

Thriving in Place for All

“I’m not old enough for that.”

Anyone who has encouraged a senior relative to make home modifications for aging has heard it.

And you already know the underlying challenge: Everyone wants to age at home, yet homes aren’t always well designed for aging.

Though 61 percent of homeowners over the age of 55 expect stay in their homes indefinitely, 78 percent have done no aging-related renovation projects.

Among homeowners who’ve never considered an age-related upgrade, 40 percent say it’s because they don’t have a physical disability requiring one and 20 percent don’t think they’re old enough for such a project, according to HomeAdvisor.

But too many people wait until after an accident or emergency to make home safety modifications.

Aging Conversation 2.0

So how about changing the way we think about and talk about housing and aging?

That’s one takeaway from HomeAdvisor’s 2016 Aging-in-Place Report that addresses myths and realities associated with aging in place, some of the projects that make homes suitable for aging, and the challenge of getting people to act.

Rather than talking about aging-in-place projects that people so resist, why not discuss incorporating features that contribute to the livability for all occupants and that later help everyone to age safely and comfortably?

Dual-Purpose Upgrades

The conversation, suggests the report, should be about helping everyone *thrive* in place.

Whether you call it universal design or user-centered design, the aim is the same and the conversation, suggests HomeAdvisor, should be about making homes more livable for all by adding features that enhance people’s lives and provide a return on investment through better livability.

So many upgrades, after all, serve dual purposes.

For instance, a young homeowner may enjoy a shower seat so he or she can bask in the steam and unwind after a long day. Thirty years later, that same bench could help the person sit down when he or she feels unstable in the shower.

Safety, Comfort Through Technology

In addition, though some seniors view smart home technology as an expensive luxury, it actually yields tremendous benefits.

Here are just three examples.

1. **Smart lighting:** It can be programmed to schedule vacation security lighting, automatically turn on the lights when you come in after a late night out, or create a mood for a party. Those same lights can automatically turn on in certain rooms or halls to prevent falls.

2. **Voice-activated devices.** Being able to control your house without having to get up to adjust the thermostat, dim the lights, or close the blinds is convenient for everyone. Those voice-activated lights can make it safer when seniors get up in the middle of the night, for example.

3. **Smart sensors.** Sensors that track homeowners' movements and send that data to family members can allow a senior to continue living at home. Such sensors can indicate that someone possibly has fallen or that someone should check on a relative because there's been a long period of stillness.

Read the complete report here:
http://www.homeadvisor.com/r/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/AIP-Report_2016_Final.pdf.

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