

Trends

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Have a Happy and Safe Holiday Season

OHSA probably will not be coming around this holiday season, but maybe they should. Hundreds of people are hurt every year installing holiday decorations. Cuts, broken bones, strains, electrocution, and falls from ladders, falls from roofs, tripping, slipping, and sliding are the things that will do it every time putting a big damper on your family holiday. Here are six ways to make life easier and longer lasting.

1. Moving Heavy Boxes - Don't carry too much weight. Bend your knees when picking things up. Use a dolly or cart to move items around. Be extra careful when carrying up or down stairs. Get help for the big awkward boxes that you can't get your hands around.

2. Step Ladders & Extension Ladders - Use only on level surfaces and make sure the legs are secure and not sliding. Don't stand on top or stop where the manufacturer recommends. Have a helper when carrying a large ladder. When on an extension ladder, have a helper holding the feet so they don't move while you're going up and down. Watch out for electrical wiring, an aluminum ladder against your

electrical service wires can make an unwanted fireworks show.

3. Outside Lighting - Use GFCI receptacles on all outdoor lighting. If your receptacles are not, have them changed. Extension cords, lights, power strips, and timers all must be outside rated and weatherproof. Check the boxes and manufactures tags/stickers for use instructions. Don't overload your receptacles, if your light display can be seen from space, you may want to talk with your electrician about power requirements! Also, a good idea is to hire an electrician to place outside GFCI receptacles where you need them.

4. Heavy Decorations - Hanging or installing heavy decorations like the Santa on the roof or large wreath covering half of the second floor is a two person job. Keeping yourself safe climbing around on a roof is a dangerous business. Make sure you securely fasten these or any large decorations in place. There always are windy nights and we would hate to have Santa take out Uncle Billy's new SUV during Christmas dinner!



5. Inside Decorations - they are no different, make sure the tree is secure and won't fall over. Place the stand on a piece of plywood 18" x 18" or a size at least as large as the legs. This plywood base should have the legs screwed into it. Watch out hanging decoration from light fixtures or railings. Keep stairs and doorways clear of decorations. Don't over load outlets, use power strips with ground fault breakers and check all extension cords.

6. Clean up Back to Storage - cleaning up and packaging can be as dangerous as when you installed the decorations. Disconnect from the outlets any electrical cords before taking down the lights. Have your helper there with you again for ladders and all heavy objects.

Safely install and safely take down all holiday decorations and then you'll be around to do it all over again next year. Then have a cold one, you've earned it!

RECIPIENT OF MULTIPLE REMODELING INDUSTRY AWARDS 2008, 2009, 2010

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Remodeling Your Home ...

For Your Golden Years

We have to face it—we're all growing older. Now, while aging is inevitable, it's not inevitable that we will be forced out of our homes when we become less active. With some careful planning, we can create a home that will continue to work well for us throughout our lives.

A home that's user-friendly for the elderly and the disabled doesn't have to look like a hospital. More and more products designed for disabled people have broken the "utilitarian" design mold and are now quite attractive. Plus, the simple structural modifications won't even be noticed. Here are some things to think about.

Make Things Easier to Reach

- Raise electrical outlets and phone jacks from 12 to 18 inches above the floor; people in wheelchairs will find this height more accessible.
- Lower electrical switches and thermostats from 48 to 42 inches from the floor; again, this provides easier access for people seated in wheelchairs.
- Move the bathroom medicine cabinet to the side of the bathroom vanity. Cabinets over the sink aren't practical.
- Have multiple light switches installed; for example—at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Lower racks, shelves, and poles in closets to make them more accessible.

Make Moving Around Easier

- Widen doors from the standard 30 inches to 36 inches to accommodate a wheelchair.
- Install chair lifts or elevators if necessary to provide access to other levels of the house.
- Make sure the flooring in the kitchen and bath is made of a non-slip finish, and is in a matte tone to diminish the glare of overhead lighting.

Make Things Easier to Use

- Replace standard door knobs with levers that are easier to maneuver with arthritic or disabled hands.
- Consider replacing double-hung or slider windows with crank-style casement windows.

- Install grab bars and railings (consider textured ones for a better grip) near the toilet and in the bath or shower stall.
- Use single-lever faucets with balled tips for the sink. These allow people to control the temperature with one lever.
- Make work areas easily distinguishable by using contrasting colors; this is especially important in the kitchen. This makes it easier for eyes that don't see quite as well. Install kitchen cabinets that feature roll-out drawers and easy-to-grip "C" or "D" handles.
- A flat glass-top stove is easy to clean, and makes it easier to remove pots and pans; make sure all appliance knobs are in the front.
- Don't overlook the world that remote controls have introduced. VCRs, CD players, garage door openers, touch-command lighting systems, ceiling fans, and even microwave ovens place the pleasures of everyday life at anyone's fingertips! Home lighting control systems such as Lutron RadioRa can have convenience, comfort and safety. And, a whole new world can be opened with the installation of voice-activated machinery.

Want more information on how to adapt your home? Give us a call!



Have a very Happy Holiday and a Merry Christmas!

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Next Issue's Topics!

The Forgotten Room



PA law now requires that home renovation contractors register with the state.

For your protection, always ask for your contractor's registration number.

Our registration is:
PAOAGHIC:000193

Give us a call to begin your next remodeling project. We will be happy to assist you every step of the way!

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