

## 8 must-have home modifications for seniors



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If you're considering making a few changes to your home that make life easier, you might be wondering what's involved and where to start.

Home modification is simply a blanket term for adjustments to your house that can help you live safely and independently at home.

They might involve small changes to fixtures and fittings, such as installing additional lighting to help you see better at night or swapping your doorknobs for lighter lever handles.

It might also involve larger, structural changes that enable you to navigate your home with more ease, such as a ramp for wheelchair access, a stairlift, or a walk-in shower.

The important thing to keep in mind about home modifications – whether they're big or small – is that they can be **subsidised by government aged care programs such as the Commonwealth Home Support Program or your Home Care Package**. You'll be asked to make a contribution, but it's unlikely you'll have to foot the entire bill yourself.

### What difference can home modifications make?



Home modifications can have a powerful impact on everyday living and consequently, your quality of life.

They can drastically reduce your risk of falling or injuring yourself at home, improve your accessibility, and help to make you feel more comfortable around the house.

Home modifications can also delay the need for residential care, meaning you're more likely to live independently at home for longer.

## **What are 8 must-have home modifications for seniors?**

Just as every person's home is unique, so too are their needs and requirements for modifications.

To give you an idea of what to expect, we've listed eight of the most popular home modifications that time and time again, older Australians have reported make a lasting impact on their everyday living.

### **1. Bathroom modifications**



The bathroom often poses a high falls risk if you struggle with mobility. Your allied health professional may have some useful suggestions on how to reduce this risk, for example:

- Grab rails next to the toilet and in the shower
- Non-slip flooring to avoid slipping on a wet floor
- Shower chairs or benches to provide stable seating while bathing.



## 2. Kitchen modifications

The kitchen is often where we complete many of our everyday tasks and it's important to make it a safe and comfortable environment. For example:

- Lever taps are often easier to turn on and off if you suffer from arthritis or limited hand strength.
- Your bench could be replaced to include an adjustable height feature if you have difficulty standing for long periods.

## 3. Access ramps



Internal and external ramps that replace stairs or thresholds can make it much easier to enter and move around the house if you use a walker or a wheelchair.

#### 4. Handrails and grab rails:



Grab rails can be added in hallways, near stairs, or in other key areas where extra support might be needed.

#### 5. Platform steps:

Platform steps are deeper than normal steps with reduced step heights, meaning that if you have a four-wheel walker, you can take each step at a time.

## 6. Stair and platform lifts



If the stairs in your home are posing a challenge, you don't have to consider moving house! A stairlift can be a great solution, helping you move between floors safely and without risk of falling. They are comfortable, easy to operate, and can be folded away for anyone else wanting to use the staircase.

## 7. Hand-held shower hoses

Flexible shower hoses can make bathing easier, especially for those with limited mobility.

## 8. Lighting solutions

As our bodies age, our vision often becomes impaired. Adequate lighting is one of the most important factors when it comes to ease of everyday living. Your allied health professional may suggest a few changes to your lighting set-up both in and outside of your house. For example:

- Motion-sensor lights in hallways and stairwells to reduce the risk of tripping



- Nightlights around the home to help you see your way in the dark
- Installing LED lights and accessible light switches to reduce energy usage and make them easier to reach.

### How do I pay for home modifications?



The Australian Government subsidises the bulk of both minor and major home modification costs for older people via two different funding streams:

1. **[The Commonwealth Home Support Program \(CHSP\)](#)**—This program is focused on ‘entry-level’ home care, aimed at people who need minimal or temporary support with just a few basic services, including home modifications.
2. **[The Home Care Packages program \(HCP\)](#)** - a wider range of home care services that includes four different levels of care depending on your needs and requirements. Home modifications can be included in your Home Care Package, no matter your level.

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Whichever stream you are eligible for, home modifications usually come as part of a package of home care services. You can learn more in our blog, [What can Home Care Packages be Used For?](#)

### How to apply for funding:

To find out if you qualify for either of these packages, the first step is to [apply for an assessment through My Aged Care](#), the government gateway for aged care services.

You can check your eligibility via the [My Aged Care eligibility checker](#) or by calling [My Aged Care](#) on 1800 200 422.

Once approved, you'll receive a list of service providers and recommendations on the modifications best suited to your home.

### How to find an approved home modifications supplier



After you have completed your [My Aged Care assessment](#), your assessor will recommend local suppliers to you. They can also contact them directly on your behalf, if you would prefer.



## BaptistCare Information Guides – BaptistCare at home

At BaptistCare, we not only provide a full suite of home modification services but also offer comprehensive assessments by a clinically trained allied health professional to help you determine which modifications might be useful for your particular situation.

We also offer a wide range of home care services, whether you have a Home Care Package or are part of the Commonwealth Home Support Program, including everyday household maintenance and repairs, and gardening.

### Home care services with BaptistCare

As [one of Australia's largest and most trusted providers](#) of home care services for seniors, BaptistCare has been delivering loving, respectful, and reliable care across NSW, ACT, and WA for more than 80 years.

If you would like to learn more about our services, our friendly team is here to help.

Please call 1300 275 227 (Monday to Friday, from 8:00am to 6:00pm) or email us at [ask@baptistcare.org.au](mailto:ask@baptistcare.org.au).