Will You Be Able To Stay in Your Home as You Get Older?

How to get set up for long-term safety and security
by VNSNY (Paid Content)

1. Clear the clutter
Make your rooms easier to navigate by clearing out the clutter that has gradually piled up over the years. Your home may need wider, clear pathways that can accommodate walkers or mobility aids. You'll also want to clear countertops and closets, and consolidate the items you rarely need and use often in accessible, easy-to-reach places.

The earlier you begin to purge your excess furniture and belongings, the less overwhelming the process will be. Start with a small area or room—like the pantry, linen closet, or guest room. Build momentum as you create a system. Divide items into categories: donate, trash, or give away. If you're sharing the possessions of other family members, now's the time for them to retrieve their things.

2. Get connected
Your social life may be filled with volunteer work, gatherings at your house of worship, and regular family game nights. It's important to have transportation options to maintain your community ties. Fortunately, public transit is becoming increasingly accessible for people who have difficulty climbing stairs or using a mobility assistance device.

Programs to your area might offer a carpool or shuttle service. Learning how to use a ride-sharing service like Uber or Lyft can help you keep the social calendar you've built over the years.

You can also start learning the technology that helps people stay connected: from a digital voice recorder to a help button, or an in-home or mobile application to help you tell your different health-care providers what medicine you prefer. You can practice to connecting with your grandchildren or younger family members over games they enjoy playing online.

3. Plan for care and in-home help
When the time comes, you can benefit from in-home care providers who can offer everything from personal care and help with meal preparation, to assistance getting to and from doctor appointments—in addition to health care following hospitalization and managing chronic health conditions. Organizations like VNSNY, visiting Nurse Service of New York, have a full spectrum of services for people who want to age in place.

Start by researching the type of aid you might need. Then interview qualified caregivers to determine the best fit for you. That way, you're prepared when you decide you're ready for it.

Click here to learn more about all the in-home care services that VNSNY can provide.