



LIFELONG DESIGN CHECKLIST

Lifelong Design

Lifelong design means having a home which is adaptable if there is a change in need eg. due to having children and the different stages they go through, children leaving home, mobility and health changes, needing to simplify housekeeping and staying in your own home as you age.

Below is a checklist for you to consider:

Exterior Pathways

- Slip resistant path
- Preferably minimum 1000mm wide
- Easy access from letter box to front door
- If using paving stones consider the distance between for easy step length
- Consider raised garden beds

Entrances

- Exterior sensor lighting
- Unblocked space of approximately 1000 x 1000mm at door entrance
- Minimise level to enter home - if not possible provide handrails
- When a step less entrance is not possible, ensure your entries have stairs that provide a uniform rise and tread within each flight. Consider use of a larger tread depth
- Level floor to exterior decks
- Make sure the main entry to your home is protected from the weather

Garages and Driveways

- Parking space that is wide enough for everyone getting in and out of cars and possible loads
- Make sure children's play areas are separated from garages, driveways and parking areas
- If possible, ensure vehicle access routes allow a vehicle to be driven on and off the site rather than having to be reversed on or off it
- Ensure any fencing or plantings allow drivers to see pedestrians and cyclists, particularly between the driveway and the footpath
- Ensure there is direct, adequately lit and possibly covered access from the garage to the house

- Install lights with two-way, motion or heat sensors between the home and where vehicles are parked

Interior General

- Wide and clear door openings – 810 to 910mm
- Lever style door handles
- Light switches at consistent height throughout and within easy reach – similar height to door handles
- Light switches at all entrances to rooms so there is no need to walk in the dark
- Power points at consistent height – preferably waist height and away from corners
- Good lighting in all rooms avoiding poorly lit areas especially traffic areas.
- Windows that open preferably hinges at top
- Consider window placement for ease of access especially for those that open.
- Consider what window treatments will be added and how these will be accessed – avoid reaching across furniture
- Think about a fire escape route

Bedrooms

- Clear space to easily access around sides of bed
- A bedroom on the main living level (ground floor)
- Put light switches or lamps by bed

Bathroom / toilets

- A bathroom on the main living level (ground floor)
- Easy access to bathroom
- Strengthened walls to accommodate future handrails and shower seat
- Lever handle taps and hand held shower rose on a slide rail
- Select a floor surface that is slip resistant and easy to clean
- Make sure the edges of cupboards, doors and benches are rounded
- Make sure all bathroom glazing is made of safety (or toughened glass)
- Ensure the bathroom has good natural ventilation and consider installing an extractor fan or other form of mechanical ventilation
- Avoid stairs between a bedroom and the closest toilet
- Avoid the risk of burns by positioning the shower mixer so the water temperature can be adjusted before the user enters the shower
- Consider installing a level entry shower
- Minimum shower size recommended is 1000 x 1000mm
- Size of entry to shower should be at least 800mm
- Ability to remove glass and replace with shower curtain at a later stage
- Avoid locating a heated towel rail where it is likely to be used as a grab rail

Kitchens

- Design your house so people don't walk through the kitchen to other parts of the house
- Position the kitchen so that it's possible to see indoor and outdoor play areas
- If possible, design the kitchen so it can be temporarily fenced off (ideally with a stair gate) from young children
- Lever handles are used on all taps
- Plan appliance heights to reduce bending
- Appliances are easily accessible and positioned away from corners
- Choose appliances with easy to use knobs, handles and controls – preferably near the front of the appliance
- Allow for a space next to oven, and microwave to place hot dishes on
- Frequently use items should be located on bench tops or stored between hip and shoulder height
- Heavy pots and pans are best kept near the stove and sink
- Consider use of drawers instead of cupboards
- Choose slip resistant flooring
- Avoid sharp edges on benches, cabinets and handles
- Kitchen should have a minimum of six power outlets to allow for the safe use of appliances
- Keep the distance hot food must be carried between the kitchen and dining area to a minimum
- Make the floor between the kitchen and the dining area level to reduce trips
- Ensure your kitchen has a permanent means of ventilation at the cooking source to remove the heat, smoke and steam that occur during cooking
- Position hob isolating switch within easy reach and preferably not directly behind

Hallways

- Ideally install low level night lights turned on by motion sensors
- Make sure doors don't open into the hallway
- Ideally hallway width should be at least 1000mm

References

Age Concern -

http://www.ageconcern.org.nz/ACNZPublic/Information/Housing_and_care/Lifetime_design/ACNZ_Public/Lifetime_Design.aspx?hkey=a17f202e-375d-4bec-b0e8-f02477ab00c7

Lifemark - <http://www.lifemark.co.nz/homeowners.aspx>

ACC resources - <http://www.acc.co.nz/preventing-injuries/at-home/index.htm>

Guide to planning Bathrooms and Kitchens 2006 – Independent Living Centre NSW
<http://www.ilcnsw.asn.au/home/publications/publications>

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