



ADDITION BUILDING DESIGN, INC

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FEATURES

Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

Everyone can use universal design! It doesn't matter if you are young or old. You could be short or tall, healthy or ill. You might have a disability. Or you may be a prize-winning athlete. Because of universal design, people who are very different can all enjoy the same home. And that home will be there for all its inhabitants even when their needs change. Take a look here for some of the more common universal design features that are also incorporated into aging-in-place remodels as well as design features that just make good sense.

Universal design features that are also incorporated into aging-in-place remodels:

No-step Entry

No one needs to use stairs to get into a universal home or into the home's main rooms.

Single -story living

Places to eat, use the bathroom, and sleep are all located on one level, which is barrier free.

Wide doorways

(32 to 36 inches wide) let wheelchairs pas through. Let wheelchairs pass through. They also make it easy to move big things in and out of the house.

Wide hallways

Hallways should be 36 to 42 inches wide. That way, everyone and everything moves more easily from room to room.

Extra floor space

Everyone feels less cramped, and people in wheelchairs have more space to turn.

Some UD features just make sense. Once you bring them into your home, you'll wonder how you ever lived without them. For example:

Floors and bathtubs with nonslip surfaces

help everyone stay on their feet, not just those who are frail. The same goes for handrails on steps and grab bars in bathrooms.

Thresholds that are flush with the floor

make it easy for a wheelchair to get through a doorway. They also keep others from tripping.

Good lighting helps people who have poor vision

and it helps everyone else see better, too.

Lever door handles and rocker light switches

are great for people with poor hand strength, but others like them as well. Try using these devices when your arms are full of packages. You'll never go back to knobs or standard switches.

Working Better Together:

While sustainable building projects do a great job of conserving energy, utilizing eco-friendly materials and reducing their environmental footprint, many have not tapped their full potential of even greater efficiencies and achieving a higher-quality built environment.

The key to making good projects great is an integrated sustainable projects delivery process in which all the players—including the building owner, end user, maintenance staff, architects, engineers and contractors—are at the table from the projects' onset, and the greatest pooling of expertise, insights and ideas can occur.

"Design by committee is a very good thing," explains Glenn Carels, FAIA, design principal, LPA Inc., Irvine, Calif. "Before this process was proven, people thought that integrated project delivery involved a lot of compromise, but in reality it's a way to problem solve and to do so more holistically. Ultimately, we work better together than separately."