

Home Modification: *How to Get It Done*



The research is clear. People want to live independently in their own homes as they age. Making simple changes (home modifications) can help. So why don't more people make these changes? Consider these common myths . . . and the realities.

MYTH	REALITY
Homes are the safest place to be.	Homes can contain many safety hazards that, if not addressed, could cause a fall.
Making my home safer will cost too much.	Many changes are inexpensive and easy, such as changing lighting and removing rugs.
Home modifications will make my home look like a hospital.	There are many products designed to blend in with your home's style and décor.
Renters are not allowed to make changes to their homes.	Under the Fair Housing Amendments Act, landlords must allow reasonable home modification requests.

Look at the following areas in your home and use these tips to make your home safer:

Floors and Rugs

- ✓ Arrange furniture and remove clutter so there are clear walking pathways
- ✓ Remove or secure throw rugs and scatter mats with gripper rug pads

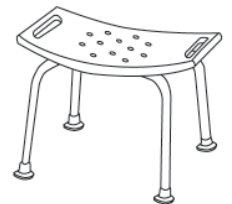
Indoor and Outdoor Stairs

- ✓ Take your time! Rushing is a major cause of falls
- ✓ Keep stairs free of clutter and consider installing handrails on each side
- ✓ Keep stairs well lit and mark edges of steps with contrasting tape or paint



Bathrooms

- ✓ Place non-skid strips on tub or shower floors and secure bath mats
- ✓ Securely install grab bars in the tub, shower and next to the toilet
- ✓ Install adjustable height shower heads or a hand-held shower head



Kitchen

- ✓ Place heavier and frequently used items within easy reach
- ✓ If you have to climb to reach items, use a sturdy stepladder with safety bar/handgrip
- ✓ Use a long-handled reacher for lightweight items on high shelves



Bedrooms

- ✓ Put a lamp in an easy to reach place by the bed
- ✓ Use a night light to mark the path between your bedroom and bathroom
- ✓ Consider sitting down when dressing and using long-handled shoe horns



The Home SAFE Project is pleased to provide this fact sheet as part of its efforts to increase home safety awareness and activities in Los Angeles County.

If you need to hire someone to make the changes, consider taking these steps:

- ✓ **Get recommendations** from friends who have made changes or contact the resources below
- ✓ **Hire a licensed and bonded contractor/remodeler.** Be specific about work to be done in advance
- ✓ **Ask for a written agreement** with a small down payment. Make the final payment only after the project is completed
- ✓ **Check the local Better Business Bureau** for for a specific provider's reliability and performance record

RESOURCES

California Department of Consumer Affairs Contractors State License Board

Educational materials about hiring contractors and the construction process
Database of licensed contractors; can check status of a contractor's license, file a complaint
www.cslb.ca.gov | (800) 321-CSLB (2752)

Eldercare Locator

Free one-stop referral resource for aging-related services in each community
www.eldercare.gov | (800) 677-1116

Fall Prevention Center of Excellence, University of Southern California

Information and resources on falls and how to reduce fall risks
www.stopfalls.org | www.homemods.org

Jewish Family Service-Los Angeles, Home Secure

Home modifications for adults age 62+ in Los Angeles, Burbank, Culver City, Beverly Hills
www.jfsla.org | (323) 937-5855

Los Angeles Housing Department, Handyworker Program

Home repair services for income-eligible older persons living in the city of Los Angeles
<http://lahd.lacity.org/lahdinternet> | (213) 808-8803

Los Angeles Housing Rights Center

Handles landlord/tenant disputes and provides information on the Fair Housing Act
(213) 387-8400

Mexican American Opportunity Foundation, Home Secure, Handyworker

Safety devices and home modifications for adults age 62+ in the city of Los Angeles
Minor home repairs for adults age 62+ who own their homes
www.maof.org | (323) 313-1631 (Home Secure) | (323) 267-4333 (Handyworker)

Rebuilding Together Southern California

Home modifications and repairs to make homes safer for income-eligible home owners
www.RTSoCal.org | (949) 278-2911

Additional sources for safety devices and supplies:

Pharmacies, Durable Medical Equipment Suppliers and Home Improvement Stores

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