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*Listening, learning,
and living together:
it's the science of life.*

Caregiving and Home Safety ¹

Rebecca McGovney and Mary Harrison ²

More elderly people are injured in the home than any other place. How do you make your home safe for family members with limited mobility? University of Florida Extension professionals have some suggestions. According to UF professor of Consumer Education Mary Harrison, homes need to be made safe whether the elderly person continues to live independently or moves in with a relative or caregiver. She explains most changes are easy to make and require little, if any, money. Here are some quick and simple examples.

Use stall type showers with non-skid strips on the floor instead of bathtubs, if possible. They are easier to get into and out of. Also, install handrails in the shower stall and near the commode to help balance. Be sure to check the temperature of the hot water heater to avoid accidental burnings with hot water.

Additionally, replace round doorknobs with lever handles for easier opening. Also, replace wall switches with lighted switches with broad, flat switch plates. Finally, since older people are more likely to stumble and fall, eliminate sharp edges and corners of furniture as much as possible.

Homeowners can make most of these changes, but some may require professional help. Check the reputation and license of any home repairman before signing a contract. Check

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2. Rebecca McGovney, master's student, and Mary Harrison, professor, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

with your county/city government to see if he or she has a local license, and never pay for the work until it is satisfactorily completed.

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