has become an undistinguishable theme for living as it embraces safety from a convenience standpoint, rather than a “warning” perception.



When done well, Universal Design becomes a virtually invisible element in one's home. There will always be the need for customized accessibility features or assistive technology to meet the individual requirements of an illness, accident or aging, but the goal is to make these occasions fewer, less frequent and less costly.

## Universal Design

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*There are three separate situations that affect the desire or need for Universal Design:*

### *Aging-In-Place Without Urgent Needs*

This group includes individuals who want to stay in their current home and are not experiencing immediate health or mobility issues and prefer universal design conveniences. Members of this group typically fall into two categories: procrastinators and planners.

Denial is prevalent in approximately 90 percent of younger age groups because they struggle to anticipate their future, but this also applies to elders that struggle with coming to terms with their changing physical condition. As a result, they procrastinate until the day when a health crisis forces a decision.

The remaining 10 percent of the population are considered to be '*planners*'; those that are in good health, but their awareness has been raised to their future needs for home modifications. There are a number of reasons that can spark awareness such as a close friend or a relative experiencing disability. One can also be pro-active by wanting to provide easier access for visitors that that strollers, wheelchairs or walkers, or accommodating for an aging parent, just to name a few.



### *Aging-In-Place with Progressive Condition-Based Needs*

This group is made up of those who have a chronic or progressive condition that requires specific modifications or attention to allow them to age in place. The individuals grouped in this category are usually aware of their needs but addressing them is not necessarily urgent.

A progressive or acute condition is one that recently developed as the result of an accident, stroke, or other traumatic event. For those with progressive conditions, long-term home modifications are necessary.

Further, the modifications installed may need to be adaptable, so they can be altered in relation to the changing condition. Characteristically, people who relate to this grouping have extensive experience with trying to work around barriers in their home or community. They will likely have specific modification needs in mind and may suggest which particular products they prefer.



### *Aging-In-Place with Traumatic Change Needs*

This group includes those that have recently experienced an abrupt or dramatic change in their health. They need clear options because they and their families typically feel overwhelmed with all of the sudden changes in their personal lives and require more immediate need for responsiveness.

*"...baby-boomers are changing the way we perceive retirement."*



## CHAPTER

# 6

# Home Remodeling Ideas: Kitchens

**T**he kitchen is where most families gather. Making modifications to your kitchen for aging in place can increase its usability and the safety of those that live there. With a few easy home alterations, you can continue to spend time in the kitchen with loved ones cooking up your favorite recipes.

*Here are some ideas that can greatly affect how you age in place:*

**Location** - Kitchens should be located on the main level of the home. If your kitchen is not presently there, you should consider remodeling to add one.

**Cabinetry** - Cabinets are an integral part of a kitchen remodel. Whether you want more usable space or just want an updated look; cabinets are a great feature to upgrade. While you're planning for that, why not plan to make your cabinets easier for everyone? Remember, you don't have to have custom cabinets made. Many cabinet dealers can design a very usable kitchen from pre-manufactured cabinets. The goal is to have everything as easy to reach as possible and limit bending or reaching.

- Incorporate open shelves for items that are frequently used.
- Mount upper cabinets 3 inches lower than the conventional height.

### **Cabinetry** - *(recommendations continued)*

- Install pull-down (for upper cabinets) or pull-out shelves (for lower cabinets) which can reduce the strain of bending over or reaching required to get to the back of cabinets, they are also great if you want to utilize maximum storage space on each shelf.
- Install lazy-susan type cabinets where appropriate (clutter causes accidents).
- Adding “D” shaped pulls and handles to your doors and drawers allow people of all abilities to open and close cabinets easily.

**Countertops** - Changing out your counters while doing a kitchen remodel is something that most people do. So, why not choose a counter configuration that increases the usability and function for everyone? One great way to do this is installing multi-level countertops in your kitchen. This allows people of different abilities the option to use the countertop that is easiest for them to use. You could have a large portion of your countertops at the standard height of 36”, have a portion at 30” for people who like or need to sit while working, and a section at 42” for ease of use while standing.



- Using a different color for the edges will give an aging eye an identifying visual signal.
- Reduce the chance of injury by installing rounded edges and corners.
- Choose a counter surface that will be easy to maintain and last for years
- Configure counters in a way that leaves plenty of room for dishes and small appliances to reduce clutter while also reducing accidents.

**Sinks** - Adjusting the height and/or location of your kitchen sink can really impact your experience in the kitchen. You can also add a roll-under sink so those that are wheelchair bound can use it. There are motorized, adjustable height counters and sinks available, which can go from a standard height to something more accessible by someone who is in a wheelchair.

**Appliances** - Appliances play a major role in a person's ability to use and work in the kitchen safely and efficiently. Appliances that do not incorporate universal design, or that are placed improperly, can inhibit this. Select appliances that display information clearly, have convenient functions and are easy to use. Many appliance makers are incorporating universal design principles in their designs, which allow consumers to get a variety of functional appliances.



**Refrigerators** - Many advances have been made in the design of refrigerators and freezers, making them easier to use. Here are some features that can increase usability:

- Illuminated water and ice dispensers on the outside of the refrigerator door
- Illuminated, large, easy to read numbers and letters on control displays
- Long, continuous door handles allow for multiple gripping points
- Good lighting inside the refrigerator to improve visibility of items being stored
- Increased storage on the door, which should include appropriate sized shelves for gallon jugs
- Top-mount refrigerators that have easy access to freezer storage on the bottom
- Slide out and transparent bins and shelves help make items easier to see and reach

**Cooktops** - With any cooking appliance, safety should be your number one concern. Cooktops are a great choice as they cool much faster than standard ranges and have smooth tops, which allow for easy transition from the stove to the counter. And, they can be installed at a variety of heights for comfortable use.

Some available features that make these kitchen appliances easier to use:

- Color indicators when the burners are on, still hot or even off.
- Front-mounted controls for safety, so you won't need to lean over hot burners.
- Convenient self-cleaning.
- Large numbers on a well-lit display.
- You can also create a easier cooking experience for those with all abilities by installing cabinet doors under the cooktop for those sitting or in a wheelchair.

**Wall Ovens** - Wall ovens are versatile, and can be mounted in a variety of locations at a height that is convenient for everyone. They can also be installed so that the interior rack lines up with the adjacent countertop, which will limit the amount of lifting or bending.

- Look for an easy to read console and lots of interior lighting.
- You might also consider a counter that pulls out beneath the oven, giving you a place to set dishes as they come out of the oven.

**Microwave Ovens** - Microwaves have become a mainstay in our kitchens and they have come a long way in terms of usability and safety. For instance, drawer microwave ovens can be installed at a height that everyone can reach and make for easy transition to counters. Some models offer one-touch cooking or beep (with visual indicators) when the food is finished cooking or needs to be stirred.

- Choose one with simple controls that are easy to read.
- Look for ones that offer visual indicators and tones to signal instructions.

## CHAPTER 7

# Home Remodeling Ideas: Bathrooms

**S**tatistically, more accidents happen in the bathroom than any other place in the home. That's why safety is the most important thing to keep in mind when considering including a bath remodel in your Aging In Place plan.

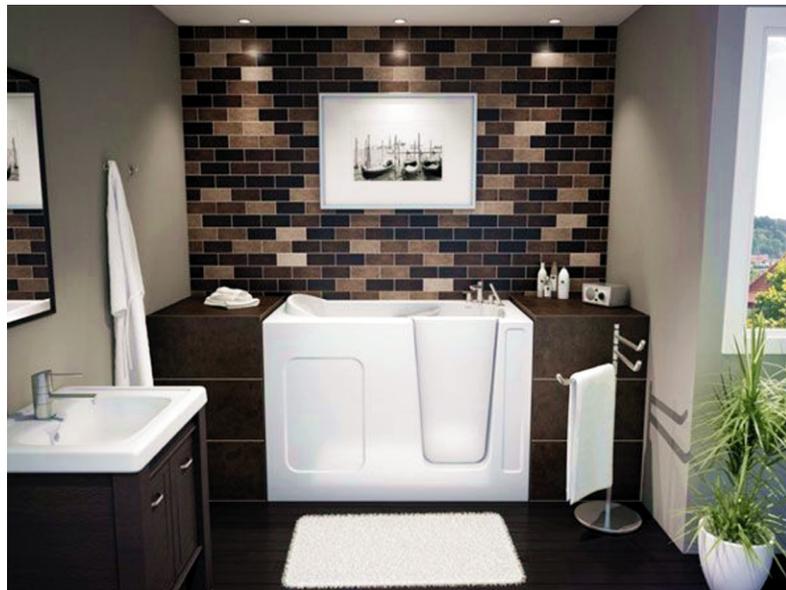
For example, most homes in America have bathtubs that are not accessible. By installing grab bars, shower seats and anti-slip coating on the tub floor, you can instantly make the bathroom safer. For showers, the most accessible option has a curb-less entrance and the door is a minimum of 36 inches wide. This will allow access for a wheelchair at some point and gives those who walk into the shower plenty of room to maneuver.



