



Cheryl Pett Design, Ltd.

Custom Kitchens, Baths, and Home Interiors

ACCESSIBLE STYLE IN EVERY HOME

Finally, we understand that Accessible Style/Universal Design is for everyone. It reflects the people that live in the space. We all come home with the expectation that our personal space is one in which we can truly relax and be comfortable.

If you are planning a new kitchen or bath, or remodeling your existing space, it is smart to consider adding design features and products that can help you remain comfortable in your home as long as possible. Whether you call it Accessible Style, Aging in Place or Universal Design, the concept makes good sense. It is about using great design to maximize the convenience and comfort of all who live in the space. It is the design of products and the environment to be used by all people. After all, people come in all ages, shapes and sizes.

Principles of Universal Design are powerful but simple. The space needs to be beautiful, safe, accessible and convenient. Although some principles apply to everyone, each home should be individually tailored to those who live in the space.

Your Certified Kitchen and Bath Designer has the education and been tested on principles to make your kitchen and bath reflect your individual needs as well as generally allow your home to be more comfortable.

For example, I like to use wider doorways and adequate spacing between the kitchen aisles. I often use dish cabinets that come down to the counter to allow for heavy, frequently used dishes to be placed at arm's length rather than highly stacked in the upper cabinets. I like to use large drawers for heavy pots and pans and roll-outs so you don't have to get on your hands and knees to find things in the back of lower cabinets. Vertical dividers allow convenience in storing cookie sheets, cutting boards and baking racks. Lighting is also a very important factor. There must be good task lighting as well as overall lighting in your kitchen. Then, accent lights and fixtures complete the design.

General Universal Design principles also apply to the bathroom. I use as wide a doorway as I can into the bath, private commode rooms and closets. Floors should be honed and not slippery. It is also nice to have a floor warming system under the stone/tile so feet don't get cold. I like to use comfort height toilets and vanities that are higher to reduce back strain. Storage items also need to be within easy reach. This is accomplished with lots of drawer storage and towers. Again, lighting needs to be from various sources to adjust to changing needs in the bath.

That's why Universal Design is designing for comfort and convenience. These are very simple things that should be incorporated into every design.

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As we all know, our population is aging. By using these principles, it will help us to remain as independent as possible for a longer period of time. Many homeowners are planning for kitchens and baths to work for them well into the future. If our homes are able to accommodate changes in our life such as accidents, surgery, physical functions or aging, we can still maintain as normal a life as possible. Flexibility, independence, and self esteem are its excellent results. Of course, depending on the physical health of someone that lives in the home, we can adapt the kitchen and bath through specialized design to also allow as much independence as possible to help them remain in the home with family members.

If planned properly, Universal Design principles are only a minimal cost. Our homes can be beautiful, safe and incredibly convenient. Our homes can adapt to their owner's changing needs and still be unique to the person using the space.

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