

er, less-obvious considerations are equally as important. One must think about individual purpose, for instance, and work toward a life that is meaningful and fulfilling and decide how living at home can help them accomplish that.

Seniors should make a strong effort to maintain social connectedness with family and friends, and have established routines and networks in place to avoid isolation. And one must think about what giving back to the community will look like when they live in their current residence, because so many people place great emphasis in their later years on giving back by sharing the knowledge and abilities that they've spent a lifetime acquiring.

Martino says he and his colleagues spend most of their time talking to people about their physical well-being. Maintaining one's health is paramount to successfully aging in place. Perhaps that can be accomplished at home, or with some sort of regular program off-site. "If they can stay healthy through physical and mental exercise, when they do have an injury or illness, the resilience that gets them back to their baseline of health...depends on how strong they are to being with," he says.

Seniors must be adaptable to confront the challenges that aging in place requires. Perhaps that means modifying one's home to make it more accessible for limited mobility, or becoming familiar with community resources that assist retirees, such as the nearest Area Agency on Aging or senior center.

Adversity sometimes takes people by surprise, Languirand says, especially things they didn't want to think about – their health, mobility, dwindling resources or the cast of characters that populate their lives, for instance. Some changes are going to occur with near-certainty, she says, while others will come out of left field. You will very likely suffer age-related illness and deterioration, but at the same time, there may be – of all things – a pandemic. "You should have the ability to marshal your resources regardless of what happens," she says.

Resources:

- *How to Age in Place: Planning for a Happy, Independent and Financially Secure Retirement* by Mary A. Languirand and Robert F. Bornstein. Ten Speed Press.
- *Aging In Place* – AgingInPlace.org
- *National Institute on Aging, National Institutes of Health* – NIA.NIH.gov/health/topics/aging-place

Home Modifications

As much as we love our homes, they become more dangerous as we age. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than a quarter of older Americans fall every year, costing Medicare and Medicaid some \$38 billion. But there are modifications that can make dwellings safer and more accommodating for residents who want to remain at home as long as possible. Numerous resources suggest the best home modifications for different living situations. Visit Aging in Place at AgingInPlace.org, the National Association of Homebuilders' Aging-In-Place Remodeling Checklist, available at nahb.org, and the National Institute on Aging at NIA.NIH.gov/health/aging-place-growing-older-home.

Bathroom

- Grab-bars and benches provide stability.
- A step-in tub or curbless shower is safer than traditional bathtubs.
- A nonslip floormat helps people navigate a surface that is often wet.

Kitchen

- Nonslip flooring or adhesive no-slip strips help with traction in a room with frequent spills.
- Cabinets and shelving can be placed lower and fitted with slide-out inserts for easier access.
- A side-by-side refrigerator/freezer reduces bending and stretching.
- Lighting under cabinets can enhance visibility.

Living Room

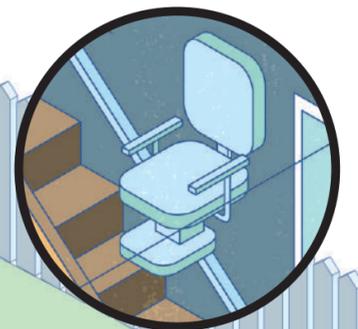
- Arrange or reduce furniture to provide an open layout with few obstructions.
- Install grab bars in heavily trafficked areas.
- Avoid area rugs, which can bunch up and present tripping hazards.

Exterior

- Low-maintenance grass and shrubbery reduces yardwork.
- Low-maintenance siding, such as vinyl, reduces the need for repair or painting.

Bedroom

- LED or other night illumination around doors or hallways can prevent falls.
- Doorknobs on bedroom doors and closets can be fitted with grips or replaced with easier-to-use handles.
- Install a stairlift when the bedroom isn't on the ground floor.



Porch and entryway

- The main entryway should be completely covered from the elements.
- Motion-activated lighting will make evening access easier.
- Place a table near the entry for putting items down while opening and closing the door.

