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NOTE: Social distancing necessitates altering your real estate business activities, especially when working with clients who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

The information provided in this newsletter is for informational purposes only and shall not constitute a promotion, endorsement, or approval of any of the products mentioned herein. Further, nothing contained in this newsletter is intended to or shall constitute medical advice. You should consult a healthcare professional before using any medical device or health product.





## 2022 Outstanding Service Award Winner

### Congratulations to Mark Kotch

2022 Outstanding Service Award winner

Mark has been a licensed real estate professional in the state of California since 2004. During this time, he has served countless clients and trained and mentored over 100 agents. Mark has a reputation for skillfully helping clients with a variety of real estate needs, especially those who require extra support and creative options to help maximize their outcomes. Mark says that “nothing matters more than helping a client transition between the good times of life and the not-so-good times of life.”

The care and concern that Mark demonstrates for his clients is also evident in how he serves his community. He has been involved in charitable efforts to help seniors, the working poor, and the homeless. For years, Mark has collected gently-used coats to distribute to those in need of assistance in his area. He also spends Friday mornings collecting excess food from grocery stores to deliver to homeless shelters, food pantries, and senior housing communities.

We applaud Mark Kotch and recognize him for outstanding service in the industry and in his community.

Wondering how you can get such an award?

Learn more by visiting: [www.sres.realtor/about/sres-outstanding-service-award](http://www.sres.realtor/about/sres-outstanding-service-award).





# Home Features that Allow Clients to Age in Place

Maintaining dignity and independence is a high priority among adults in the United States. Over 85% of individuals 50-80 years old prefer to age in place in their later years. Although it is considered a top priority by most seniors and boomers, only one-third (30%) of these individuals feel confident that their living space has the features that would allow aging in place to be a safe possibility. Almost 50% of this demographic reports that they have given little or no consideration to their home's accessibility. As an SRES® Designee, you have a unique opportunity to empower your clients by informing them of what they should look for in a home if they intend to age in place in their later years.

**1 Single-story living:** Main-floor living is a feature that you already know to look for when older clients are in the market for a new home. Your clients are likely to prioritize that as well—ground-level bedrooms and bathrooms are the accessibility features that most older adults report having in place already. Single-story homes are a safe route to promote aging in place; however, multi-level homes can still work so long as the client can access their bedroom, bathroom, laundry room, and kitchen on the ground floor. Even with single-story living, many older clients may still want or need friends, family members, or hired professionals to take over housecleaning and maintenance. Having everything needed on one main story will allow for added comfort, independence, and safety for aging clients.

**2 Accessibility features:** Home upgrades designed to improve accessibility are often a selling point for seniors and their families, especially if they intend to age in place. Grab bars, barrier-free showers, raised toilet seats, and lever-style door handles are accessibility features to look for. Stair-free or ramped entryways and hallways wide enough for a wheelchair should also be considered. While

it is unlikely that your client will find a home that has all of these features, you can be a helpful guide in prioritizing which accessibility features are most important and within range for your client's needs and budget. For example, you can help them consider how much easier it may be to install grab bars or change door handles than it would be to widen a hallway.

**3 High-tech aids:** Assistive technology provides a wide range of applications that promote independent living. Such high-tech aids are becoming indispensable for aging in place. The technology itself is more advanced, targeted, and easy to operate. Aging adults are also becoming more comfortable using tech devices. Seniors report higher levels of confidence in technology than in previous years, with most being eager to adopt gadgets as long as they are taught how to use them in a way they understand.

Smart home options including voice-controlled assisting devices (e.g., Alexa, Echo, etc.), doorbell cameras, smart thermostats, and emergency detection systems increase a home's accessibility and allow for monitoring by faraway

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## Home Features that Allow Clients to Age in Place

caretakers. Smartwatches and cell phones keep aging adults in touch with loved ones and track their location, two invaluable features when a senior needs help away from home. In-home monitoring systems, stove alarms, programmed pill boxes, and personal emergency systems are all devices designed specifically to assist the elderly population who live independently. These gadgets monitor home and health conditions and can report a variety of information to remote caretakers—for instance, if their loved one has a health emergency, leaves the refrigerator door open, forgets to take their pills, or leaves the house.

**4 Senior-friendly communities:** Helping clients decide if a home is functional for older adults is essential when their goal is to age in place. Still, assessing the senior-friendliness of a community is an important priority that can be overlooked. Are they close to their doctors? What about their friends and family members? Will they be required to maintain landscaping? Do other seniors live nearby, or is there a senior center in the area? These general considerations are important for most SRES® clients. As you get to know your clients, ask them questions about their lifestyle choices to help them find a community that matches not only their needs but their interests. If your clients prioritize fitness, look at communities with walking trails, gyms, or senior dance classes. Research suggests that seniors who are physically and socially active are less likely to experience physical decline or depression, so consider connecting clients with community resources and senior groups.



