



# 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 \(CDC\)](#), falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries to people age 65 and older<sup>1</sup>. "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.

