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Tips for Increasing Safety in the Kitchen and Bathroom

Independent seniors may still like to cook their own dinners or hold family get togethers, as in their past the kitchen was most likely a space for entertaining, socializing and learning traditional family recipes. Adapting the kitchen to meet their needs can help improve its usability as seniors age. When evaluating the safety of the kitchen in your loved one's home, consider the following list from [AARP](#)[®] and follow these tips:

- **Decrease fire hazards.** As with any kitchen, make sure that a smoke detector is present in the kitchen and always make sure there is a fire extinguisher close to the stove. Teach your loved one how to use one if they do not know how, so they can easily put a fire out should one occur. Ensure that paper towels, napkins and dishtowels are stored away from the stove, as well as any other flammable items.
- **Prevent falls.** Make sure there is adequate lighting around all work areas, as this can help to reduce the risk of falls. Keep cords off of the floor and out of the way and ensure any rugs are slip or trip proof. Ensure the floor is not too slippery and place a non-slip rug in front of the sink in case water spills.
- **Keep things within reach.** Objects such as pots and pans are often stored in lower cupboards, while cups and plates are often stored in higher shelves. Adapt storage in order to make sure the most-used items are well within reach so your loved one does not have to bend over or use a step-stool they could potentially fall off of.
- **Adjustments with aging.** If, as your loved one ages, they begin to have more trouble opening cupboards or would prefer to sit down while preparing dinner, you may need to install different handles and adjust the height of the countertops in order to make it easier for them to continue comfortably cooking and using the kitchen.

Home Safety Measures for the Bathroom

As the most common room in the home where senior accidents occur, it is important to focus on how to increase the amount of safety to ensure your loved one's well-being. Try following these tips from [AARP](#) to increase the level of bathroom safety:

- **Adapt for ease of use.** Make sure that your loved one will not have any trouble getting in and out of the shower. Grab bars should be installed in the bathtub, in the shower and around the toilet. Place non-slip mats in the shower to keep your loved one from falling and consider purchasing a removable showerhead to make it easier for them to shower. It may also be a good idea to buy a toilet seat extender if your loved one has trouble getting on and off of the toilet.
- **Ensure floors aren't slippery.** While this is a common problem in the kitchen, this is even more common in the bathroom thanks to the shower. Make sure there are non-slip rugs that do not fold up around the edges just outside of the shower. As AARP states, rubber-backed mats are the best, as they stay in place.

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- **Make sure it's bright enough.** Just like the kitchen, it is important that it is bright enough in the bathroom. Make sure that there is a light near the shower, toilet and sink. At night, make sure there is a night light that will help your loved one find their way in the dark.
- **Adjust temperatures of water.** The sink and shower water can very easily get hot and scald the skin. Check to make sure that the hot water heater is set at 120 degrees and consider placing an anti-scald sensor to ensure your loved one does not get burned.

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