

Design Tips for Baby Boomers

Homes designed for “aging in place” draw on the basic principles of universal design, which eliminate barriers to access and provide a safe environment for people of all ages and ability levels. Some of the most common features of a universally designed home are:

- Zero-threshold entries and interior doorways
- Wider doorways and hallways
- Hard-surface flooring and no level changes
- Open floor plan
- Main-floor living potential, including a full bathroom (preferably a no- or low-threshold shower)
- Pocket doors
- Lever door handles
- Bathroom grab bars (around the toilet and in the shower)
- Raised-height toilets
- Ramps or lifts for any level changes
- Multiple countertop heights
- Roll-out and pull-down cabinet shelving
- Lowered wall cabinets
- Task lighting
- Lowered windows or taller windows with low sills
- Lowered light switches and raised electrical outlets
- Stacked closets to provide a shaft for a future elevator
- Stairlifts
- Barrier-free showers
- Walk-in tubs
- Shower seats
- Accessible plumbing fixtures
- Ramps & non-slip floor coverings
- Lighting & electronic home control
- Hardware designed for easy use

Universal design isn't just for the elderly or handicapped. It ensures that people of all ages and ability levels can live comfortably and safely in a home.