

HOME MODIFICATION CHECKLIST FOR SENIORS WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Parkinson's disease makes it more difficult to walk and perform everyday tasks. Modifying your loved one's home can make it safer for them to live alone, making home modifications an important consideration for caregivers. As you walk through the home, use this checklist to identify areas of concern and make plans for addressing them.

GENERAL SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Keep electrical cords out of walkways.
- Reduce the amount of furniture in each room, keeping pathways clear and wide.
- Arrange furniture so that your loved one doesn't have to make frequent turns.
- Make sure each room has adequate lighting.
- Cut down on clutter to prevent trip-and-fall accidents.
- Use mobile apps to control thermostats, switches and locks.
- Keep smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in working order.
- Replace thick carpeting with low-pile carpeting or hard surfaces to prevent tripping.

ENTRANCES AND EXITS

- Install a ramp to eliminate the need for your loved one to navigate steps.
- Remove throw rugs from entryways.
- Replace round doorknobs with lever-style handles, which are easier for some people with Parkinson's disease to operate.
- Install extra lights outside to make it easier to see in the dark.
- Add reflective strips to porches, decks and other outdoor surfaces.

KITCHEN

- Purchase a small fire extinguisher and keep it near the stove.
- Organize dishes, pots, pans and other items according to how often they're used.
- Move frequently used items to lower shelves or cabinets to prevent your loved one from having to use a stool to reach them.
- Install lights under the cabinets to make it easier for your loved one to work at the counter.
- Replace loose throw rugs with nonskid mats.
- Install a stove that has push-button controls instead of knobs.
- Purchase adaptive utensils to make it easier to prepare and eat food.
- Use two small trash cans instead of one large one to make it easier for your loved one to take out the trash when needed.

BEDROOM

- Purchase a bed that's low enough for your loved one to touch their feet to the floor while seated. This makes it easier to get into and out of bed.
- Replace the existing bed with a hospital bed, if needed. Hospital beds are adjustable, so they're more comfortable for seniors with Parkinson's disease.
- Keep a lamp on the bedside table so that your loved one doesn't have to walk in the dark if they need to use the bathroom or get a drink during the night.
- Raise the head of the bed to make it easier to sit up.
- Install a grab rail to make it easier for your loved one to get out of bed.

BATHROOM

- Install a roll-in or walk-in shower.
- Add grab bars to the walls and shower enclosure.
- Replace the existing toilet with a toilet that has a seat height of 17 to 19 inches.
- Put a bench in the shower so your loved one can sit comfortably.
- Add nonslip decals to the shower floor to prevent slipping.
- Replace faucet knobs with levers that don't need to be turned.
- Install a grab bar near the toilet to help with balance.
- Make sure all bath mats have nonskid backing.