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## Bathroom safety tips for seniors



Certain senior citizens with mobility problems when exiting the bathtub may run the avoidable risk of slips in the bathroom. One recommended precaution that minimizes the risk of injury for elderly loved ones would be to redesign the bathroom to include supportive, preventive safety features.

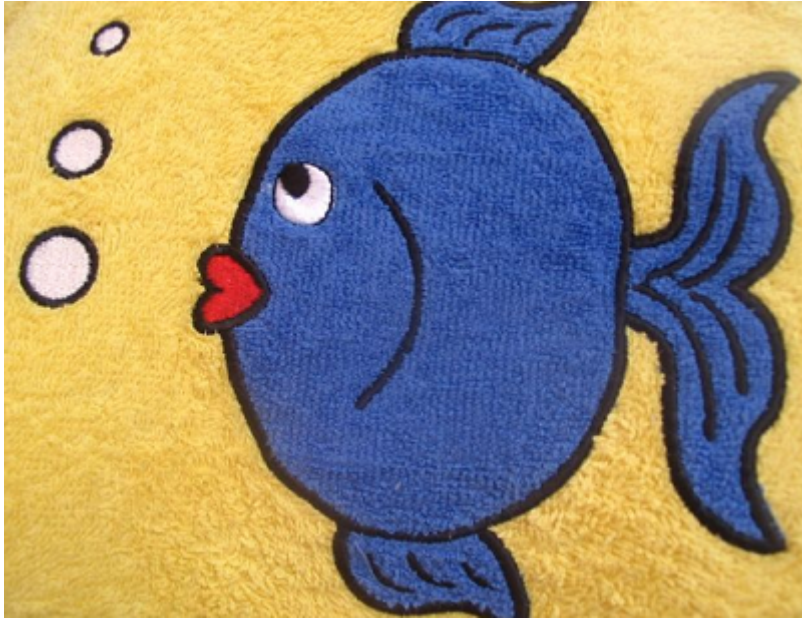


It's alarming to learn that of all the rooms in the home, the one that is the most accident and injury prone is the bathroom. Adding safety features in the bathroom that assist elderly family members with mobility problems and balance challenges is a precautionary measure that makes some sense. Lets discuss ways to make the bathroom safer for our elderly loved ones:

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Bathroom floors are likely to get wet and slippery. Non-skid bath rugs for bathroom floors are one way to prevent slipping.



Replacing the bathroom floor? Rubber flooring is a smart choice for those homeowners concerned about senior safety. Other bathroom surface materials that are safe for seniors include sheet vinyl flooring, slip-resistant vinyl tiles, and more.

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Lighting is important. Consider buying bright bulbs, ideally indirect light, as many seniors have a sensitivity to bright light. Consider installing a nightlight in the room that senses when the room gets dark or when the person enters into the room.



Bathing is critical. Buy a rubber suction-grip mat or apply adhesive nonskid tape to the surface of the tub or shower floor. Something else: Hire a carpenter to install grab bars placed in and around the tub or shower for support exiting the bath. Bathtubs with shower curtains should include ones that are screw or bolt-mounted, instead of a tension-mounted rod that spring loose easily if someone were to lose their balance and grab onto the curtain rod. Bathtub chairs are available for those people who prefer to bathe from a seated position. Handheld, adjustable-height showerheads may be installed for seniors to make chair bathing easier.



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Budget permitting, install a curbless shower or a walk-in bathtub with no thresholds to worry about seniors stepping over; they are available with features like built-in seat, grab bars, slip resistant floors and an adjustable handheld showerhead. Walk-in tubs are installed with a door in front that provides seniors a much lower threshold to step over than regular tubs.



Walk-in tubs are like indoor hot tubs with built-in seat, handrails and a slip resistant bottom, plus therapeutic features such as whirlpool water jets and or bubble massage air jets. Some curb-less showers and walk-in-tubs

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may be affordable whereas others are pricey. Prices range from \$2,500.00 to \$10,000.00 (installed).



Toilets may be problematic for seniors, as the average seat sits 15 inches off the ground. Those suffering from arthritis, back problems, hip issues and knee pain find low seated toilets troublesome. Raised toilet seats that clamp onto the toilet present a welcome solution to low seated toilets. Toilet safety rails that sit on each side for support are useful for seniors. There is another option: install an ADA compliant comfort height toilet, seated higher than average (~ 16-19 inches high).



Faucets with twist handles on the sink, the bathtub and the shower faucet may be especially difficult to use for seniors, which are replaceable with lever faucets. Other faucets are available: There are touch, motion and digital smart faucets each of which are easier to operate for seniors with hand arthritis and gripping issues. Lower the hot water temperature to 120 degrees, as 130 degrees is scalding.

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Bathroom entrances could be widened to accommodate a walker or wheelchair. Doing so may be an inexpensive solution. Try installing swing clear offset hinges on the door which will expand the doorway an extra two inches to the entranceway.

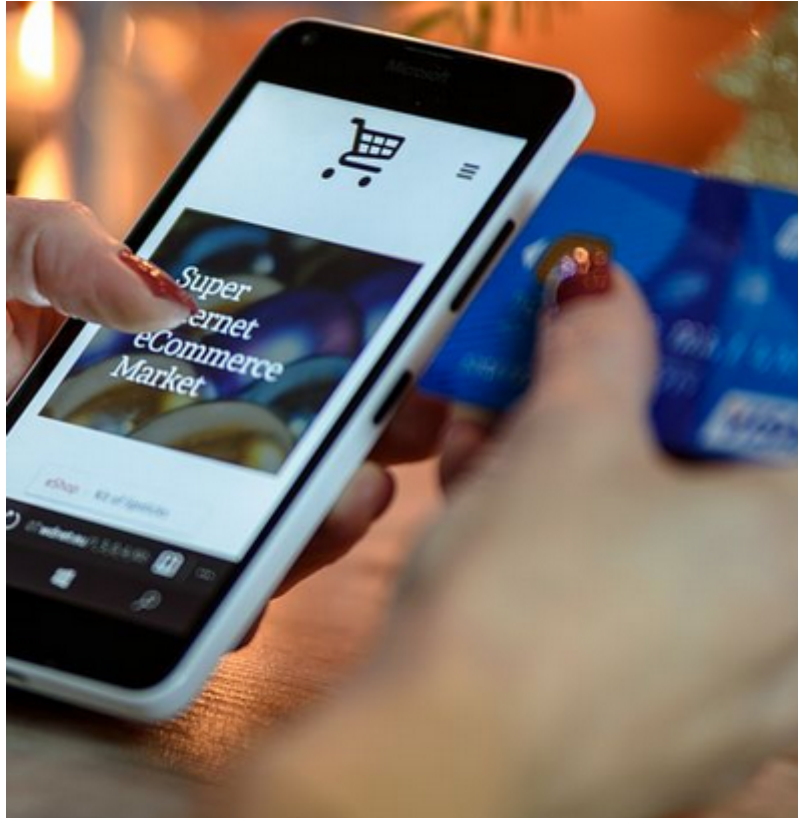


Accidents happen despite such precautions. To account for such emergencies, buy a voice-enabled medical alert system such as Get Safe. The bathroom device lets seniors call for help by a voice command, pushing a button or pulling a cord.

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All of the above products are available at medical supply stores, pharmacies, big-box stores, home-improvement stores, hardware and plumbing supply stores. If you are concerned about social distancing, you can also purchase these online.

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## Flooring Updates





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