MS Home Adaptations to Consider

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MS Home Adaptations to Keep You Safe

Medication and rehabilitation are important parts of an MS treatment plan, but they don't address the small challenges in everyday life. Most people with multiple sclerosis will need to adjust their homes to stay happy and injury-free, which means adapting the placement and design of everyday household items to conserve energy, limit muscle strain, and simplify movement. Now it's time we dive into ms home adaptations.

The sooner you can implement some clever adjustments, the sooner you can diminish your risk for pain and injury.

Most Helpful Accessories for the Home

Some small accessories can have a big impact on fatigue and ease of movement, which means they can help to prevent injury. Many people with multiple sclerosis find that these tools are vital for a more comfortable and independent home life:

- **Grab bars –** By the toilet, in the shower or bathtub, and along the kitchen counter are popular places to install these simple devices that can make repeated movements a lot easier. Since they're so versatile, consider putting them in other areas of the house, too: think about where you tend to spend most of your time and decide whether a grab bar might be a good addition to that space.
- **Reaching devices –** Standing up repeatedly can be a painful chore, and climbing up on a stool is often out of the question. There are plenty of devices that are designed to reach, grab and hold things, and with a bit of practice, you'll find that they help in all sorts of situations. You may want to try out a few different reaching devices in the store, so you can choose the easiest and most comfortable one for you to maneuver.
- **Built-up utensils –** Eating and drinking should please you, not pain and frustration. If you're having trouble holding small or thin items, use utensils with big, soft handles to help your grip and ease any painful pressure. You can opt for a whole new set of built-up utensils, or simply buy a universal built-up handle that can pop onto cutlery, pens and toothbrushes.

Depending on your home's dimensions, your mobility and your resources, you can fine-tune each room with everything from electronic beds to specialized cupboards. On the other hand, you might find that a few straightforward tools are all you need to live happily and comfortably. Before you invest in a big upgrade, you may want to talk to other MS sufferers about what has worked best for them and visit a few different medical supply stores to see the whole range of household aids that are available.

Using Your Space Wisely

Adding helpful devices can keep you comfortable, but a safe home calls for some careful elimination, too. Experts suggest reducing dangerous obstacles by:

- Decluttering all floors and surfaces by removing things like throw rugs, baskets and slippers
- Keeping a pet-free home, or attaching bells to collars so you can hear pets coming
- Trip-proofing your stairs by adding brighter lights, skid-proof flooring and an extra handrail

If you do decide on a big household upgrade, think ahead. You may not use one now, but wheelchairs become necessary for many MS sufferers and narrow hallways or doorways can interfere with easy movement and turning. Occupational therapists, physical therapists and renovation experts that specialize in these sorts of projects will be important allies as you continue to overcome the physical challenges of multiple sclerosis. The good news is that some professional insight and simple adaptations can make a huge difference in the quality of your home life now, and in the years to come.