



Report Compliments of **Homes and Lifestyles of Colorado** - *Finding Your Place Called Home*

Denver Office: <http://www.DenverHomeLiving.com> - (303) 816-9199 Office

## Top Ten Home Improvements for Seniors



According to an AARP survey (May, 2000), the overwhelming majority of mid-life and older Americans want to remain living independently in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. The new survey found that seven in ten of those who are able to make changes to their homes have made at least one modification to make it easier for them to get around. Two thirds of those who made home modifications believe those improvements will allow them to live in their homes longer than they would have been able otherwise, most for another ten years or more. The survey is the fifth in a series of AARP senior housing studies. Based on telephone interviews of 2,000 persons aged 45 and over, it examines the opinions and behavior of mid-life and older Americans regarding their current and future housing situations.

Eighty five percent of those polled said they have already made simple changes to their homes, such as placing non-skid strips in bathtubs or safety bars in showers and handrails on both side of the stairwells. The reasons most often cited by respondents for not making home improvements were the inability to make the changes themselves (37%) and not being able to afford the modifications (37%). HUD's HECM program (Reverse Mortgage) can turn the built-up wealth in your home to cash without having to move or repay a loan each month. Financing needed home repairs or improvements is one of the many good uses for funds received from a HECM.

The top 10 home improvements reported were:

1. Levered doorknobs.
2. Grab bars in bathrooms.
3. Levered faucets in kitchen sinks.
4. Handrails on both sides of stairwells and on front and rear steps.
5. Grab bars in showers; removal of any door threshold.
6. Movable shower heads for those who must sit.
7. Portable shower seats.
8. A bathroom with a bath/shower as well as a bedroom on the first floor.
9. Widened doors to accommodate wheelchairs.
10. Ramps for those using walkers and wheelchairs.

Seniors spend billions of dollars each year on home improvements. If you are planning on making repairs or improvements to your home it is important to know how to pick the best contractor, and choose the financing that's right for you. AARP has developed extensive resources on home modifications, to obtain this information visit AARP.

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