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# Planning Ahead:

## Be Safe at Home

By Larry Taff, MCR, UDCP, GCP & CAPS

Most homeowners would prefer to live safely and comfortably in their home for as long as possible. In fact, according to a recent survey, while 84% of boomers would like to stay in their current home during retirement, only 16% have taken any steps to adapt their home for the next couple of decades.

More homeowners are starting to understand the importance of being proactive with their homes. By planning ahead, you can be ready when your needs change. And they will change; it is a simple fact of life. It just requires looking at aging in place (CAPS) and universal design (UD) upgrades through a different lens. The goal with both UD and CAPS is to make your home safe, comfortable, low maintenance and energy efficient. So you can spend your time living, not fretting about utility bills, or moving around safely. By putting your home at the top of your to-do list, you can spread out universal design and energy efficiency improvements over a period of time. This allows you to plan the costs in advance, rather than having sudden expenses when life takes a turn.

Prior to starting these kinds of improvements it is important to get a comprehensive view of your home. A Universal Design Certified Professional (UDCP) or Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS) has the background required. The benefit of a certified contractor is that they have the knowledge to see where the best improvements can be made for your particular needs. This provides you with a "whole-istic" view of your home. By being proactive and planning your projects with accessibility and efficiency in mind, your home can have many elements that will allow you to live safely and comfortably for decades to come. And as the baby boomer survey showed, that is exactly what homeowners want.

Larry Taff is president of TZ of Madison, Inc., a residential remodeling company and a three-time winner of the NARI CotY Award in Residential Universal Design. Visit [tzofmadison.com](http://tzofmadison.com).