

A GUIDE TO A SAFER, MORE ACCESSIBLE HOME

Practical, easy-to-read advice for making everyday life at home safer, simpler and more comfortable.

STAIRS

Safer access between floors

BATHROOMS

Reducing slips and difficult transfers

LIGHTING

Better visibility and fewer hazards

A whole-home guide covering entrances, stairs, living areas, bathrooms, bedrooms, kitchens, falls prevention, helpful technology and funding.

Keep this guide handy

Use it to walk around the home with a family member, friend or carer and identify the changes that could make the biggest difference.

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Honest advice. Professional installation. Ongoing support.

1. Start With the Person, Not the Product

The best home adaptation is the one that solves a real everyday problem. Before buying equipment, walk through a normal day and note where movement feels difficult, tiring, uncertain or risky. Think about getting in and out, using the toilet at night, bathing, preparing food and moving between floors.

Try to separate occasional inconvenience from a repeated barrier. A loose rug may simply need removing. Difficulty using the stairs several times every day may justify a more substantial solution. Needs can change, so it is sensible to consider what will still work in the future.

What to check

- ☐ Where do slips, trips, stumbles or near-misses happen?
- ☐ Which movements cause the most fatigue or loss of confidence?
- ☐ Is the problem worse at night or when carrying something?
- ☐ Would a small change solve the problem, or is a permanent adaptation more appropriate?
- ☐ Could an occupational therapist or council assessment identify other options?

2. Entrances, Paths and the Front Door

Safety starts before you enter the house. Uneven paving, loose gravel, poor drainage, high thresholds and dim porch lighting can make an otherwise manageable entrance difficult.

A ramp can help where steps are a barrier, but gradient, landing space, grip and handrails matter. A poorly planned ramp can replace one difficulty with another.

What to check

- ☐ Keep paths even, stable and free of clutter.
- ☐ Deal with leaves, moss, ice and standing water promptly.
- ☐ Fit a secure handrail where external steps are difficult.
- ☐ Make sure the doorway and keyhole are well lit without glare.
- ☐ Use flat, non-slip doormats.
- ☐ Check that locks and handles are easy to operate.

3. Stairs - A High-Priority Area

Stairs combine changes in level, balance, strength, vision and coordination. Pay particular attention if someone has fallen, avoids the stairs, climbs sideways, pulls heavily on the banister or becomes breathless halfway up.

A stairlift may be appropriate when the staircase has become a repeated barrier but the user can transfer safely on and off the seat. Straight stairs are generally simpler. Curved stairs, landings and unusual layouts need a rail designed for the staircase.

What to check

- ☐ Keep every tread and landing clear.
- ☐ Secure loose carpet and repair worn edges.
- ☐ Use good, even lighting at the top and bottom.
- ☐ Check handrails are secure and comfortable to grip.
- ☐ Consider visual contrast at step edges if individual steps are hard to distinguish.
- ☐ Avoid carrying bulky items that block the view of the steps.
- ☐ Ask whether a swivel seat, folding rail or other stairlift feature would make transfers safer.

Do not choose a stairlift on price alone

Correct fit, safe transfer position, aftercare, warranty and suitability for the user matter as much as the headline price. A home survey should consider both the staircase and the person using the lift.

4. Living Rooms and Everyday Movement

Living rooms often become cluttered gradually. Furniture that has been in the same place for years can leave narrow routes or sharp turns that become more significant when someone needs a stick, frame or extra room to steady themselves.

What to check

- ☐ Create a clear route between the chair, door, phone and toilet.
- ☐ Remove unnecessary low tables and footstools from main routes.
- ☐ Secure or remove rugs, especially if edges lift.
- ☐ Choose stable seating that is high and firm enough to rise from comfortably.
- ☐ Keep phones, glasses and controls within easy reach.
- ☐ Keep charging cables away from walking routes.
- ☐ Make sure lighting reaches corners and routes, not just the centre of the room.

5. Bathrooms - Reduce Slipping and Difficult Transfers

Bathrooms deserve careful attention because water, hard surfaces, restricted space and stepping over bath sides can combine several risks at once.

Options can include non-slip surfaces, grab rails, raised toilet seats, shower seats, bath lifts, walk-in showers or level-access showers. The right choice depends on the person, the room and likely future needs.

What to check

- ☐ Keep floors dry and remove mats that slide.
- ☐ Use suitable non-slip surfaces in the bath or shower.
- ☐ Keep toiletries within easy reach.
- ☐ Improve lighting for night-time visits.
- ☐ Use properly positioned grab rails rather than towel rails for support.
- ☐ Consider professional advice before larger bathroom adaptations.

6. Bedrooms and Moving Around at Night

Night-time movement can be very different from daytime movement. Someone may be sleepy, without their glasses, in a hurry to reach the toilet or navigating a dark route.

What to check

- ☐ Keep the route from bed to door and toilet completely clear.
- ☐ Remove cables, shoes and bags from the bedside route.
- ☐ Provide a light that can be switched on before getting out of bed.
- ☐ Consider low-level or motion-activated lighting.
- ☐ Check the bed is a comfortable height for sitting and standing.
- ☐ Keep a phone or personal alarm within reach.

