

10 Reasons Why You Need a Universally Designed House

Hey, I get it. I am a “boomer” and I don’t want to think about getting older and less able to get around either. We are a stubborn lot – we are the most physically fit, active, hard-working and playing generation of 60 year olds this country has ever seen. We don’t want our retirement home to look like a hospital. Aging-in-Place is for really old people! We’ll think about it when we get there.

Well, it isn’t just about us. There are many reasons to design or re-model a house to make it as universally liveable as possible. All these other people might visit or live in your house sometime too.

1. The elderly next door neighbor who uses a walker
2. Your pregnant daughter who can’t climb steps right now
3. Your son’s family with their two toddlers in a double stroller
4. The “I can still play football” husband who just broke his leg in a bad tackle
5. The 15 yr old family dog who can’t get up the porch steps anymore
6. Your teenage son who has been injured in a car accident
7. Your aging father who has cataracts and can’t see clearly
8. Anyone trying to get all the groceries into the house
9. Your older mother who has severe arthritis
10. The family with a handicapped child that wants to buy your house.

These are all very common scenarios that happen every day in houses everywhere. And in most homes, the doors and hallways are too narrow, porches and entryways have steps and built-in barriers, powder rooms are too small to turn around in, and floor coverings are slippery or too hard to move around on.

Universal (or Transgenerational) Design is about all of us living well and comfortably. Assessing your existing home or reviewing the plans for your new home just makes good sense. Many of the modifications are undetectable and most do not require major construction work. In new homes, the cost of paying attention to these details is minimal to the contractor. Some states are legislating that all new homes must be built according to these standards. Take the steps to make your home the best it can be now.