

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: UNIVERSAL DESIGN



All of us age and it is natural that our physical needs change over time. While you might be very physically fit today, there will come a time when your body slows and you begin asking: how can I age *in my home* and the community that I love? Our advice is to plan for future needs now by integrating universal design principles into your remodeling plan. It will be less expensive and, from a design standpoint, more cohesive to remodel for the future than to retrofit items later.

So what does the terms "universal design" mean? Unlike "accessible design" which aims to accommodate those with specific physical limitations (primarily wheelchair bound) and must comply with ADA regulations, universal design is a bit more flexible and is intended to improve general accessibility and overall usability within a space. The [Center for Universal Design](#) (CDU) defines universal design as **"the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible."**

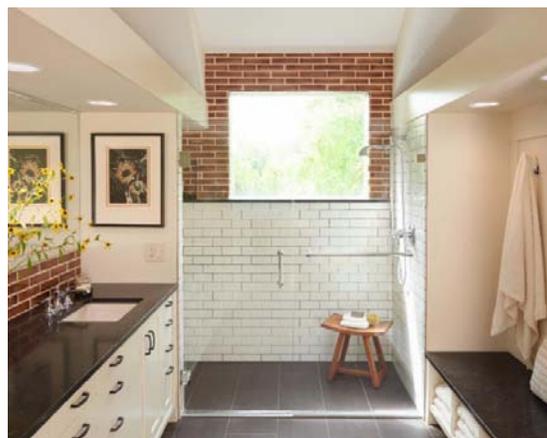
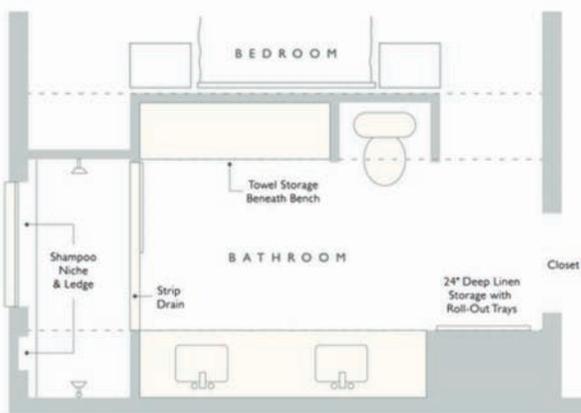
There are [seven principles](#) associated with universal design. We incorporate many of these principles into our remodeling design to allow for **graceful aging in place**: 1) zero-threshold doorways and curbless shower entries (no tripping); 2) wide hallways and corners (for maneuvering with a walker, cane or shower chair); 3) lever-type hardware (easier to manipulate with arthritic hands); 4) cabinet drawers in place of doors (reduces the need for stooping or bending at the knee); 5) strong visual contrasts between floors, walls and counters (helps with depth perception) and 6) a combination of direct and indirect natural and man-made lighting (creates safe transitions when eyesight diminishes). These simple solutions improve the long-term functionality of a home and preserve overall aesthetics when carefully integrated into the design from the beginning.

Be sure to ask about universal design options when [contacting DiGiacomo Homes](#) about remodeling your home!

## IN THE NEWS

### UNIVERSAL DESIGN SUITE FEATURED BY *MSP* AND *MIDWEST HOME* MAGAZINES

Check out the latest *Home & Design* from Minneapolis-St. Paul Magazine (April 2018) and *2018 Remodeling Guide* from Midwest Home Magazine (April/May 2018) for visual examples of a universally designed master suite recently completed by DiGiacomo Homes.



## CONTACT US



DiGiacomo Homes & Renovation, Inc. is an [award winning](#), husband and wife, design-build firm that has been honored to bring timeless beauty, value, and sustainability to neighborhoods throughout the Twin Cities for more than 25 years. Our services include site analysis, architectural design, interior design, and construction. As always, [contact us](#) with questions or when ready to begin your custom home or remodel project.

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