



## ***MAKE YOUR HOME SAFER IN 10 EASY AND INEXPENSIVE STEPS***

Have you noticed that you are not getting any younger? You need more light? Climbing stairs can be more of a challenge?

A 30-year old needs more light than a 15-year old. It doesn't get any better as we get older. Most of us want to stay in our homes. AARP, the association for folks 50 and older, has a very good 10-step list of things we can do to make our homes safer. Many of these things are easy, DIY projects, and most of the materials can be purchased at the local hardware store.

I decided that the AARP list was so good that I wanted to share it with you. I priced out most of the items on the list at Home Depot to give you a general idea of the costs involved.

- 1) Install handrails on both sides of all steps inside and out. Home Depot has some inexpensive black aluminum railing systems starting at \$9.98 for a 4-foot by 4-foot section. Newel posts start at \$7.97. Personally, I would call a fencing company or a company that specializes in wrought iron such as Arky's Welding & Iron Works, (586)791-5640, for exterior handrail installation. Find a good carpenter or handyman for interior handrails.
- 2) Secure all carpets and area rugs with double-sided tape. Duck brand two-sided interior tape costs \$8.78 for a 75-foot roll.
- 3) Install easy-to-grasp handles for drawers and cabinet doors. Home Depot has a huge selection from \$2.49 to \$6.47.
- 4) Use brighter bulbs in all settings. Upgrading bulbs can be tricky because it is unsafe to put a 100-watt bulb into a fixture rated for 60 to 70 watts. However, you can upgrade to 100-watt equivalent spiral fluorescent bulbs. They give 100 watts of light but only use 23 watts of energy. The Home Depot price for the n:vision 100-watt equivalent was \$5.97. The 120-watt equivalent was \$8.97. This is expensive for light bulbs, but they last three to seven times longer than incandescent bulbs. You wind up saving more than \$20 per bulb in electricity. You may have to change some shades because the spiral fluorescent bulbs are bigger. If you want to learn more, go to [www.wattbusters.com](http://www.wattbusters.com).
- 5) Install nightlights in all areas of night activity. Amervelle automatic 7-watt night lights cost \$4.19 if you shop around, you can find multilight packs a lot cheaper. Make sure you have a row of night lights leading you from the bed to the bathroom and from the bedroom to the nearest exit in case of emergency.
- 6) Add reflective, non-slip tape on all non-carpeted stairs. HD has 3M Reflective Tread priced at \$5.97 per 2-foot tread.
- 7) Install lever handles for all doors. Schlage lever handle entry door handles were \$69.97 a set. Hall and closet handles were \$34.97. Baldwin Entry Way Lever handles were \$74.98.
- 8) Place a bench near entrances for setting down purchases and resting. These can go anywhere from \$50 to \$1,000 at a furniture store. You can go garage sale hopping and get something that is surprisingly good for less than \$20. The nice thing about that is you don't have to worry about leaving it out in the weather. When a garage sale bench starts looking bad, slap on a coat of paint or go garage sale shopping again and replace it. Rubbermaid makes heavy-duty plastic storage benches that are for outdoor use. You can get them in the \$100 range every spring.

9) Install closet lights, as well as adjustable rods and shelves. A two-pack of battery powered Moon Lights cost \$3.97. No wiring. Stick them anywhere. Tap on, tap off. The jingle almost drove me crazy a few years back, but they really work. An Amervelle battery-powered mini fluorescent utility light that would be perfect for under cabinets on a closet wall costs \$7.97. Screws on, no wiring.

Every store has wire or wood shelving kits, or you can call in a specialist to completely redesign your closets and give you double the room. You can start by making adjustable closet shelving for less than \$100, or go whole hog and spend thousands.

10) Install rocker light switches (consider illuminated ones in select areas). Leviton Decora touch rockers cost \$19.97 each. This is as easy DIY project, but calling in an electrician can save a lot of time. A Leviton Decora 150 degree Motion Detector only costs \$14.97, and you never need worry going into a dark room.

All 10 items on the AARP list are readily affordable and doable. You don't have to do all of them at one time, so they can be worked into most budgets. Besides, Christmas is coming. If the kids ask what you want, give them the list and let them start to work.

If you are still young, the list will not only make your home better, it makes a great "to do" list of the things you can do for your folks and older friends and relatives. They'll not only brag about it, they'll bless you for it. And that will be a great feeling this time of year.