BY JIM MILLER

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Most seniors want to stay living in their own home. But being able to do so often depends on how easy it is to get around the house if you develop physical limitations.

Here are some helpful resources you can turn to, to get an idea of what types of improvements you should make that will make your home safer and more convenient as you grow older.

Get Informed:

A good first step is to do a home assessment. Go through your house, room-by-room as if you've never set foot in it before, looking for problem areas like potential tripping or slipping

hazards, and areas that are hard to access.

To help you with this, there are various organizations that offer published lists of questions to ask, and things to look for to identify problems.

For example, the Fall Prevention Center (see homemods.org) offers a number of online checklists, including one called “How Well Does Your Home Meet Your Needs?” that you can access directly at homeneedschecklist.org. Or, download and print out the “Home Modification Checklist” at caregiverslibrary.org — click on “Checklists & Forms,” then on “Housing,” to get there.

An excellent resource called “The AARP Home Fit Guide” provides a checklist and tips to keep your home safe and livable as you age. Access it at homefitguide.org; or, if you’re an AARP member, call 888-687-2277 and ask them to mail you a free copy.

Personalized Advice:

For more personalized help, consider getting a professional in-home assessment with an occupational therapist who can evaluate your home, make recommendations and refer you to products and services to help you make improvements. Your doctor or your local Area Agency on Aging (call 800-677-1116 for contact information) can also help you find nearby therapists.

Many health insurance providers, including Medicare, will pay for a home assessment by an occupational therapist, if prescribed by your doctor. They will not, however, cover the physical upgrades to the home.

Home Modification Ideas:

There are dozens of small, simple things you can do to make your home more user-friendly as you age, such as:

• Securing throw rugs with double-sided tape to avoid tripping

• Installing brighter full-spectrum bulbs in existing light fixtures to improve visibility

• Adding grab bars to the bathroom for support.

More extensive projects might include installing a stair-lift or elevator for multi-floor access, and replacing the tub with a walk-in shower for easier entry and exit.

To get a list of more senior-friendly home improvement ideas and illustrations, visit ageinplace.org and click on “Practical Advice” then on “Making Your Home Senior Friendly.”

Another good resource that’s loaded with tips and universal design ideas is the “AARP Guide to Revitalizing Your Home.” It’s available in bookstores nationwide as well as online for around $16.

Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of “The Savvy Senior.”