

## HOW ACCESSIBILITY CHANGES THE VALUE OF YOUR HOME

Currently, only 1% of America's housing stock is considered accessible, and 5% considered easily made accessible.

With so many Americans desiring to 'Age in Place,' homes with accessible features are estimated to sell faster. Home buyers, owners, and contractors estimate in neighborhoods with 30-day average selling times, accessible homes sell in less than 30 days, while non-accessible homes take over 30 days.

As a homeowner, you can potentially increase the desirability and value of your home by adding features that make the home more usable for all people. A shortage of homes with accessible features makes your home appealing and viable to renters and purchasers alike.

## WHAT VALUE DO WE PLACE ON PEACE OF MIND?

*"My parents are getting older. Living a few hours away, I used to worry about them living safely and independently, something they insist on doing as long as they can. Falls were my biggest fear. We had grab bars professionally installed in both bathrooms and a ramp built in the garage. Now, with these simple fixes, they have no steps to contend with and I have greater peace of mind."*

- A Concerned Son

## BUILDING NEW vs. RETROFITTING

Waiting 'until you need it' to make access changes to your home can increase your cost and leave you unprepared and scrambling for the unexpected.

Real estate agents estimate a value increase of up to \$14,997 in new homes with accessible features.

Adding accessible features during design or new construction phase saves approximately \$3,180.00 over retrofitting.

## WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW?

There are many resources available to help you with either renovating your existing home or building your new home to be more accessible. Here are a few:

- North Carolina University Center for Universal Design's Residential Rehabilitation guide
- Universal Design Living Laboratory
- Local, knowledgeable contractors and organizations specializing in 'Aging in Place' or 'Universal Design.'
- Visitability.org



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**IT'S YOUR "DREAM HOME."  
- KEEP IT THAT WAY.**

*Easy, Economical Tips for Improving the Accessibility of Your Home*

## WHAT IS HOME ACCESSIBILITY?

When something is accessible it has an ease of use. Many people do not have a home that is easy to use or live in. However, there are modifications in all price ranges that can be made to make a home more accessible. While you may not find yourself in this position yet, people who are aging and those who have disabilities do.

## MAKING A HOME FOR ANY FAMILY OR FRIEND TO VISIT

"*Visitability*" is a concept that focuses on the idea of designing homes so people with disabilities can easily enter and get around. Having a home with visitable features means friends, parents, renters with disabilities can stop by or stay without issue.

These features are useful even if you don't recognize it. Consider the following:

- If you broke your leg today, how easy would it be to enter and get around your home while in a cast or using crutches?
- As you and your loved ones age, is your home usable and safe to live in temporarily or permanently?
- How difficult is it to get items such as strollers, furniture, and groceries in and around your house? How much easier might it be with a no step entrance and wider doorways?

**The Bottom Line:** A universally-designed home is a smarter, safer, more easily usable home for everyone - a true '*dream home*' for all your days ahead.

## LOW-COST AND LOW-EFFORT IMPROVEMENTS

- Bathroom and Shower Grab Bars
- Indoor/Outdoor Stair Railings
- Indoor transition strips
- Low effort or lever door handles
- Adjusting in-home control heights (*light switches, thermostats, alarms*)

## MODERATE IMPROVEMENTS

- Removable cabinets in bathrooms and kitchens
- Install raised toilets
- Easy to use and reach appliances
- Add lighting

## MORE INVOLVED IMPROVEMENTS

- Creating a no-step entry
- Adding ramps, if necessary
- Widening doors and doorways
- Redoing floors to low pile, sturdy, and/or slip resistant flooring
- Creating a full bathroom on the first floor
- Installing stair lifts

\* *More information on types and suggested specifications of home accessibility renovations can be found at: [Visitability.org](http://Visitability.org)*

***Making changes like no-step entries, support-providing grab bars, and providing bathrooms and bedrooms on the first floor help to make your home livable through any stage in life.***

## HAZARDS IN THE HOME

Falling is the single biggest hazard in our homes as we age, and is the leading cause of fatal injury among older adults. More than 1 in 4 people over the age of 65 fall each year.<sup>1</sup>

With small adjustments, fall risks can be reduced. Changing flooring types, adding support bars and railings, lighting stairs and steps, removing 'reach risks' by lowering shelves, cabinets, and controls, and creating no-step entrances all help to reduce fall risks and increase independence for us living in our homes.

<sup>1</sup> Falls Prevention Facts. (2017, August 16).

From <https://www.ncoa.org/news/resources-for-reporters/get-the-facts/falls-prevention-facts/>

## HOW ACCESSIBILITY HELPS WITH STAYING IN YOUR HOME

A single-family home has a 60% chance of housing a resident with a physical limitation at some time<sup>2</sup>, which means your home likely will. You may not think you or your family member will be *that resident* but keep in mind:

- Ohio is an aging state. By 2030 over 1 in 5 people will be over the age of 65.
- Disability is a part of life. Nearly 20% of people in the U.S. have a disability.

If you plan to stay in your home into old age, that resident will likely be you or a loved one. Making accessibility changes to your home now helps to make sure you can enjoy it later.

<sup>2</sup> ODDC.(2015). Perceived Value of VISIBLE Housing in Ohio. Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council.