

# Therapeutic Home Adaptations for Older Adults with Disabilities

Table 2.

## Home Modifications for Patients with Dementia

### Bathroom

Install grab rails in tub, shower, and near toilet

Install handheld shower

Install nonskid surfaces on tub or shower

Install tub chair or bench to sit while showering or bathing

Place sign on bathroom door, keep door open

Raise toilet seat or commode to higher level

Remove or reverse inner door locks or keep keys accessible

Remove rugs and electrical appliances

Replace glass shower doors with plastic doors or curtains

### Bedroom

Add night-lights

Consider bedside commode

Consider hospital bed

Install room-darkening shades or curtains

Lower bed to floor level if patient is falling out of bed

Remove carpeting if patient has trouble with incontinence

Use baby monitor to monitor activities

### Car

Install driver-controlled door locks and window

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Notify police of patient's disability

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Secure garage door opener out of patient's reach

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Take away patient's car keys or disable car

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### **Fire prevention**

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Add firefighter sticker at bedroom window

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Conduct fire drills

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Install smoke alarms

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Notify fire department of patient's disability and home measures

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Remove lighters and matches

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Restrict smoking

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Use flame-retardant bedding materials

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### **Kitchen**

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Consider electric stove or install hidden shut-off valves or auto-pilots

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Consider locks on cabinets, refrigerators, and freezers

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Cover stove burners

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Disable garbage disposal

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Install locks on oven doors

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Lock up sharp objects and glassware

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Remove small, nonfood items that could be consumed

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Remove stove knobs

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Secure garbage out of patient's sight and reach

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Unplug or store electrical appliances out of patient's reach

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### **Outdoors**

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Be aware of danger areas, such as embankments, streams, lakes, and busy streets

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Consider fences or hedges around yard

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Remove poisonous plants

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Secure outdoor equipment

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### **Stairs**

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Add contrasting color on edge of treads

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Consider barriers or gates at top and bottom

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Install banisters on both sides

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Replace stairs with ramp

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### **General precautions**

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Childproof electrical outlets

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Cover radiators

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Cover shiny or reflective surfaces

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Install door alarms

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Install double key locks

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Install scald-proof faucets or reduce water temperature

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Install spring-loaded door closers

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Keep first-aid kit accessible

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Keep legal documents accessible

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Lock up cleaning supplies, chemicals, poisons, and medications

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Make a list of patient's medications and health conditions

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Notify police and emergency medical services of patient's disability

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Program emergency phone numbers on speed dial

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Provide neighbors with set of house keys

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Provide patient with identification card and bracelet

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Reduce clutter

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Remove free-standing floor and table fans

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Remove hazardous furniture (e.g., high-back chairs, pedestal tables, easily moved furniture)

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Remove mirrors if they cause delusions or hallucinations

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Remove or lock up sharp or breakable objects

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Remove or reverse inner door locks or keep keys accessible

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Remove small rugs without nonskid backing

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*Information from reference 18.*

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