

The 10-Year Home Readiness Checklist

A calm, room-by-room guide for identifying what works today, what deserves attention, and what can wait.

Use this checklist three ways

Walk through the home slowly. Mark anything that creates friction today. Then sort each item into Now, Soon, or Later—without assuming every observation requires a project.

Before you begin

Think about the people who use the home today, guests who visit regularly, and changes that could affect daily routines over the next decade. Temporary injuries and recovery periods are useful tests of how adaptable a home may be.

NOW

Current friction, safety concerns, or easy improvements.

SOON

Items to coordinate with maintenance or planned renovations.

LATER

Options to preserve and revisit before they become urgent.

Arrival and entry

Consider the route from the car or sidewalk through the door—not only the doorway itself.

■ A commonly used entrance can be reached without steep or unstable steps.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Walkways are even, well lit, and wide enough for comfortable passage.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ There is a stable place to pause, set down packages, or unlock the door.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Thresholds are easy to see and cross.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Door hardware, locks, and lighting are simple to operate.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ A future lower-step or step-free route could be created if needed.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■

Circulation and stairs

Look at the paths used every day, including turns, transitions, and places where furniture narrows movement.

■ Halls and frequently used routes remain clear and comfortable.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Flooring transitions are secure and easy to see.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Stairs have consistent lighting and stable handholds.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Frequently used rooms can be reached without unnecessary level changes.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Furniture placement supports movement without creating obstacles.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ There is a workable plan if stairs become temporarily difficult.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■

Lighting and visibility

Good lighting supports comfort, balance, and confidence throughout the home.

■ Entries, stairs, halls, bathrooms, and work surfaces are evenly lit.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Switches are conveniently located at room entries and both ends of stairs.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Glare and deep shadows are minimized.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Nighttime routes to the bathroom and kitchen can be illuminated easily.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Controls, edges, and changes in level are visually distinct.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■

Bathrooms

Bathrooms often deserve early planning because small dimensions and fixed plumbing can limit future options.

■ The primary bathroom is comfortable to enter, turn within, and use.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ The shower or tub can be entered without a difficult step or unstable motion.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ There are secure handholds where balance may be needed.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ The floor is slip resistant and remains manageable when wet.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Lighting is bright without harsh glare.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Walls and layout could support future assistance or added support features.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ At least one usable bathroom is available on the main living level.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■

Kitchen and everyday storage

Focus on frequently repeated tasks rather than redesigning around every possible limitation.

■ Everyday dishes, food, and appliances are easy to reach.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ There is a comfortable work surface that can be used while seated if desired.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Traffic routes do not conflict with open appliance doors.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Lighting clearly covers counters, cooking areas, and sinks.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Controls and handles are easy to see and operate.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Heavy or frequently used items do not require difficult lifting or reaching.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■

Bedroom and first-floor living

A flexible home has a realistic way to support essential daily living on one level.

■ A suitable sleeping space is available—or could be created—on the main level.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ The route between bedroom and bathroom is short, clear, and well lit.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Closet and storage areas are practical to access.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Doors and furniture placement leave comfortable circulation space.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ The room could accommodate temporary recovery needs or occasional assistance.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■

Technology, communication, and security

Simple systems can support independence when they are reliable and easy to use.

■ Smoke and carbon-monoxide alarms are current and easy to monitor.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ The home has dependable cellular or internet coverage where needed.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Door, lighting, temperature, and security controls are understandable.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Important contacts and home information are organized and accessible.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ A trusted person could gain access during an emergency.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Technology choices remain useful without requiring complicated routines.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■

Maintenance and outside areas

A home that is physically usable may still become burdensome if upkeep is difficult to manage.

■ Routine exterior and yard maintenance is realistic for the household.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Utilities, filters, panels, and shutoffs are accessible and clearly labeled.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Laundry is located conveniently and does not require difficult carrying.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ Outdoor seating and gathering areas are comfortable to reach.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■
■ A plan exists for tasks that may eventually require outside help.	Now ■ Soon ■ Later ■

Your three priority observations

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Turn observations into a practical roadmap

The purpose of this checklist is not to diagnose a home or prescribe construction. It is to help you identify patterns, organize questions, and decide what deserves a closer look.

1. Start with current friction

Address items that already make the home uncomfortable, difficult to use, or harder to maintain.

2. Coordinate with planned work

If a bathroom, kitchen, entry, floor, or major system is already being updated, consider long-term usability before work begins.

3. Preserve future options

Identify structural or layout constraints early enough that you can compare renovation, adaptation, and relocation choices calmly.

4. Involve the right professionals

Contractors and appropriately licensed professionals should evaluate feasibility, dimensions, code requirements, permits, pricing, and construction.

Ready for an independent conversation?

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