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Accessible Housing: Practical House-Hunting Advice for Those With Disabilities

Finding accessible housing is often a difficult task for people who live with disabilities. There are more accessible homes on the market than there used to be, but they are still few and far between. Nonetheless, if you (or a loved one) are going to lead a life of safety and comfort, then living in a home that accommodates your needs is critical.

It may be challenging, but you can find a home that either meets your needs or can be modified to meet your needs. [The Arc](#) has always been committed to helping people with disabilities enhance and advance their quality of life. That's why we've provided a few practical tips for how you can find the right accessible home.

Determine What 'Accessible' Means for You

The first step is to figure out exactly what you need from your home and to research design [ideas](#). Even if you're not planning a new build, this will give you something to reference during your house hunt. It may also expose you to ideas and modifications you've never thought about

before. For instance, did you know that you can have kitchen cabinets installed at modified angles and that you can get adjustable [countertops](#)?

When determining what you need from your home, there are two essential factors to consider: access and safety. If you have limited mobility, your primary concern should be that you can easily access the entrances and interior spaces of your home. Bathroom safety should also be a priority, as the bathroom is where [most accidents](#) in the home occur.

Research Existing Accessible Housing

Existing accessible homes may still be rare, but [universal](#) design is becoming more and more popular among new builds, so it's worth looking at your local market to see what your options are. Hire an experienced real estate [agent](#), and give them a list of your accessibility needs. For limited mobility, you most likely need a single-floor home with wide doorways and hallways, a zero-step entrance (or ramp), wheelchair-friendly [flooring](#), a paved driveway, and smooth walkways. Determine your budget, and [explore](#) the local housing market with your agent.

Look for a Home You Can Renovate

Even if you don't find a home that's ready to move into, you should be able to find one that can be modified to meet your needs. There are several benefits to going this route, including:

- You have more homes on the market to choose from.
- With more options, you may be able to find a less expensive home.
- You can completely customize a home to your specific requirements.

When buying a home that you will renovate, the key is to find one that is structurally [sound](#) and that will require the least amount of extensive remodeling. For example, adding grab bars in the bathroom is something that can be [DIY'd](#). But you'll need a contractor to modify kitchen cabinets, doorways, and flooring, and the costs can quickly add up.

Consider a Fixer-Upper

Finally, don't rule out the possibility of purchasing a fixer-upper. If you find a great deal on a home that has good bones but needs a lot of work, it could be worth your while. This can especially be a good route if you have friends, family members, or other people in your community who are willing to pitch in on the work. Even if you don't have help from others, however, the money you save from the purchase of a fixer-upper can go toward paying contractors. And you'll likely still have money left over.

Having a home that allows you to live safely and comfortably is essential to improving and maintaining your quality of life. Figure out what you need from a new home, hire a real estate agent, and research the local market for accessible homes, homes that you can renovate, and

fixer-uppers. With enough time and perseverance, you can find/create the perfect home that satisfies your accessibility requirements.

If you would like to read more helpful content about living with disabilities, or if you would like to contribute to what we're doing each day in our community, visit arcbutte.org to learn more!