

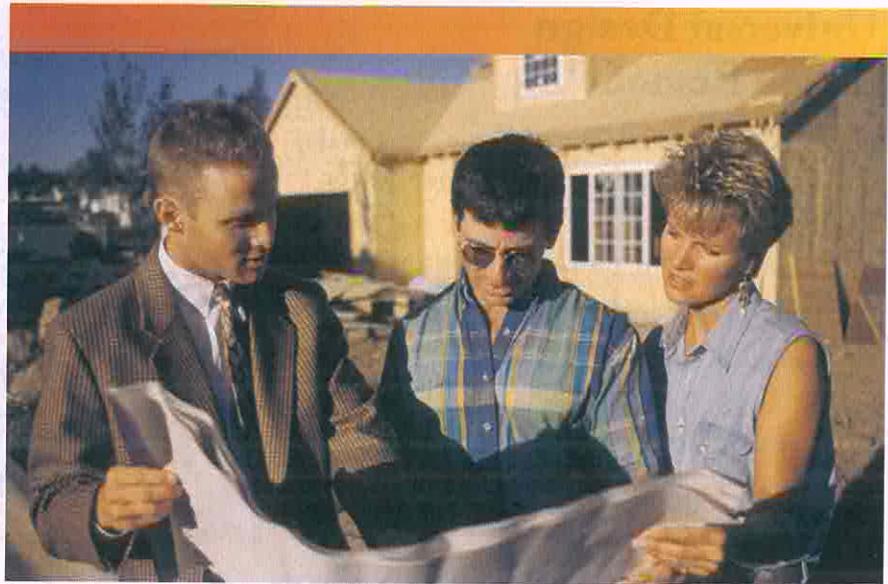


Universal Design

Imagine...

- A home where people of all abilities can enjoy living
- A home where you and your loved ones can age in place
- A home where all of your friends and family can visit

Think about including Universal Design features in your plans!



Put Universal Design in *Your* Plans!

What is Universal Design?

- Universal Design incorporates features that increase the usability of the home by people of all ages, sizes and abilities.
- A universally designed home enhances the ability of all residents to live independently in their own home as long as possible.

What are the benefits?

Universal design makes a home friendly and easy to access for everyone. Steps at the front door pose an equal challenge to a stroller as to a wheelchair. Families are able to welcome relatives and friends with disabilities. Residents who develop disabilities are more likely to be able to remain in their homes rather than having to move or remodel. The resale of the home is enhanced because home buyers are attracted to homes that welcome their aging parents and provide easy use for themselves.

Will your home look “different”?

No. Some people think the homes seem more spacious, but these features are virtually unnoticeable. They simply allow the house to be adapted for a lifetime of changing needs.

The Top 3 Universal Design Features:

1. Zero-step entrance from the driveway or walkway
2. Wide passage doors
3. Half bath/powder room on 1st floor

Other Universal Design features and ideas for your home:

- Low maintenance exterior building materials
- Three types of lighting: ambient, task and accent
- Designed with 5 feet of turnaround space in smaller spaces (baths, kitchens)
- Lever door handles on doors, cabinets and plumbing fixtures
- Handrails on both sides of stairways
- Smooth, slip-resistant flooring of wood, vinyl or low-profile carpeting
- Contrasting color to emphasize edges and visibility
- Closet spaces with lights
- Nightlights for dark hallways and rooms
- Light switches at a height of 36 inches
- Electrical receptacles at 15 to 18 inches above the floor

Elder Readiness
Remodel

Universal Design When Remodeling

Have you ever asked yourself how can I make changes in my home to make it possible for me to:

- Enjoy my home now and as I grow older?
- Bring my parents to live with me?
- Return home if I have an injury or an accident?
- Live comfortable if I have a disability?
- Invite all my friends over, including those who use wheelchairs?



The most common remodeling changes include adjusting for 3-4-5:

3-foot wide doorways

4-foot wide halls

5-foot turnaround space in rooms

Universal Design in the Kitchen

A good kitchen design can adapt to many changing needs over time.

- Knee space under the sink
- Countertop heights for different uses
- Roll-out shelves or drawers in cabinets
- Lazy susan for easy access
- Adjustable shelves
- Heat-proofed surfaces near cooking appliances



- No sharp corners and edges on countertops
- Spray hose for the sink
- Combined light and dark surfaces for visual contrast

Universal Design in the Bath

Baths using safe and simple principles of design work best.

- Bathroom shower stalls with a low threshold
- Space for a seat in the bath or shower
- Reinforced bathroom walls that can accommodate grabber bars
- Higher toilet seats (17 to 19 inches)
- Adjustable closet rods, shelves and countertops

Learn more: Local designers, builders, realtors and senior care specialists can help with finding, remodeling and redesigning your home. Resources on the web:

- NCSU Center for Universal Design: www.design.ncsu.edu/cud
- SUNY Buffalo: www.makoa.org/accessibledesign.htm
- AARP: www.aarp.org

Arlington libraries are a great place to find books on the subject:

- *Residential Remodeling and Universal Design*, HUD
- *Universal Design for the Home*, Wendy A. Jordan
- *Universal Designed Smart Homes for the 21st Century*, Charles M. Schwab



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For more information contact a Certified Aging in Place Specialist at the National Association of Home Builders – www.nahb.org or 202-266-8451