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Tips To Help Parents Who Want To Age In Place

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The Boomerater™ Report, our weekly collaboration with online baby boomer resource [Boomerater](#), this week explores some of the issues involved in [helping your parents age in place](#).

Here is the question from a Boomerater member: “My mom and dad are in their 70's and are in good health. They have told me they would never consider leaving the home they have lived in since they were married and raised all five of their children. With the high cost associated with assisted living and the loss they will probably take in the real estate market, I can also see the financial benefit of their staying in their home. I'd like to hear from other boomers who have helped their parents stay in their homes successfully. What are the modifications to make the home safe and what else should be considered?”

Make a strategic plan. They should consult a financial planner and develop a budget for current and changing financial needs. With an attorney, they should draw up a will, an advanced health care directive, and any other documents their attorney deems necessary. Explore options for managing their affairs should that become necessary. If they have adult children with special needs they should make special plans to arrange for a guardianship or strategic planning.

[See [Smart Ways to Access Your Housing Wealth](#).]

Carefully review the floor plan of the house. If they can't do this objectively, hire an architect, residential designer or accessibility contractor to look at the existing floor plan and see how it could be made fully accessible through retro-fitting modifications. Learn how to incorporate elements of universal design so that they can continue to use the same space well into the future in varying degrees of mobility.

Would a dish drawer make more sense than a regular dishwasher? Typically they are more accessible than most dishwashers. Should your oven be at a lower height? Should it have a door that lifts up? Is there a bedroom on the main floor? Or is there a den or bonus room that could be converted to use as a bedroom? If they don't have a shower or bathtub on the main floor, is there

a half bath or a laundry room? There may be a way to reconfigure the existing rooms to accommodate an accessible stall shower as well as a front loading combination washer/dryer that takes up less space. If it has steps, add ramps. Add lifts on the stairs or a pneumatic elevator if necessary, but ensure that they have a good fire escape route and exit route during a power failure.

Consider adding an “always on” generator. Instead of door knobs, change to lever handles. Make the property wheelchair accessible. Most wheelchairs are between 27-28 inches wide. With knuckles on either side you should allow a minimum door width of 32 inches. If your plan includes a future time when in-home care providers may be required 24 hours per day, modify the house in such a manner that you have a minimum of 2 bedrooms so that you may accommodate overnight staff. This advice was provided by [Alicia Reid, a Realtor in Redmond, WA](#).

Tackling Transportation. Another Boomerater member wrote that one of the biggest dilemmas their parents faced while they stayed in their home was losing the ability to drive to doctors, veterinarians, senior centers, etc. Ask the local hospital, senior center, or local agency on aging (AAA) or Council on Aging (COA) about transportation resources for seniors in your area. My parents had a companion who came in twice a week to drive them to doctor appointments, the grocery store, the library, to have their hair cut, etc.

[\[Is a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community Right for You?\]](#)

Most towns have a local grocery that delivers – [Peapod.com](#) is a national service that delivers from local stores. Most drugstores deliver prescriptions without a fee and [drugstore.com](#) can ship a huge variety of products. If you don't have a local store that delivers, [netgrocer.com](#) is a backup, though its shipping is expensive. My parents also used Meals on Wheels to get a hot meal brought in everyday.

Read other member tips for [helping your parents stay in their home](#) on Boomerater.

Boomerater is an online resource for baby boomers, with local directories to help you find everything from a [financial advisor](#) to [Alzheimer's Care facilities](#). The site also contains forums where boomers can post questions and swap first-hand experiences. If there are questions on your mind that you would like answered by other people who have faced similar situations, or you have advice of your own to share, go to [Boomerater.com](#) and participate in the forums. Say that

The Best Life sent you.

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