

universal design

●●● UNIVERSAL DESIGN IS WORTH CONSIDERING for at least one full bathroom in your home—ideally on a first floor—even if there are no household members who presently need its accessibility features. Many otherwise

healthy individuals have surgeries, injuries, or accidents at some point in their lives that temporarily impact their mobility.

Having a bathroom that you can still use with crutches or while confined to a wheelchair makes life immeasurably easier during a difficult time. Having a bathroom that a mobility-limited friend or relative can use while visiting your house is an added benefit.

A universally designed bathroom makes it possible for anyone at any age or mobility level to use all of its features. The doorway should be wider to allow a wheelchair to roll through. There should be ample room for that chair to roll up to the different fixtures in the room and turn space where needed.

The toilet should be higher to make transfer easier. The sink should be at a usable height for a seated user, and installed in a cabinet or countertop that allows the user to roll a wheelchair's footrest under. The shower should also be roll-in, without a curb. There should be lever handles on the shower set and sink faucets that can be operated by someone with compromised grip strength.

There should also be grab bars installed for safety, but they need not look institutional. Manufacturers are now designing them in finishes and trim styles that match their faucet and accessory sets. A universally designed bathroom can have an upscale spa look and enhance the value and “visitability” of your home.

This award-winning bathroom with its massive framed mirrors, decorative light fixtures, matte black faucets and accessories, and handsome tile and stone surfaces shows that a universal design bathroom can look more like a resort spa than a rehab hospital room.

