

Real Estate

## Design tips for incorporating aging-in-place elements into your home



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Aging in place has become more popular during the [coronavirus](#) pandemic, with some older adults expressing reluctance to move into a group setting.

Adding safety features to your home can make it easier to live there longer, but homeowners often worry that incorporating those features will be unattractive.

We asked Tom Reineberg, director of design at [InSite Builders & Remodeling in Bethesda, Md.](#), for his suggestions about how to design and install aging-in-place components in a home.

### **Stair-lift options**

For many older homeowners, eliminating the need for stairs is an impetus to move into a home with one-level living. But Reineberg said in an email that a stair lift can be fully functional and comfortable while blending into the decor of the home.

Reineberg said homeowners need to consider these three elements when considering a stair lift:

1. Installation area: This will dictate the size of the stair lift you can install. While safety is the top priority, stair lifts today are much more compact than in the past.
2. Power options: There are several power options to make the stair lift less noticeable, such as swivel and folding seats and folding footrests.
3. Finishes and colors: Upgraded upholstery and colors give homeowners the ability to coordinate stair lifts with the rest of the home's decor.

### **Six design-friendly options for aging in place**

When considering other aging-in-place elements in a home, think durability, safety and long-term function, Reineberg wrote. He suggested the following upgrades that support aging-in-place yet are design-friendly.

1. Luxury vinyl plank (LVP) flooring: This monolithic material comes in wood-look finishes, is waterproof and nonskid, and stands up to wear and tear.
2. Accessible appliances: Ovens at countertop height and refrigerators with French doors are more accessible and easier to open and close.
3. Lighted bathroom mirrors: This type of bathroom mirror provides dual purposes, including lighting and the ability to angle the mirror.
4. Linear shower drains: With a linear shower drain, there is less slope in the floor than in a typical shower drain system, which leads to more stability when standing. A bonus is the sleek, modern look this option presents.
5. Folding shower bench: A teak or wood folding bench in the shower, especially one with a stainless-steel frame, offers a warmer finish to sit on than tile or stone, as well as creating a more luxurious appearance.
6. Exterior concrete ramp: The look of an exterior, exposed aggregate concrete ramp can be both practical and attractive, especially when surrounded by lush landscaping.