

## AGING MATTERS: Home Modifications



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It's no secret that the majority of us will need some kind of assistance as we age. Imagine returning home from the hospital for recovery after being treated for a stroke. With limited mobility, you may find that the world you have become so accustomed to over the years now has many new obstacles to overcome.

Across South Carolina, there are numerous individuals and families who have made significant adjustments to cope with activities associated with daily living. Sometimes, home modification is a viable alternative to more costly types of care. Most of these modifications include minor adjustments to a residence, allowing seniors and people with disabilities to remain in their homes with increased levels of accessibility, mobility, and safety.

While some large-scale modifications can be pricey, many of the less expensive "quick fixes" take little time, yet provide years of added convenience. These modifications may include: installing bathroom grab bars; entry / exit ramps; an elevated toilet; or use of Assistive Technology equipment. There are a number of resources available across our state that provide help:

- **South Carolina Assistive Technology Program** – Links interested parties with many resources for home modifications. Also offers a short-term device loan program (two weeks to one month period) to let consumers try Assistive Technology options before making a permanent purchase. [www.sc.edu/scatp](http://www.sc.edu/scatp) or 1-800-915-4522
- **Equipment Exchange / Reuse** – A database that lists unused Assistive Technology equipment that is available for use by others who need it. [www.scatpexchange.net](http://www.scatpexchange.net)
- **South Carolina Equipment Distribution Program** – A free program that provides telecommunications equipment to South Carolina residents with qualifying hearing, speech, vision loss, or dual sensory disabilities. [www.scedp.org](http://www.scedp.org) or 1-877-225-8337
- **South Carolina Statewide Independent Living Council** – A non-profit organization that supports Centers for Independent Living across the state. [www.scsilc.com](http://www.scsilc.com) or 1-800-994-4322
- **Vocational Rehabilitation** – A state agency that can pay for Assistive Technology equipment for individuals with mental or physical disabilities who qualify. [www.scvrd.net](http://www.scvrd.net) or 1-800-832-7526
- **Veterans Administration (VA)** – Eligible veterans or their dependents may be able to receive funding for devices or Assistive Technology. [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) or 1-800-827-1000
- **AbleData** – An online resource that highlights companies and the types of equipment they offer, categorized by need. [www.abledata.com](http://www.abledata.com)
- **SC Access** – An online database that lists modification services and resources available in communities across South Carolina. [www.scaccesshelp.org](http://www.scaccesshelp.org)
- **Homemods.org** – A website with information on home modification and supportive housing resources. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section enables users to access a checklist to assess safety concerns in their own home.

**Question of the Week:**

**Q:)** My wife and I are thinking about remodeling our home once we're both retired. Do you have any advice or suggestions?

**A:)** If you're close to retirement age and are considering remodeling your home, you might want to think about making modifications (such as widening existing door frames to allow a wheel chair to pass through or installing a walk-in shower) to your home now rather than later. Be sure to talk with a contractor beforehand to discuss your plans.

*For more information, contact the SC Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging  
(803-734-9900 or 800-868-9095) or visit [www.aging.sc.gov](http://www.aging.sc.gov).*