

# Staying longer in your home - checklist



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 (including Seniors Information Service) and the South Australian Residential Parks Residents Association Inc. (SARPPRA) 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:

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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:

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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

My notes:

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:

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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:

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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:

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29. Are the power points are also placed at least 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:

In brief the seven core livable design features elements include:

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

### Useful resources

*Livable Housing Design Guidelines* – published by Livable Housing Australia ([www.livablehousingaustralia.org.au](http://www.livablehousingaustralia.org.au)), including design elements regarding access, entrance, internal doors and corridors, toilet, shower, internal stairways, kitchen and laundry space, bedroom, switches and power points, doors and tapware, living room space, window sills and flooring. The website also includes guidelines for National Disability Insurance Scheme Specialist Disability Accommodation.

*The South Australian Housing Trusts (SAHT) Design Guidelines for Sustainable Housing and Liveable Neighbourhoods* – all guides including for house, apartment and housing modification can be accessed from [www.housing.sa.gov.au/news-and-publications/housing-design-guidelines](http://www.housing.sa.gov.au/news-and-publications/housing-design-guidelines)

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