Aging-in-place refers to specific upgrades or modifications made to a home so that it will remain comfortable, convenient and safe for its occupants as they grow older, allowing them to remain in their home rather than to move into an assisted living facility. With that said, these very same upgrades will be appreciated by homeowners of any age, not just senior citizens or individuals with physical limitations.

When should you consider incorporating Aging-in-place upgrades into your home or the home of a loved one?

- When someone in your family is experiencing some type of physical limitations, temporary or permanent
- When your parents are starting to have some difficulties living in their own home, but don’t want to move into an assisted living facility
- ANYTIME you’re preparing to start a new remodeling project around your home

Some upgrades you may not want to include in your remodeling project right now, but by planning ahead for future upgrades you can save yourself a lot of time and money, for example: let’s say you’re in your mid-forties and getting ready to remodel your master bathroom; you may not want to install grab bars in your new tiled shower right now, but while the walls are opened up, go ahead and take a few minutes and install some 2x10 blocking between the wall studs, this way when you want or need to install a couple grab bars in the future, you don’t have to worry about where the studs are located or having to use specialized fasteners…just drill your holes where you know the blocking is located and screw them in place!

Below is a list of specific upgrades/modifications you can do to make your or a loved one’s home safer, more comfortable and more convenient. Many of these ideas are very affordable and a lot of them are simply common sense, but all of these ideas are priceless if you or someone in your family suddenly becomes physically disabled.

**Design**

Have fewer floor height transitions / eliminate thresholds (between rooms)

Hallway *minimum* width of 36”

Incorporate 36” wide doors wherever possible or use offset hinges on narrower doors

Include a full bath on the first floor of multi-floor homes

Have at least one covered no-step entry into the home

**Flooring**

Use smooth, non-glare, no-slip flooring in entry & bathrooms

If using carpet, use low-density (1/2” or less pile height) with firm pad
**Lighting & Electrical**

Use rocker style light switches (i.e., *Decora™*) rather than the traditional toggle-style switches

Locate light switches 48” above the floor

Incorporate more lighting, especially in hallways and rooms without windows

Use light fixtures with two bulbs or long-life (and very energy efficient) LED bulbs

Consider remote operated lighting controls

Add occupancy sensors to automatically turn lights on when you enter a room and turn off when you leave

Locate electrical outlets a minimum of 18” above the floor, preferably 24”

Install motion activated lights at the main entrance

Place task lighting in all work areas

Locate HVAC controls (thermostat) 48-60” above the floor

Use a digital thermostat with larger, easier to read controls/numbers

**Plumbing**

Lever operated or “touch-less” faucet controls

Anti-scald shower valves

Set water heater temperature to 120-degrees (or lower)

**Kitchen**

Pull-out drawers in base cabinets

Pull-down shelving in wall cabinets

Mount wall cabinets 3” lower than conventional height

Rounded corners and radius edges on all countertops

Accent stripes/color on countertop edges

Counter space next to all appliances

Electric cook top/range with level burners and easy access (front mounted) controls

Raised dishwasher with push-button controls

Loop-style cabinet pulls

**Bathroom**

Grab bars in shower, outside shower and near toilet

Barrier-free shower entrance

Seat in shower (permanent or fold-down)

Adjustable and/or handheld showerhead with 6’ hose
**Bathroom (continued)**

Light in shower area (only install lighting approved for showers/damp locations and wire through a GFCI circuit)

ADA height toilet (17”-19”)

Toilet paper holder designed for easy one-hand replacement of paper

Slip resistant flooring

Electronic push button digital timer for exhaust fan

Built-in night lights

**Closets**

Adjustable height shelves and rods

Lighting (ideally on motion activated/occupancy sensors)

**Misc**

Locate HVAC air filters in easy to reach areas

Install smoke and CO detectors (with audible & visual indicators) in all bedrooms & near kitchen

Incorporate low-maintenance exterior finishes (vinyl or brick)

Have a table or countertop inside main entrance

Use lever-style door hardware (rather than knobs) and single-cylinder deadbolts

Locate handrails next to all steps (interior and exterior); 1 ¼” diameter in all stairways

Use front-load washer and dryer raised 12-15” above floor