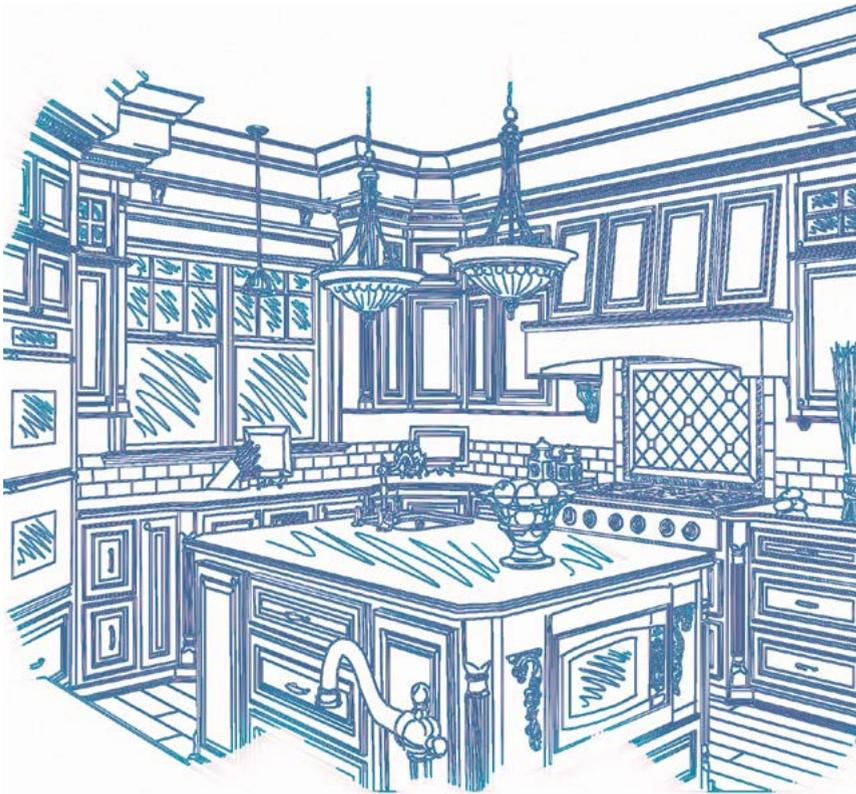


ASK GENIE

By Genie Nowicki, Harrell-Remodeling



- Appliances that are easy to access and clean and safer to use (e.g., Induction Cooktop, Microwave at a safe and comfortable height)
- Storage that is convenient and accessible (roll-outs, drawers, etc.)
- Aisles and clearances that are safe
- Counter tops at varying heights to provide options for more comfortable use
- Storage that is easily reached

Q: I'm diabetic and losing feeling in my feet and having trouble with my eyesight. What can I do to make my bathroom safer?

A: First, I would suggest that you talk with an Occupational Therapist for specific suggestions for your condition as best solutions can vary. Designers who specialize in Universal Design often consult with Occupational Therapists. In general, for diminished eyesight excellent lighting is a must and defining the edges of steps, flooring transitions and even tables with high contrast colors is very helpful. Textured tile on a floor can be helpful for those with limited feeling in their feet. And if balance is a concern grab bars and handrails are very helpful.

Genie Nowicki is a senior designer at Harrell-Remodeling in Palo Alto, CA. Her design certifications include CAPS, CKD, CBD and CID. For more information about Harrell-Remodeling, go to Harrell-Remodeling.com. 650.230.2900.

Q: What exactly is "Aging in Place?"

A: The concept of Aging in Place is creating a home that is safe, comfortable, user friendly and accessible for occupants of all ages and abilities. The goal is to provide a space that will allow you to stay in your home as long as you choose to and allow friends and relatives to visit.

Q: What are three things I can do to make my home safer as I age?

A: Falls are a major safety concern so here are three suggestions:

- Remove tripping hazards (rugs, cords, clutter)
- Install grab bars and hand rails (in bathrooms and other areas)
- Install better lighting

Also consider options to stairs on the exterior; provide good lighting and lighted house numbers at the front porch; add handrails on exterior and interior stairs; install night lights to light the floor/pathways; and add Lever door handles for ease of use.

Q: If I am remodeling my kitchen to Age in Place, what should I ask my designer?

A: Talk with your Designer about their experience in Universal Design and/or for Aging in Place. Designers who specialize in these areas have credentials such as CAPS and UDCP (from NARI and NAHB, respectively). Here are some specifics to discuss with them: