

There's No Place Like Home: Adapt to Stay

Information for Home Owners



We all love to be in the comfort of our homes. The number one reason older adults are forced to leave their homes is that they fall and sustain injuries that leave them with a decline in their functional abilities and thus are not able to return home. In order to stay in our homes we need to:

1. Make adaptations to our homes to prevent falls.
2. Make adaptations to our homes to support a change in our functional abilities.

Many of the beneficial changes we can make to our homes are cost effective and simple. These can include such things as:

- Consistently keeping a clear path of travel by reducing clutter and arranging furniture in such a way as to allow easy movement throughout our homes.
- Keeping items off the stairs. Having a bin or basket at the top and bottom of your stairs to store items until you are ready to go up or down instead of placing them on the stairs will prevent you from tripping over items when you use your staircase.
- Avoiding the use of loose rugs or mats. These items are a very common tripping hazard and lead to many falls.
- Placing items within easy reach and using a safety step ladder with handles when reaching is necessary.
- Ensuring that a phone is handy by either carrying one with you or having multiple units throughout the house to avoid rushing to answer the phone.

Others changes to your home may require the hiring of a professional. This publication highlights some of the key changes that should be undertaken to increase the years we spend in the comfort of our home.

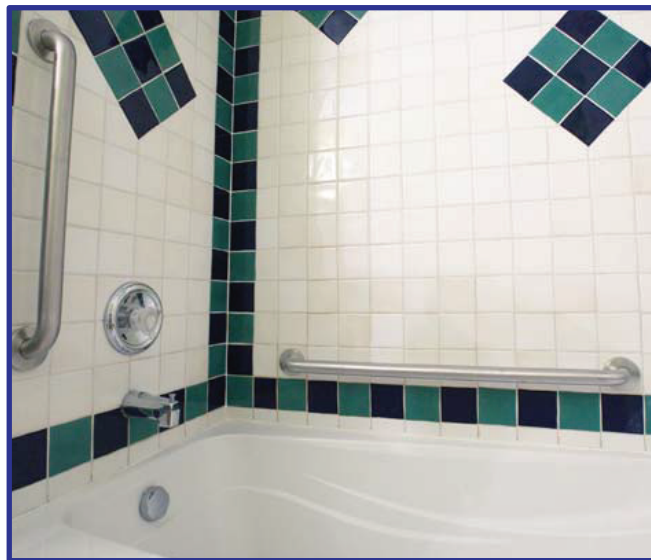


Hamilton

1. Safety in the Bathroom:

a. Grab Bars: a minimum of two grab bars should be installed for the bathtub or shower or combination. For individual adaptations, a consultation with an Occupational Therapist is recommended. For those residents who often shower in the tub combination, they may request an additional higher horizontal bar.

Minimum Grab Bar Installation Recommendation:



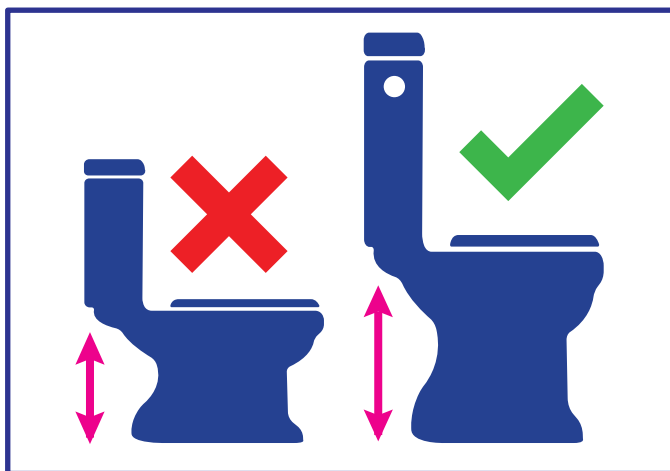
Universal Grab Bar placement recommendation for all ages:

1. A long vertical grab bar at the tub or shower entry for getting in safely.
2. Either a horizontal or diagonal grab bar along the back wall for getting up and down in the tub.

Always follow manufacturer's guidelines for installation. Poles can also be used in place of grab bars.

Warning-Do not use clamping or suction cup grab bars as they pose a safety hazard.

b. Toilet: Install higher toilets and grab bars.



- c. A shower head on an adjustable pole is a benefit.
- d. A shower or bath chair or bench can be helpful; a consultation with an Occupational Therapist would be beneficial.

When possible consider the following:

1. Installing a walk-in or curbless shower.
2. Installing a main floor bathroom.
3. Installing a walk-in bathtub.

For slip resistance when showering – a wet hand towel can be placed on floor of the tub to provide a non-slip surface. This has been shown to work more effectively than many non-slip mats in a tub.

2. Stair Safety:

- a. Install railings on **both** sides of stairways, entry ways or any other areas that have steps (even a single step). The best railings are the kind shown in the photo that can be grasped by wrapping your hand around the railing. Do this for both exterior and interior stairs.
- b. Keep your stairs in good repair.
- c. Stairs need to be well lit but without glare during day light or night time lighting conditions. Install a light switch both at the top and the bottom of a staircase.
- d. Carpeted stairs can have a higher fall risk. To avoid slipping, remove runners and rugs and use a matte finish on stairs.



For more information <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/Data-and-Research/Publications-and-Reports/Preventing-Falls-on-Stairs>



3. Safety in the kitchen:

- a. Place the microwave solidly on a counter.
- b. A stove with front controls is recommended.
- c. Install easy to reach kitchen storage.
- d. Ensure that there is good lighting especially over your stove and prep area.



4. Better Grasp:

- a. Facets: lever handles are recommended.
- b. Cupboards and Drawers: "D" shaped pulls are recommended .
- c. Doors: lever handles are recommended.



5. Improved Vision:

- a. Use a night light with an automatic sensor in your bathroom and hall.
- b. Increase the brightness of your lightbulbs. With the new technology of LED bulbs they will not use more power.
- c. Install motion sensors for lights where possible and especially for outdoor lighting.
- d. Have lamps within easy reach beside your bed and in your favourite seating areas.

Additional Suggestions:

- a. Choose front loading laundry machines installed on a base to place them at a more comfortable height.
- b. Whenever possible, place a bench or chair near entryways to both provide a rest area and to help with putting on shoes.
- c. Install a peephole in your front door.
- d. Check with Utility Companies, Manufacturers and the City of Hamilton website for periodic subsidies for home modifications.

For more information check out:

HomeFit Guide www.aarp.org

Maintaining Seniors Independence Through Home Adaptations
www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca

