



## Seniors vote for independence

Based on recent surveys, seventy-five percent of older adults say they'd like to stay in their own homes for the rest of their lives.<sup>1</sup> February is "Senior Independence Awareness Month." So this seems like the perfect time to find ways to try and make this wish come true.

### Aging in a safe place

It's no surprise that people want to age at home. That's where they can enjoy comfort and independence in familiar surroundings.

However, people change as they age. There are adjustments they may need to make to their living space so it's safe and secure. Here are some examples:

- **Lighten up.** To adapt to possible vision changes, keep all areas of the home well lit. This is particularly true for stairways. Brighter areas are more appealing and safer, too.
- **Clear the clutter.** Falls can lead to injuries. Those injuries often result in loss of mobility and independence. To help avoid falls, make sure rooms, hallways and steps, in particular, are free of small and large obstacles.

- **Keep it in reach.** Getting on a step stool to reach something on a high shelf might be a cinch for young people. But as folks age, it's safer and more sensible to keep everyday items within easy reach. This includes food, dishes, medicines, sheets, blankets and other things they use often.
  - **Stay put.** Throw rugs can be slippery and lead to accidents. Simply remove these rugs or use two-sided tape to secure them to the floor.
  - **Hold on.** Install grab bars in areas like the bathtub and shower for extra support and to help avoid falls.
- These are just a few ideas for making home a safer environment. It also helps if adults try to stay fit and limber as they age.

Seniors should do daily exercise like walks, stretches and simple strength training. All of these are proactive steps to help ensure adults can live as independently as possible in their later years.

<sup>1</sup>[www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org)

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