**Bathtubs** - Non-accessible bathtubs present a very big safety issue for people who wish to age in place. Some can be modified to create a safer way to enter the tub, which may be more inexpensive than replacing it. There are also a wide variety of walk-in tubs on the market that can replace your existing one. Walk-in tubs offer safety, comfort and accessibility. Top reasons for installing one of these units include:

- The tubs feature easy door access with low entry steps. These designs support people that are physically weak or have mobility issues and help prevent falls.
- Most bathtubs are located where locking doors offer privacy while the space is in use. In emergency situations, this can make the victim more difficult to reach. Walk-in bathtubs help reduce the chances of unnecessary emergency scenarios from happening in the first place.
- Most accessible bathtubs are equipped with anti-slip and non-skid floors with strategically placed grab bars.
- The ADA compliant seat allows a much safer and more comfortable bathing experience than a standard tub.

*PHOTORIGHT:  
New advances in bathing technology are helping to create beneficial, accessible spa experiences for all. Thank the baby-boomers for pushing the market along and demanding beautiful, multi-featured, non-clinical fixtures.*



## Home Remodeling Ideas: Bathrooms

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**Showers** - According to a study from the University of Michigan Health System *“For older adults, losing the ability to bathe oneself is associated with having falls, fracturing bones, and even being admitted to a nursing home. It is important that we take steps to help to prevent bathing disability before it occurs.”* Installing barrier-free showers while remodeling can add safety and value to your home.



## Home Remodeling Ideas: Bathrooms

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*There are plenty of ways to create a user-friendly bathroom with these simple suggestions:*

**Location** - At least one full bathroom should be located on the main level of the home - along with the bedroom, kitchen, common areas and laundry room. If there is not a bathroom on the main floor of your home, you should consider remodeling to add an additional bathroom or install a chair lift or elevator for easy access to other levels.

**Space to Move** - If you are remodeling your bathroom, keep in mind that space will be a greater issue as you age. As you transition from mid-life to senior to elderly, planning for the use of canes, wheelchairs, walkers or similar assistive devices is a good idea. The ideal situation would be to have plenty of clear space to accommodate someone in a wheelchair around the toilet, bathtub or shower stalls.

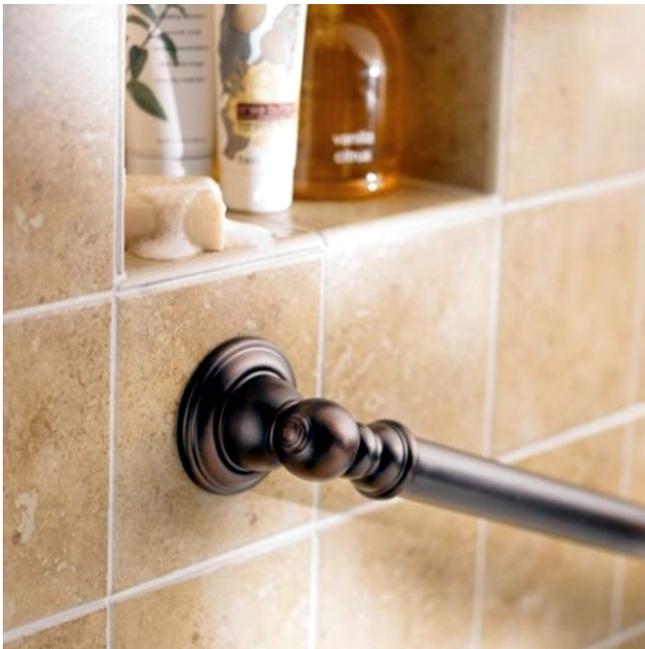
**Toilets** - Having the toilet at the proper height can make an incredible difference in the comfort and safety of your bathroom. Two of the most common options for achieving this are replacing the toilet with one that is the proper height or buying a seat extender. The latter is the most economical way and can be purchased at a local home health care store. If you are remodeling the bathroom and wish to replace the existing toilet, please keep in mind the right toilet needs to be selected for you and the people who will be using it the most, so the height should be properly adjusted.

