

Staying longer in your home – checklist



Catalyst
Foundation

This check list helps you with choosing a home that will suit your needs now and into the future. The questions refer to access, personal safety (e.g. falls prevention) and fire safety. The list can be used if you are considering living in a retirement village, residential park or any other housing arrangement. Remember that this is a tool only. It can also be used to assess your current home and help you consider possible future modifications. Some features may not be so important now but it may be good to check how easily they can be added to the home if necessary. Space is provided under each question for your own notes / comments.

Take along this questionnaire and a tape measure when you go looking for a new house / flat / unit. Ask questions. This is your life and your house must meet your needs.

Catalyst Foundation (formerly Seniors Information Service) and the South Australian Residential Parks Residents Association Inc. (SARPRA) acknowledge the work of Liz Burge in compiling this checklist.

Entering your house

1. How many steps are there for day-to-day entry into the house?
 - Front None 1 – 2 3+
 - Back None 1 – 2 3+

My notes:

2. Is there a deadlock on the front door?
 - Yes No

My notes:

3. Is there a handrail at each entry door to the house?
 - Yes It varies between doors No handrails at all

My notes:



4. Is there space to open the front door or back door while using a wheelchair or walking frame?

- Yes No

My notes:

5. How easy is it / might it be to move through the front or back doorways in a wheelchair or mobility aid such as a walking frame?

- Very easy Easy Somewhat difficult Very difficult

My notes:

6. How easy would it be for an ambulance staff or a gurney to enter and exit your house quickly?

- Very easily Somewhat easy Challenging because of narrow pathways / hallways

My notes:

7. Are there steps or changes in ground level in the gardens? Could the garden be accessed by (or become easily accessible to) a person in wheelchair?

- Yes No

My notes:

8. Is there space near the front or back door for a bench (or other waist-high item) to place shopping etc. while you open the front door?

- Yes No

My notes:

Moving around

9. How many of the doors (internal and external) have lever-type handles, as distinct from round knobs?
- All Many A few None

My notes:

10. Are all areas accessible to a person using a wheelchair / walking frame?
- Most areas Some areas A few areas None

My notes:

11. Corridors are, at minimum, 100cm wide.
- Yes No

My notes:

Bathroom

12. How easily could you travel from the bedroom to the entry to your bathroom and toilet while using a wheelchair or walking frame?
- Very easily Somewhat easily Not very easily

My notes:

13. Could a person in a wheelchair get their knees under the hand basin for easy use?
- Yes No

My notes:



14. How do the bathroom and toilet doors open?

- Bathroom: inwards outwards slides into the wall cavity
- Toilet inwards outwards slides into the wall cavity

15. Is the size of the shower floor 110cm x 110cm or larger?

- Yes No I don't know

My notes:

16. Is the shower floor:

- Same level as bathroom floor Lower than the bathroom floor a little Other

My notes:

17. How quickly does the shower floor drain?

- Quickly Slowly Very slowly

My notes:

18. Does the bathroom floor have any anti-slip properties?

- Yes No I don't know

My notes:

19. Does your shower hot water tap enable you to set the temperature at a safe, fixed level (to avoid accidental scalding, i.e. in the event of a fall)?

- Yes No I don't know

My notes:

20. Is there a grab rail (strong enough to support a person and firmly attached to a robust wall / to the floor)?

- In the toilet: Yes No
- In the shower cubicle: Yes No

My notes:

Kitchen

21. How many self-closing drawers does the kitchen have?

- All Some None

My notes:

22. Is it easy to reach all food storage areas in the kitchen without needing a step stool?

- Yes No Some areas only

My notes:

23. Is the oven sitting on a bench that is level with the hotplates?

- Yes No

My notes:

24. Are all cupboard handles bow or D-shaped (they are not round knobs) and suitable for using four fingers?

- Yes No

My notes:

Light and power

25. Can you control all lighting levels inside the house (including daylight)?

- Yes, all Some A few

My notes:

26. Can you increase lighting to areas when it's needed to perform tasks?

- Yes No

My notes:

27. How are the windows opened?

- Pulling upwards Sliding horizontally Both methods Other method

My notes:

28. Are the power points fitted approximately waist high (60cm or 2ft approx.) above the floor for easy access?

- All of them Some of them A few of them None

My notes:

29. Are the power points are also placed 50cm from the corners of each room for easy access?

- All of them Some of them A few of them None

My notes:

30. Any other things you have noticed? For example, any required improvements for foot traffic flows, safety issues, or more economic forms of energy.

My notes:



Useful information can also be found in the booklet [Livable Housing Design](#), published by Livable Housing Australia, containing guidelines for the various design elements. They include the *seven core livable design features elements*:

1. *A safe continuous and step free path of travel from the street entrance and/or parking area to a dwelling entrance that is level*
2. *At least one, level (step-free) entrance into the dwelling*
3. *Internal doors and corridors that facilitate comfortable and unimpeded movement between spaces*
4. *A toilet on the ground (or entry) level that provides easy access*
5. *A bathroom that contains a hobless (step-free) shower recess*
6. *Reinforced walls around the toilet, shower and bath to support the safe installation of grabrails at a later date*
7. *A continuous handrail on one side of any stairway where there is a rise of more than 1 metre*

Another useful resource is [Sustainable Housing Principles – 2.3 SAHT Universal Housing Design Criteria](#), published by the South Australian Government.

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