### Would a few changes make a home easier and safer for your client?

Consider a ramp at the front door, grab bars in the tub or shower, nonskid floors, easy-to-grip handles on doors or faucets, and better insulation. Home renovations can be expensive, so talk with your client about creative ways they can afford updates. Explain how improvements can be rolled into a mortgage to make the property they want more accessible. If they meet certain financial criteria, they may be able to get help paying for some changes. Connect them with your local Area Agency on Aging, state housing finance agency, welfare department, and other community development groups, and learn what programs are available for accessibility renovations in your area.

Source:

[www.nia.nih.gov/health/aging-place-growing-older-home](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/aging-place-growing-older-home)

Source:

[www.ageinplace.com/aging-in-place-basics/technology/](http://www.ageinplace.com/aging-in-place-basics/technology/)

# Support Independence in Elderly Populations

“Aging in place” is a term used when older adults live in their own homes in safety and comfort. In order to age in place, seniors’ personal needs—including moving about, caring for their bodies, and managing their homes—must be met. Sometimes older adults need assistance from caretakers to continue to age in place, and that is to be expected. All people need help from others at times, but adults who are able to meet their personal needs autonomously are more likely to age in place longer. Understanding a few basic ways that seniors can maintain function and independence will make you a better advocate for your SRES® clients.

Physical function, cognitive function, and environmental structure all impact a person’s level of independence. Here is a brief look into why these areas impact independence and what interventions help older adults age in place.

## Physical Support:

Physical activity is essential to healthy aging. Living an active lifestyle can slow physical decline and improve autonomy, which greatly improve a person’s ability to age in place. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that all adults aim for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week (e.g., 30 minutes of walking five times a week) and participate in two strength-building activities per week. These numbers are a benchmark; the CDC stresses that some physical exercise is better than nothing and reminds people not to get discouraged if meeting those goals feels out of reach. The CDC also advises adults in the 65+ age range to engage in activities that improve balance.

Individuals who are physically limited can often work toward greater independence. Occupational therapists and physical therapists are uniquely equipped to support aging adults in maintaining or even regaining independence. Improving physical condition (strength, balance, muscle tone, bone density) and physical skills (walking, bending, self-feeding, and applying adaptive techniques) are some of the many ways that physical therapists and occupational therapists can assist aging clients. As an SRES® designee, consider connecting with local physical therapists and occupational therapists who specialize in geriatric care. Having their contact info ready to pass along to clients can support their ability to age in place—safely and independently.

## Cognitive Support:

According to the National Library of Medicine, cognitive decline is a normal part of aging. When people experience cognitive deterioration, it can impact working memory, attention, the ability to recall information, and problem-solving ability. Although for many, mental decline is inevitable due to medical conditions or genetic make-up, the National Institute on Aging does suggest

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*CDC recommendation for all adults:*

**150 minutes**  
of moderate-intensity exercise per  
week (e.g. 30 minutes of walking  
5 times a week)





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## Support Independence in Elderly Populations

actions that promote cognitive health and, in some cases, can slow the deterioration. Taking care of physical health by eating well, staying active, and managing high blood pressure are all linked to improved mental faculty. Other behaviors that improve cognitive health include managing stress, staying engaged socially, and keeping your mind active. Encouraging your clients to get involved in senior community groups, join a walking club, or do a daily crossword puzzle might promote their mental wellness and help them to age in place.

Although preventive activities can help, often cognitive deterioration cannot be stopped. This can be distressing, in large part because it often means a loss of independence. Everyday activities like overseeing finances, managing medications, running a household, and driving a vehicle can all be affected by cognitive decline. Luckily, there are ways to support aging adults as they face growing mental limitations. Caretakers including family members, friends, and hired professionals can step in to assist with many of these tasks: A spouse can manage finances, a friend can oversee car maintenance, and a housecleaning service can handle deep-cleaning needs. Finding creative ways to support older adults in meeting their needs can allow them to live independently, and longer.

Sources:

[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7917261/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7917261/)

[www.nia.nih.gov/health/cognitive-health-and-older-adults](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/cognitive-health-and-older-adults)


[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7917261/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7917261/)

