



Safety First:

Six tips to help you prepare
your home for older guests





Whether it's for a special occasion or just because, hosting an older adult in your home can be a wonderful experience. To get ready before your guests arrive, you may want to consider a few changes around your home to help keep your guests safe.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2016/p0922-older-adult-falls.html), falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries to people age 65 and older¹. "While a fall could happen almost anywhere, being in a less familiar environment can contribute to a senior's risk for a fall," said Sara Terry, Brookdale's senior vice president of Resident and Family Engagement.

Use these six tips to help you transform your home into a more inviting and senior-friendly space, so you can focus on what matters most: making memories with your entire family.



1. Consider your curb appeal

Outdoor walkways to many homes are often cracked or uneven, which can be a risk factor for falls. Make sure you **clear off pathways**, so they are easy to see.

Porch stairs can also be tricky to maneuver. If possible, add a ramp that leads to your door. If there are stairs, make sure there are handrails on each side.

Entryways divided by a threshold can be difficult for someone with mobility issues. **Eliminate potential tripping hazards**, or make sure thresholds are clearly marked.



2. De-clutter your space

One of the easiest things you can do is to **remove clutter, especially on floors**, to allow plenty of space for a senior guest who may be in a wheelchair or need a walker to maneuver around rooms.

Remove or tape down all cords. And rugs may look nice, but they are a big tripping hazard. Remove accent rugs, or make sure they are secured with non-slip material.



3. Find your best lighting

Seniors need more light than you do in your home, particularly in notoriously dim areas such as entryways, hallways and staircases.

Replace existing soft light bulbs with higher wattage bulbs, and add motion-sensor lights to bathrooms. You can also **add nightlights** throughout your home, an easy addition that helps seniors see better, especially at night or on darker winter days.

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2016/p0922-older-adult-falls.html>





4. Mind your steps and stairs

Ideally, a senior won't have to navigate stairs, but if you have stairs in your home, you can make them safer by having **railings on both sides**.

Railings should be at least 1 ½-inches in diameter to accommodate seniors with limited dexterity and aging grips. You can also make each step be more visible by **adding contrast strips**, which are available at your local hardware store.



5. Makeover your bathroom

You can make your bathrooms safer by **adding well-placed grab bars** next to the toilet and in bathing spaces. In the shower or tub, add non-slip strips and a shower seat for comfort and ease of use.

For guests who are staying awhile, consider adding a handheld, adjustable-height showerhead. Finally, **lower the temperature of your hot water heater to 120-degrees** to avoid unintended burns.



6. Choose the perfect room

Whether your guest is staying one night, one month or even longer, you want to choose the right bedroom for their stay. **One-level living is key**, so if possible, use a room on the main floor with easy access to the bathroom, kitchen and living room.

Furniture, including the bed and chairs, should be at a **good height** (neither too low nor too high), so your guests can use them easily.

And remember, door knobs can be difficult for seniors, so **consider replacing round door handles with lever handles**.



The most important tip of all: have fun and enjoy your time together. And with just a few simple modifications, your home will be comfortable and safer for your older guests.

Call **844-340-2289** to find out more.

