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Preparing Your Home for Life

By Larry Taff, UDCP, CAPS, MCR and GCP

If you are like the majority of baby boomers in the United States you would prefer to live safely and comfortably in your home for as long as possible. Who wouldn't? With the costs for medical and limited care housing increasing, it makes smart financial sense to be proactive and prepare your home now...for life. You plan for retirement; you can also plan for your family's future comfort in your home. Most universal design strategies can be employed with very little fuss. While some folks may require a significant remodel to make their home live up to its universal design potential, most homeowners only need very basic modifications, and perhaps a new way of looking at their space!

Preparing your home for life can be virtually invisible when done well. There are hundreds of innovative products in the market today that allow for both ease of use and let your personal style shine through. To get started, your home can be evaluated with a Universal Design assessment. Key questions to consider are: Do I need a bedroom and bathroom on the main level? How can I make my kitchen more functional? What are the best ways to prevent falls or injury? How is the ease of movement from room to room? Are light switches and door handles easy to reach and use? Are bathrooms, work areas and hallways well lit? Can I easily enter and exit my home?

Universal home improvements add immediate value and at the same time enhance your personal comfort and safety. It is much easier and cost effective to plan for these improvements prior to a sudden need. Many times this can be accomplished when remodeling is planned for your home. With a little forethought, you can easily have a home for life.

Larry Taff is president of TZ of Madison, Inc., which specializes in residential remodeling and is a three-time award winner of the NARI Contractor of the Year Award in Residential Universal Design. Visit tzofmadison.com for more information.