

# Overcoming Physical Difficulties Through Home Alterations

Sometimes one's home becomes a problem when dealing with the difficulties of health issues related to aging. But with a few alterations to lighting, arrangements and fixtures, one's home can instead become the solution.

Below is a list of the physical difficulties along with a list of possible remedies.

## Balance and Coordination Problem

- Bath seat in the tub or shower
- Transfer bench or lift for bathtub
- Walk-in shower or tub with door for walk-in
- Grab bars near the bath and toilet
- Handrails extended beyond the top and bottom of the stairs
- No stairs to bedroom or bathroom
- Phone in the bathroom

## Hearing Impairment

- Dishwasher is ultra-quiet to reduce background noise
- Increased volume on phones
- Smoke detectors with strobe lights
- Doorbell with flashing light when rung

## Trouble Bending

- Elevated toilet or toilet seat
- Lower kitchen cabinets 6 inches above the floor
- Sink no more than 6 inches deep
- Countertop that can be used while sitting



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## Trouble Walking and Climbing Stairs

- Smooth, slip-resistant floors
- Knee space under sinks, so someone can sit while washing
- Knee space under the stove, so someone can sit while cooking
- No area rugs
- Ramp to front door with handrails on both sides
- Stairs with slip-resistant surface

## Limited Vision

- Edge of counters that are a different color than the top
- Edge of each step in a color that stands out
- Well-lit stairs
- Steps that are a different color than the surrounding area
- Increased wattage of light bulbs
- Lights in all closets
- Well-lit outside walkways and entrances
- Stove controls clearly marked and easy to see
- Stove with different colors to tell which parts are hot
- Under-the-cabinet lights over the kitchen counter

## Poor Hand and Arm Strength

- Automatic garage door opener
- Cabinets and drawers with D-shape handles
- Smooth countertops so heavy pans can slide across them
- Doors with lever handles
- Push-button controls on appliances
- Rocker light switches
- Sinks with lever faucet handles
- Special hardware to make drawers slide easily
- Spray hose to fill pots on the stove
- Dishwasher eight inches from the floor

### Limited Reach

- Cabinet shelves no more than 18 inches deep
- Closet organizer to reach belongings
- Closet rods that pull down to a comfortable level
- Front-loading clothes washer and dryer
- Cooktop with easy-to-reach controls at the front
- Electrical outlets 27 inches above the floor
- Hand-held shower in bathroom
- Kitchen and closets with pull-down shelving
- Lazy Susan to reach things stored on deep shelves
- Microwave oven no higher than 48 inches above the floor
- Oven doors that swing to the side
- Pull-out shelves in the kitchen
- Side-by-side refrigerator
- Sink controls on the side
- Upper kitchen cabinets 48 inches from the floor

When care is needed, Senior Planning Services can help, not only with a qualified caregiver, but by coordinating community services so living at home longer is possible. We can also provide a free in-home safety assessment and make recommendations for comfortably aging in place.