STAYING IN THE HOME YOU LOVE



A Planning Guide for Living Safely, Comfortably & Independently

Thoughtful planning today can help your home continue to support the life you want for years to come.

SAFETY · COMFORT · CHOICE · INDEPENDENCE · PEACE OF MIND

Prepared by Makeba Stallings
Broker Associate | Coldwell Banker Realty

Your Trusted Partner in Life's Transitions

Home Should Continue to Work for You

Planning ahead is not about expecting the worst. It is about preserving comfort, choice and independence.



For many homeowners, the goal is not finding another home. It is continuing to enjoy the one filled with familiar routines, meaningful memories and a strong sense of belonging.

This guide will help you:

1. Recognize simple ways to make daily living safer and easier.
2. Identify improvements that may support long-term independence.
3. Think about how your home could adapt if your needs change.
4. Start useful conversations before decisions become urgent.

A helpful plan can begin with one question: "What would make this home easier to live in five or ten years from now?"

Why Planning Ahead Matters

Small changes made before they are needed often provide the greatest flexibility.

SAFETY

Reduce avoidable risks by improving lighting, pathways and frequently used spaces.

COMFORT

Make everyday tasks easier so your home continues to feel supportive rather than demanding.

CHOICE

Give yourself more time to compare options instead of making decisions during a crisis.

PEACE OF MIND

Help family members understand your wishes and feel more prepared to support them.

1 NOTICE

2 DISCUSS

3 PRIORITIZE

4 ACT

You do not need to complete everything at once. Begin with the changes that improve everyday life now and create flexibility for later.

Is Your Home Working for You?

Use this quick check-in to notice areas that may deserve attention.

CAN YOU COMFORTABLY...

- [ ] Walk through rooms without navigating clutter or loose rugs?
- [ ] Go up and down steps while holding a secure handrail?
- [ ] Enter and exit the shower or bathtub comfortably?
- [ ] Reach frequently used items without climbing or overreaching?
- [ ] See hallways, entries and stairways clearly at night?
- [ ] Carry laundry, groceries or household items safely?
- [ ] Enter and leave the home without uneven surfaces or difficult steps?
- [ ] Keep up with routine maintenance, yardwork and repairs?

A “not always” answer does not necessarily mean a major renovation is needed. It may point to one practical improvement worth exploring.

Small Changes Can Make a Big Difference

Many helpful improvements are simple, affordable and useful at any age.

LIGHTING

- Use brighter, even lighting in frequently used rooms.
- Add night lights along the path from the bedroom to the bathroom.
- Improve lighting at entries, steps and exterior walkways.

PATHWAYS

- Remove clutter from halls and high-traffic areas.
- Secure or remove loose rugs and curled carpet edges.
- Keep electrical cords away from walking paths.

BATHROOM

- Use non-slip mats or surfaces.
- Consider secure grab bars near the toilet and bathing area.
- Add a handheld shower head or stable shower seat when helpful.

EVERYDAY REACH

- Store frequently used items between waist and shoulder height.
- Use lever-style handles instead of round knobs.
- Choose sturdy seating with supportive armrests.

Plan for the Home You May Need Later

The goal is not to predict every possibility. It is to preserve options.

Could your home adapt if stairs became difficult, mobility changed or everyday maintenance became more demanding?

ONE-LEVEL LIVING	Could a bedroom, bathroom and daily living space be available on one floor?
EASIER ENTRY	Is there an entrance that could become step-free or easier to navigate?
FLEXIBLE BATHROOM	Could the bathing area accommodate a low-threshold shower, seat or secure supports?
SMART SUPPORT	Would automated lighting, video doorbells or emergency response tools add convenience?
LOWER MAINTENANCE	Which repairs, landscaping tasks or systems may become burdensome over time?

Some improvements can be completed gradually. Others may simply be noted as future possibilities.

A Conversation Worth Having

Clear conversations can help families support the homeowner's wishes rather than make assumptions.

- What do you value most about staying in this home?
- Which parts of daily living already feel more difficult than they used to?
- What changes would make the home easier to use right now?
- Would the home still work after a temporary injury or recovery period?
- Who should be included in future planning conversations?
- What financial or maintenance responsibilities should be reviewed?

Start with curiosity, not pressure. The goal is to understand what matters most and identify choices that support it.

Helpful People and Resources

The right advice depends on the question. These professionals and organizations may be useful starting points.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST	Evaluates how a person functions in the home and may recommend practical safety or accessibility changes.
PHYSICAL THERAPIST	Helps with strength, balance, mobility and the safe use of canes, walkers or other supports.
QUALIFIED CONTRACTOR	Assesses the feasibility, cost, permits and construction requirements for modifications.
FINANCIAL & LEGAL ADVISORS	Help review budgets, insurance, estate planning and other decisions connected to long-term housing goals.

National Resources

- AARP HomeFit and Livable Communities
- National Institute on Aging
- National Council on Aging
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Meals on Wheels America
- National Directory of Home Modification and Repair Resources

Your Simple Home Planning Worksheet

Use this page to turn observations into a manageable plan.

AREA	WHAT I NOTICED	POSSIBLE NEXT STEP	PRIORITY
Entry / Exterior			Low Med High
Lighting			Low Med High
Bathroom			Low Med High
Kitchen			Low Med High
Bedroom			Low Med High
Stairs / Hallways			Low Med High
Maintenance			Low Med High
Other			Low Med High

Begin with one or two priorities. A useful plan should feel clear and manageable, not overwhelming.

HOME SHOULD CONTINUE TO WORK FOR YOU.

Whether you plan to stay for many years or are simply beginning to think ahead, thoughtful planning can provide greater comfort, confidence and peace of mind.

Every homeowner's situation is unique. If you would like to talk through your home, your options or the decisions ahead, I am happy to be a resource.

MAKEBA STALLINGS

Broker Associate | Coldwell Banker Realty
DRE #01332672
Info@homesbymakeba.com
www.lahomesandestates.com
Phone: 323-481-6156

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