7. Kitchen Safety and Reducing Reaching

The aim is to make routine kitchen tasks possible without repeated bending, stretching, lifting or carrying hot items over long distances.

What to check

- ☐ Store everyday items where they are easy to reach.
- ☐ Move frequently used items to the easiest cupboards and drawers.
- ☐ Use lighter cookware if heavy pans are difficult.
- ☐ Deal with spills immediately.
- ☐ Never climb on unstable chairs or stools to reach high cupboards.
- ☐ Provide somewhere to sit for longer preparation tasks if fatigue is an issue.
- ☐ Keep the kettle, mugs and drinks supplies close together.

8. Lighting, Vision and Contrast

More light is not always the same as better light. The aim is useful, even illumination without harsh glare, deep shadows or confusing reflections. This is especially important on stairs, at thresholds and in bathrooms.

What to check

- ☐ Replace failed bulbs promptly.
- ☐ Add task lighting where reading, cooking or medication is handled.
- ☐ Reduce glare from bare bulbs and reflective surfaces.
- ☐ Use contrast to make important edges, handles and switches easier to identify.
- ☐ Make the top and bottom of stairs clearly visible.
- ☐ Avoid heavily patterned stair coverings that hide individual treads.

9. Helpful Technology Without Making Life Complicated

Technology can add reassurance, but it should simplify daily life rather than create another system that is difficult to remember or maintain.

What to check

- ☐ Personal alarms can provide a way to call for assistance.
- ☐ Motion lighting can help in halls, landings and night-time routes.
- ☐ Video doorbells can reduce the need to rush to the door.
- ☐ Voice controls may make lights, heating or calls easier to operate.
- ☐ Key safes can help authorised family or carers gain access when securely fitted and managed.

10. Falls Prevention Is More Than Home Adaptation

Home changes are important, but falls can also be influenced by strength, balance, eyesight, footwear, medication and dizziness. If someone has fallen repeatedly, feels unsteady or has become frightened of moving around, seek appropriate health advice as well as reviewing the home.

What to check

- ☐ Wear supportive, well-fitting footwear with good grip.
- ☐ Avoid loose slippers and slippery socks on smooth floors.
- ☐ Keep glasses and walking aids within easy reach.
- ☐ Stay active within your abilities - strength and balance matter.
- ☐ Do not ignore new dizziness, weakness, fainting or repeated unexplained falls.
- ☐ After a fall, consider why it happened rather than simply becoming more cautious.

Repeated falls need attention

If a fall has caused an injury, or the person cannot get up, use an available phone or personal alarm to get help. This guide is general information and is not a substitute for medical advice.

11. Paying for Home Adaptations

Before paying privately for major work, check whether help may be available. Disabled Facilities Grants can contribute towards eligible adaptations for disabled people, depending on circumstances and location.

Your local council can explain assessment routes and available support. For substantial work, establish whether approval is required before work begins.

What to check

- ☐ Contact your local council about adult social care, equipment and home adaptations.
- ☐ Ask whether a Disabled Facilities Grant or other local help may apply.
- ☐ Do not assume you are ineligible without checking.
- ☐ Establish whether approval is needed before commissioning major work.
- ☐ Keep written quotations and specifications so options can be compared.

12. Your Whole-Home Safety Check

Walk through the home and tick each item that is already satisfactory. Mark anything that needs attention.

Entrance

☐

Path clear, lighting good and steps or threshold manageable

Hall

☐

No clutter, loose rugs or trailing cables

Stairs

☐

Clear treads, secure handrail, good lighting and safe transfer

Living room

☐

Clear route, stable seating and essentials within reach

Bathroom

☐

Non-slip surfaces, useful rails and safe bath or shower access

Bedroom

☐

Clear night route with reachable light and phone or alarm

Kitchen

☐

Everyday items reachable and no unsafe climbing

Lighting

☐

Even light, limited glare and important edges easy to see

Outside

☐

Paths maintained and weather hazards managed

Emergency

☐

Phone or alarm accessible and family knows the plan

13. Independent Sources of Help

These organisations are independent of Top Flight Stairlifts (UK) Ltd and provide wider information on falls, home adaptations, funding and living independently.

NHS - Falls

Advice on preventing falls and what to do after a fall.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls/>

Age UK - Adapting your home

Independent guidance on adaptations, support and housing choices.

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/housing-options/adapting-home/>

Age UK - Falls prevention

Information on reducing fall risk, footwear and activity.

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/exercise/falls-prevention/>

GOV.UK - Disabled Facilities Grants

Official information about eligibility and the application process.

<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants>

GOV.UK - Home equipment and adaptations

Find the relevant local council route for equipment and adaptations.

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-home-equipment-for-disabled>

RNIB

Information and support for people affected by sight loss.

<https://www.rnib.org.uk/>

Top Flight Stairlifts (UK) Ltd

If the stairs are the part of the home causing concern, we can assess the staircase and explain suitable stairlift options while keeping the wider goal in mind - helping someone use their home safely and confidently.

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Important: This guide provides general information only. It is not medical, occupational therapy, building or financial advice. Individual needs vary. Seek appropriate professional advice for significant mobility difficulties, repeated falls or structural alterations.