One the biggest fears most people have as they age is a fear of having to leave their home. But if it means more freedom and a better life, then what’s the risk? A smaller home will save you money and time. Be sure that new more easily manageable home is enhanced and modified for aging in place, living independently and maintaining the current standard of living. I’ll explain…. Whether you’re reading this thinking of your loved ones, or yourself in the future, this stuff is good to ponder.

As we age, things around the house that were once easy to negotiate may become more challenging. While most people notice the change in themselves as they age, many neglect to notice the changes that are needed in their home to keep their homes age appropriate. There are many things that you can do to increase safety and make sure that your home fits the increasing needs in your life. Simple home modifications can transform a home into a living space that functions efficiently for all ages and conditions.

A room by room assessment can be completed focused on safety, accessibility and adaptability. Does anything pose a safety hazard in the room? Can a senior move around the room and perform tasks safely? Is everything accessible to the senior? (yes, being a senior is a good thing! If you don’t make it to being a senior….ooops! Know what I mean? ) Can they reach things and work switches, doors, cabinets, and plugs? Can they perform necessary or desired tasks in this room? Are there things in the room that could be adapted so they are easier for the senior to reach or use or so that the senior can get around more easily and safely?

Below are some things that should be considered with easy solutions that can enhance the environment to support continued independent living at home for a longer period of time.

**Poor lighting.** One way to reduce accidents in the home is to make sure there is proper lighting where it is needed. Outdoor areas, walkways, stairways, kitchen, living room, bathroom, bedroom, hallways; there is no place that won’t benefit from better lighting. Rocker type switches can be turned on and off with the touch of an elbow. Use of motion sensored or automatic lights by entry ways, hallways, or bathrooms can also be an option.

**Clutter.** Things tend to pile up on the stairs, by the door, or on the counters too near (or even on) the stove. Be aware of clutter on shelves and in upper cabinets that can fall and cause injury. Put on your thinking cap and get organized. Install more shelves and cabinets if necessary. Use more labels. And recycle things you aren’t using often enough to keep…somebody else will be thrilled.

**Throw rugs, extension cords, thresholds.** Tripping on a rug, snagging a foot on a table, chair, or cords can cause a fall. Try to get rid of all extension cords or cables strung across walk areas and pare down the amount of furniture or floor items. By modifying the layout of furniture, you can create an environment that’s easier to get around – especially if assistance with a cane, walker or wheelchair is necessary. Add some sitting areas down a long hallway, or take away the extra chairs in the living room that make it hard to get around. Thresholds between rooms are difficult to maneuver. Remove these “speedbumps” and replace with low/no thresholds and a potential fall can be averted.
**Bath and water hazards.** Make sure the water heater is set at 120-degrees or less. Burns from scalding water can be particularly dangerous for those with diabetes who have diminished feeling in their extremities. Place non-skid mats in front of the sink and tub to absorb excess water and prevent falls.

Lower the bathroom sink and making sure there is proper knee clearance (wheelchair accessible). Use a shower seat and/or consider a walk-in or a roll-in shower with multiple showerheads (height adjustable handheld showerhead and fixed). Ensure ample maneuvering clearance for caregiver, walker or wheelchair. Install an elevated toilet seat and grab bars around the toilet and at the tub, Replace faucet knobs in the kitchen and bath with lever-type handles.

**Kitchen – cooking and fire hazards.** Make sure there is ample maneuvering space. Are towels and oven mitts stored properly? How steady is the hand using the stove, kettle, handling hot food? Does my loved one remember to turn off the stove? Loose clothing can be a fire hazard, too. Candles, space heaters, fireplaces can all be hazardous if someone cannot use them safely. Cabinets and drawer handles should be user-friendly and easy to grasp. Attention to performance is important to decide if a simple adaptation is needed to make a job easier or if it is an unsafe environment

**Home Temperature.** Your parents might not realize they're overheated, or they might be trying to save on electricity costs. Either way, make sure your elder is not in danger of heat exhaustion or hypothermia—both real concerns.

**Outdoor safety.** The entry to your home is your connection to the rest of the world. It should be a safe, well-lit, obstacle free and convenient access to your home. Is there a way to open the front door to talk to someone and still be safe? Are the outdoor steps cracked or too large for them to comfortably climb, or have they pulled away from the house? Is there debris in the yard they could trip over?

If you maintain a flower or vegetable garden in your backyard, you may want to consider raising your beds. Raising your beds can help reduce fatigue and stress on your back if bending over for extended periods of time is often difficult.

At **Ezra Home Care** we provide additional support to help keep seniors safe and independent while giving them the ability to go about their daily activities as usual. Perhaps you just need someone to help you with errands, household chores, or tasks that you may find difficult like bathing or dressing, or recent surgery has prevented you from doing normal everyday activities. Home care can be the answer.

So be wise, and Dare to Downsize! ☺

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**室内与水危险。**确保热水器设置在120度或以下。热水烧伤对糖尿病患者来说特别危险，他们感觉不到自己的四肢。在浴室前面放置防滑垫，以吸收多余的水并防止跌倒。

降低浴室水槽的高度并确保有足够的膝部间隙（适用于轮椅）。使用淋浴座椅和/或考虑使用可进入或可进入的淋浴间，带有多个喷头（可调节的手持淋浴头和固定式）。确保护理人员、行走者或轮椅使用者有足够的空间。在厕所和浴缸上安装提升式马桶座和扶手。将厨房和浴室的水龙头把手换成杠杆式的。

**厨房—烹饪和火灾危险。**确保有足够的活动空间。毛巾和烤箱手套是否妥善存放？手握着炉子、水壶时是否稳定？我爱的人是否记得关掉炉子？松散的衣服也可能成为火灾隐患。蜡烛、空间加热器、壁炉等都可能造成危险，如果某人无法安全使用它们。橱柜和抽屉把手应该是用户友好和易于操作的。注意力到性能是重要的决定，是否需要简单的适应以使工作更轻松或它是一个不安全的环境。

**室内温度。**您的父母可能没有意识到自己过热，或者他们可能试图节省电费。无论如何，确保您的长者不会陷入中暑或低体温的危险状态。

**户外安全。**您家的入口是您与外界的连接。它应该是一个安全、照明良好、无障碍且便利的访问您家的方式。有没有开前门聊天仍然安全的办法？户外楼梯是否开裂或太大，让人无法舒适地攀爬，或者它们是否已经与房子分离？院子是否有碍他们绊倒的障碍物？

如果您在后院维护一个花卉或蔬菜花园，您可能希望考虑升高床铺。升高床铺可以帮助减少弯腰时间过长时对背部的疲劳和压力。

在**Ezra Home Care**，我们提供额外的支持来帮助保持老年人的安全和独立，同时给他们做日常活动的能力。也许您只需要有人帮助您做日常杂务，或者购买家务，或者做您可能发现困难的事情，比如洗澡或穿衣服，或者最近的手术阻止您做日常的日常活动。家庭护理可能就是答案。

所以要明智，挑战下去！😊

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