



Moving Into An Existing Home

A Better Living Design Guide™

When looking to change dwellings as part of a life adjustment in our later years, we want to find a place that won't interfere with our current lifestyle plans. However, most existing homes in today's market are often not equipped for older households.

What to do? Look for a home that has the best potential for conversion to a more accommodating dwelling. Which home allows the easiest remodel? Picking an easy-fix home will provide freedom to

add universally designed features that will make a huge difference in our daily lives, and prepare us for our future as well.

This document is a guide for essential criteria to select a home that offers the best chance to remodel for the least cost and the most accommodating outcome. Better Living Design™ guidelines provide what is needed to find a home that is set up for the long haul.

Improving Existing Homes



One-story home vs. two story home

You don't have to have only one floor homes: Spaces off the main level are okay as long as they aren't essential for daily living, such as extra bedrooms.

Key function areas on reachable level: Your goal is to have the kitchen, a full bath, laundry, and bedroom, on a reachable level.

Can a function be relocated? e.g. can laundry be moved up from the basement?



Zero-step or 1-2 step entry

Zero step is great! It might be possible to create a step free entrance even if you have 1-2 steps. Don't forget that you may have to raise the porch to the first floor level.

Check thresholds of all entry doors including back porch doors for modification.

Improving Existing Homes, cont'd



Interior circulation

Hallways: A good hallway width of 42". Hallways can be expensive to modify so look for homes with open plans or short hallway lengths.

Doorways: Clear 32" opening of all doors. You may not have to modify all the interior doors, maybe just the bath and bedroom.

Kitchens and Bathrooms



Bathroom: You only need to make one bathroom on the main level more usable. Pick the one that is the easiest. You may only have a half-bath on the first floor so you'll need to think about how to expand it or where to place a new one. If you have two full baths in the house, one should probably have a curbless shower.

Kitchen: Kitchens are the most difficult space in the house to convert from primary use by a standing person to a seated person. If you are going to remodel your kitchen anyway you can add a number of storage, lighting, and work surface improvements.



Bedroom on first floor

Master Bedroom: Not every home has a master bedroom on the first floor. A place to start is a home that has any bedroom and a full bath on the first floor. If this is not possible, find a home that has a room that can be converted to a bedroom, such as a den or a family room.

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