



Universal Design can Make Life at Home More Enjoyable

Universal Design (UD) describes an environment that can be created to not only be aesthetically pleasing, but usable for people of all ages and abilities. Statistics from the Administration on Aging (AoA) predict that by the year 2050, there will be an estimated 88.5 million Americans over the age of 65. They also predict that UD principles will be in demand for new and remodeled homes. Additionally UD can provide lifelong designs for short term and long term needs, style, safety; and, function, especially for the Age Wave of Boomers.

The principles of UD are:

- Design that is useful and marketable to a diverse population with various abilities.
- Intuitive use for easy to understand design regardless of experience, knowledge level, language and concentration ability.
- Design that minimizes hazards and reduces episodes of unintended actions.
- Design that are efficient and can be used comfortably with minimal fatigue.
- Design that provide for each, manipulation and use regardless of the users body size, posture or mobility.

Along with the application of UD remodelers, occupational therapists are collaborating with them to include their assessments of those who have fallen and will be returning to their homes. This collaborative effort helps homeowners gain independence and safety, and enhances their overall quality of life. Adding an experienced occupational therapist to the UD team adds a personal client-centered point of view and gives the remodelers insight to their client's abilities and desires.