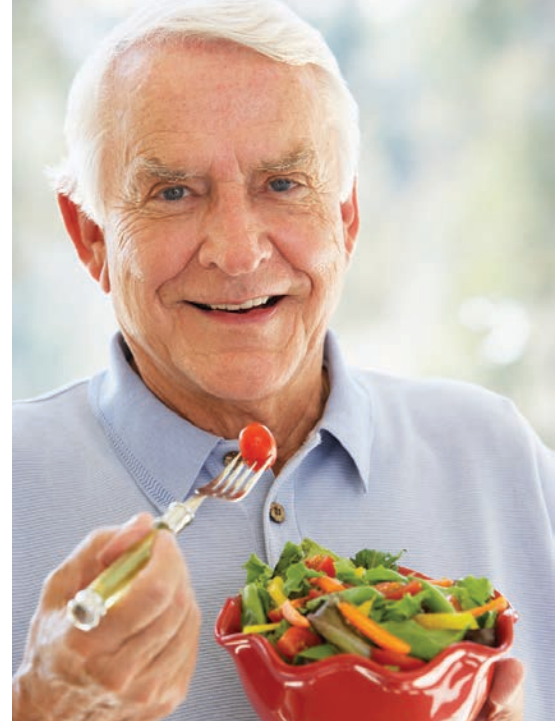
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[www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/older\\_adults/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/older_adults/index.htm)

### Environmental Support:

Environmental factors can make a significant impact on the independence of aging adults. Seniors who live in accessible homes in communities that are supportive of elderly residents are much more likely to be able to care for their own needs. Home accommodations including, roll-in showers and grab bars in bathrooms, make it easier and safer for aging adults to be self-sufficient. Creating a safe, easy-to-navigate environment for seniors can require help from caretakers, but can extend their ability to live independently—think automated home systems, medical tracking devices, pre-prepared meals, and accessibly organized closets and cupboards. Social inclusion and respect, easy-to-access transportation, and available medical care are other environmental factors that promote health and independence. When seniors live in age-friendly homes and age-friendly communities, they will age in place with greater success.

Research suggests that physical and cognitive interventions combined with an age-friendly environment help seniors age in place with greater success. As you work with your clients, advocate for them by providing them with resources that promote their autonomy now and in the future. 



### Aging-in-place experts

Would adding some accessibility features to their home support your client as they age in place? Help them find a competent, specialized contractor on the website below. Certified Aging in Place Specialists have training and experience in how to help older clients age safely at home. Find a CAPS in your area whom you trust, and use them as a resource to help your clients.

Source:

[www.ageinplace.com/aging-in-place-professionals/why-choose-a-certified-aging-in-place-specialist/](http://www.ageinplace.com/aging-in-place-professionals/why-choose-a-certified-aging-in-place-specialist/)



# The Skills You Need to Age in Place

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, aging in place is “the ability to live in one’s own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level.” Eighty-eight percent of Americans between 50-80 years old believe that aging in place is important, but many will need assistance to continue to live independently. What abilities must you or your loved ones need to live safely and independently? The healthcare community identifies these activities of daily living (ADLs) as the skills a person needs to care for themselves:

## Instrumental ADLs

- Managing transportation, either via driving or by organizing other means of transport.
- Managing finances: paying bills and managing financial assets.
- Shopping and meal preparation.
- Housecleaning and home maintenance.
- Managing communication with others: telephone, mail, digital correspondence.
- Managing medications: obtain medications and take them as directed.

## Basic ADLs

- The ability to move from one position to another and walk independently.
- The ability of a person to feed oneself.
- The ability to select appropriate clothes and to put the clothes on.
- The ability to bathe and groom oneself and maintain dental hygiene and nail and hair care.
- The ability to control bladder and bowel function.
- The ability to get to and from the toilet, use it appropriately, and clean oneself.

*\*This information comes from the National Library of Medicine, retrieved at [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470404](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470404)*

People unable to perform some of these ADLs are often able to continue living independently with support. Knowing the areas in which you or your loved one needs assistance makes aging in place more possible, and gives seniors and their family members peace of mind.

If you have concerns about either yourself or a loved one being able to care for themselves, reach out to your doctor or local senior support center for help. They can assess ADLs and recommend interventions to help you and your loved ones age in place safely and confidently.

Sources:

- [bit.ly/ruralhealthtoolkit](http://bit.ly/ruralhealthtoolkit)
- [bit.ly/betterhealthwhileaging](http://bit.ly/betterhealthwhileaging)
- [bit.ly/healthyagingpool](http://bit.ly/healthyagingpool)

**To learn more about aging in place and explore support and resources, connect with the following resources:**

**Eldercare Locator**  
800-677-1116  
[eldercarelocator@n4a.org](mailto:eldercarelocator@n4a.org)  
[www.eldercare.acl.gov](http://www.eldercare.acl.gov)

**USAgging**  
202-872-0888  
[info@usaging.org](mailto:info@usaging.org)  
[www.usaging.org](http://www.usaging.org)

**Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services**  
800-633-4227  
877-486-2048 (TTY)  
[www.cms.gov](http://www.cms.gov)  
[www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)

**Count on an SRES® to guide you through the process of buying or selling your home, making the transaction less stressful and more successful.**

The Seniors Real Estate Specialist® (SRES®) designation is awarded by the SRES® Council, a subsidiary of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR).

To learn more about SRES® and access various consumer resources, please visit [seniorsresource.realtor](http://seniorsresource.realtor).





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