- Install a toilet paper holder that is designed for one-handed changing
- Ensure the toilet paper holder can be reached from a sitting position
- Installing a toilet bidet attachment can make the bathroom experience easier and more dignified for people who struggle in that area. Not only do these bidet attachments spray warm water for both front and rear washing, but some models incorporate warm-air dryers, heated seats and hands-free flushing.

**Grab Bars** - Installing grab bars can dramatically and economically increase safety in the bathroom. At the toilet, grab bars can help with sitting and standing. In the tub or shower, they can help you to stand and safely get in and out of the shower. Typically, when people think of grab bars, they typically think of something that looks like it belongs in a hospital (cold and metal). Today, you can find grab bars in a variety of styles and colors to match your decor and taste.

- If you are thinking about remodeling your bathroom, go ahead and install bracing in walls around tub, shower, shower seat and toilet even if you do not plan on installing grab bars now. This will prepare the walls to support the grab bars and keep you from additional remodeling later.
- Typically, grab bars need to support 250 – 300 pounds

- For best results, grab bars should have a texture to them for easy gripping and holding.



**Shower Seats** - Adding a shower seat can relieve the strain experienced with standing for extended periods of time. These seats allow a person to safely shower and lessen the chance of falling.

There are many types to choose from, a few being shower stools, shower chairs, retractable (or fold-up) seats as well as, built-in seats.

## Home Remodeling Ideas: Bathrooms

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**Shower Heads** - An adjustable shower head, which moves to suit the height and position most comfortable for a user, is a great way to add accessibility to a bathroom. Combining it with a hand-held shower head creates an even more functional experience. Using these two in conjunction with a shower seat will make it much easier to bathe, while providing an increased level of safety. For overall bathing safety and usability, you may want to think about these options:

- Have the tub and shower water controls close to the entry-point so they can be reached from outside the tub/shower area
- Install easy-to-use lever handle shower controls
- Have a shelf installed in the tub/shower area for soap, shampoo and towels
- Have the water pressure controlled and install anti-scald controls
- Make sure a light is installed in the shower stall if there is not one already

**Sinks** - In order to prepare for the greatest usability, consider a wheelchair accessible sink that is hung on the wall, providing space for your knees (or wheelchair) underneath a pipe-covering panel to protect user's legs.

One of the easiest things to do to make the bathroom more accessible is installing lever handle faucets. You also might like to know that there are faucets that are touch sensitive controlled. Both of these allow people of almost all abilities to more easily turn the faucets on and off, and are particularly helpful for people that have arthritis or other issues with gripping or bending their hands.



## How Do Other Contractors Measure Up?



- On Staff CAPS Designers
- Full Service Design/Build Firm
- 26 Years Experience
- Licensed as a General Contractor
- Liability Insurance Coverage  
\$2M General Aggregate  
\$2M Products / Completed Operations  
\$1M Each Occurrence
- Workers Compensation Insurance
- Project Managers Assigned to Each Job
- Provides Plans and Building Permits
- Works Within Customer's Budget
- 3D Computer Generated Plans
- Showroom On Site for Material Selection
- Referrals Available
- Award Winning Designs
- Professional Associations:  
Better Business Bureau  
Remodelers Advantage Executive Group  
National Kitchen and Bath Association  
Build It Green  
California Building Performance Contractor  
Qualified Remodeler Magazine Top 500  
American Society of Interior Designers  
Orange County Association of Realtors  
Bath and Kitchen Buying Group

## Other Contractor

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- Award Winning Designs
- Professional Associations:  
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# SeaPointe

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