

The 10 Most Common Modifications for a Universally Designed Home

Many people confuse Universal Design ideas with what they think of as handicapped Accessible Design. A well-designed home that works for all ages and capabilities does not look like an institution. Most of the common modifications are not even noticed by the average person entering the house. It's like many other things in life, we don't notice the parts that work well – we only notice those things that get in our way.

Here are 10 of the most common changes that can be made.

1. Creating at least one no-step entrance into the house. Ramps are not the only solution.
2. Replacing door handles with lever-style openers that can be opened with an elbow when your hands are full.
3. Replacing light switches with rocker-style switches that glow-in-the-dark.
4. Providing a lower counter space in the kitchen to sit and work when needed.
5. Add a railing to the other side of the stairway.
6. Enlarge one bathroom, adding a walk-in shower stall with a bench and hand-held shower sprayer and raising the vanity height to 36”.
7. Widen all hallways and doorways in new construction. Existing doors can be made wider by re-hanging the door with swing-away hinges or installing a pocket door.
8. Re-decorate with lighter colors and using contrasting bands of color on the edges of countertops, changes in flooring material and on stairs.
9. Add lighting with dimmers (either lamps or fixtures) to specific areas for reading, hobbies, cooking, dressing.
10. Install adjustable rods and shelving in closets to accommodate children and different size adults.

There are actually over 100 possible changes, some big and some small, that can be made to create a home that is not only attractive and comfortable, but easy to live in. The Universal Home is the home of the future!