

PREPARING YOUR HOME

Making Your Home Accessible After Surgery

There are several things to consider when preparing your home for your return from the hospital.

Home Entrance

Choose the entrance with the shortest route—with the fewest steps—to the main living area

If you have steps into your house, consider installing a firm handrail on either or both sides

- Ensure that lighting is adequate
- Clear a path from the passenger side of your vehicle to the entrance you've chosen

Bathroom Needs

If you have a toilet seat with a low height, use a raised commode seat for comfort or to keep your hip from bending too far when sitting if instructed to avoid this bending by your surgical team

Handrails or grab bars can make getting on and off the commode easier

Your physical or occupational therapist can help determine the best location of these in a preoperative home safety visit

- Having a bedside commode may be a helpful choice
- Grab bars can help with accessing your bathtub or shower
- A tub or shower bench can offer additional safety and comfort

Shelves and Cupboards

You may have bending limitations placed on you after your surgery. If you do, arrange your shelves and cupboards with frequently used items at waist to shoulder height. For lighter items that are on lower shelves, be sure to have help or special tools handy to keep you from bending over at the hips.

Furniture Height

A good rule of thumb is to have a seat height that is at least 20 inches above the floor. If you have bending limitations placed on you, then you need to be careful sitting in your furniture at home. If you sit down and your knees are above your hips, the seat is too low. If that's the case, consider using a platform under the seat or couch to raise it to the desired height. Using 4 x 4 blocks may be helpful, but ensure that the chair or couch is stable when placed on them.

Preparing Floors, Doors, and Hallways

- Remove throw rugs
- Consider rerouting any electrical cords that might be a hazard
- Remove doors that are either too narrow for your walker to fit through or that are heavy and hard to swing open, especially if they separate a frequently used walkway

Lighting

Finally, be sure you have good lighting. Overhead and night lighting will be helpful, especially if you need to be up and about at night or at other times of low light.