

Costs for Adapting a Home for Senior Living, Disabilities or an Illness.

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As one ages and becomes frailer, sustains a disability or develops a catastrophic illness the consideration falls to their care either by loved ones or caregivers.

Statistics show that most people would do almost anything reasonable to avoid moving from the comfort of their home yet in many cases their homes are not adapted to accommodate their current and changing needs. The question arises as to what is necessary and the associated costs to make the modifications to enable an individual to continue living safely and as independently as possible in their homes.

The answer depends on what and how much is done and each case is different. Allow me to address some typical adaptations and their associated costs.

The very basic modifications may involve additional hand railings, [grab bars](#) & improved lighting which may cost in the \$300 to \$1500 range based on the extent of work being done.

Considerations for entering and leaving the home or accessing a second level may be part of the evaluation. Simple options for entry and exit can be obtained by trip-free thresholds, access ramps & improved hardware which might cost in the range of \$1500 to \$3500 once again based on the extent of the work. An [automatic door opener](#) that converts a regular door into an automatic door at the push of a button can add an additional \$1300-\$2000 based on availability of electricity and type of automatic opener selected. More involved options such as stair chairs, platform lifts and even elevators can cost as little as \$4000 and as much as \$70,000 depending on the equipment selected.

Bathroom modifications can be as simple as installing comfort height toilets with well placed grab bars, lever type or motion activated faucets and knee space at a sink. Costs for these modifications may range from \$1000 to \$3000.

Bathrooms however tend to be the most important consideration both for the dignity and independence of the user as well as for prevention of injuries to caregivers and loved one's taking care of the person. Entering and leaving the bathing zone becomes a major consideration. In this case [walk in showers](#) with no curb that allow for easy walker or wheelchair access are great additions. There are several manufacturers offering multi piece units that work well in a remodel and when complete eliminate the obstacles encountered when entering or leaving a curbed shower or stepping over a bathtub. A typical cost for supply and installation of this type of unit will be \$7-\$10,000. An option also exists to create a handicapped shower with tile or stone, which while offering an upgraded look is considerably, more time consuming and costly. One can expect to spend in the range of \$15-\$25,000 based on the level of finishes selected and the size of the project.

For those who still prefer to soak in a bathtub the popular [walkin bathtubs](#) may be a great addition. These bathtubs include an in-swing door & only require stepping over a 5-7" curb. They allow the user to soak in warm water and utilize the optional air jets for possible pain

reduction therapy as a result of the oxygenation of the water. For those unable to step over a curb a [handicapped bathtub](#) may be the answer. These units include an out-swing door allowing for either a lateral transfer from a wheelchair or where necessary manual assistance from a caregiver. The cost to supply and install both of these types of units range from \$10 to \$20,000.

Finally one should consider hiring a [universal design](#) specialists who will provide all the recommendations and solutions available to the specific individual, which may also include a handicap bathroom, design should this be necessary. Consultations typically span the \$300-\$500 range and if plans are necessary an additional \$2000-\$5000 is likely based on how much work is being undertaken.

Regardless of the level of barrier free modification necessary it is possible and usually a lot less costly for an individual to remain safely in the home that they love and know rather than moving into an assisted living facility.