

# A START LIST FOR DESIGN IDEAS



Here is a brief list of the universal design elements mentioned in this guidebook. This is not an exhaustive or comprehensive list, but rather an introduction to the key elements you may want to consider to make your home a better fit for yourself and for your loved ones. For more comprehensive lists, please consult the other sources in the resource list.

## Inside Your Home

- **Doors, Doorways and Thresholds:**
  - Increase the width of all doorways to allow for at least 32 inches of clear passage space (36 inches provides even greater flexibility).
  - Eliminate room-to-room thresholds.
  - Replace round doorknobs with lever-style handles.
- **Room Size/Design:**
  - If possible, favor large, multi-purpose rooms over smaller ones.
  - Try to ensure that hallways are at least 42 inches wide.
- **Lighting:**
  - Bring in all the natural light you possibly can and include many other sources of lighting for each room as well.
  - Provide even lighting throughout, including stairs and hallways.
- **Electrical Outlets:**
  - Have all electrical outlets raised to 18-24 inches from the floor.
  - Install easy-touch, rocker-style light switches 42-48 inches above the floor.
- **Stairs and Railings:**
  - Be sure there is a sturdy railing on both sides of all stairways in the home.

## Your Kitchen

- **Lighting:**
  - Include lighting from as many different sources as possible, such as natural, under-cabinet, track, recessed and task lighting.
- **Counters and Center Island:**
  - Install a peninsula or island with multiple counter heights.
  - Try to ensure that you have plenty of space around the peninsula or island.
  - Install kitchen and island counters at multiple heights.
- **Ovens:**
  - Opt for a built-in wall oven.
- **Cabinets/Drawers:**
  - Include pantry cabinets, which are long, slender cabinets that pull out on wheels.
  - Add pullout cabinets, Lazy Susans, and deep storage drawers.

### Your Bathroom

- **Showers & Tubs:**

- Consider replacing a tub in the house with a large shower that has a very small curb or, preferably, no curb at all.
- Add a built-in shower seat – a boon for shaving legs, a great storage spot for multiple bath and hair products, and a near-necessity for anyone who has difficulty standing.
- Add an adjustable-height shower head. One that can also be hand-held is the best bet.

- **Grab Bars:**

- Strategically place grab bars throughout the bathroom.
- Consider adding blocking to the bathroom walls, including behind tile, so that if you need to add grab bars later, it's much easier.

- **Toilets and Sinks:**

- Install a “comfort height” toilet with a seat that is 18 inches high (16-½ inches to the rim) to replace a standard residential toilet.
- Consider a vanity design that would accommodate a person who is seated.
- Opt for rounded corners on counter tops.
- Install single-lever faucet handles on all faucets.

### Outside Your Home

- **Lighting:**

- Install plenty of lighting.
- Consider motion detector lights that go on automatically when anything comes within a certain distance of your home.

- **Entrance:**

- Create at least one zero-step entry to your home.

- **Doorways:**

- Try to ensure your doorways are at least 36 inches wide.
- Install lever-style handles on all doors.

Excerpted from Modern Ideas, Modern Living: Taking the Next Step in Home Design and Planning for the Lifestyle You Want. Visit [www.thehartford.com/lifetime](http://www.thehartford.com/lifetime) to download the entire guidebook.

This checklist, and the Modern Ideas, Modern Living guidebook, is intended to help homeowners who seek information about housing decisions. It is not intended to be an exclusive source or to relate to a particular housing situation. Readers are advised to consult necessary professionals to assist them in analyzing their situation and to refer to the sources identified in the section entitled “Resources” for additional information. All information and representations are as of September 2016. Printed in U.S.A. © September 2016 The Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc., Hartford, CT 06155 All Rights Reserved