

## Moving vs. Staying at Home

At different stages of life, you may find that your home and possessions no longer suit your lifestyle, such as when you are starting a family or have become an empty-nester. As you age, your physical abilities may change, making it necessary to evaluate your living environment once more. When this happens, many people opt to move or remodel their homes.

According to John Buckles, president of [Caring Transitions](#), this evaluation has become increasingly important for those ages 65 and older. “Establishing short-term and long-term housing goals can help you plan and stay ahead of large moving or remodeling projects, without wearing you down or worse – postponing decisions until crisis, emergency or health matters dictate where and how you will live.”

Today, there are several [housing options](#) from which to choose, including independent living, assisted living and active adult communities, as well as the ability to continue living at home with assistance and safety modifications. Reorganizing, rightsizing and redesigning may also serve to make your home environment safe and comfortable for years to come.

Open and honest discussion among family members becomes an essential first step when trying to decide whether relocating or “aging in place” is the best option for you. Family meetings with your parents, spouse, children, siblings and other key people will help everyone share their views and help you decide how best to proceed. Active communication among all family members is the foundation to a strong support system.

Although some of these discussions may be quite difficult and emotional, several topics truly require attention. Older adults, along with family, should consider:

- The type of care that may be needed
- Various possible residential options
- Financial implications
- Legal implications
- Changes in lifestyle, geography, socialization and mobility
- The physical setting of the new home

### Moving

While health-related issues often dictate a move, many people simply decide they no longer want to stay in a home that is too large or requires too much maintenance. Increasingly, Baby Boomers are choosing to move to residential settings specifically designed with a number of senior lifestyle benefits:

- Architectural designs that maximize safety and security and provide common space for social, recreational and other activities
- Daily opportunities for social interaction with those who share your interests
- Conveniently located near shopping centers, bus or van transportation, and other activities
- Amenities, such as guest rooms, fitness centers and recreation programs
- Availability of health care services that may be needed in the future
- Provisions of a secure environment

## **Staying at Home**

According to AARP, over 85% of older adults prefer to age in place in the comfort of their own homes. Today, there are several agencies and tools available to help make this a safe and achievable reality. First, you must realistically evaluate your financial needs and resources to formulate an effective “stay at home” plan. If at some point, you find household tasks too overwhelming or need assistance with personal or health care issues, an array of [home care support services](#) are available.

## **Meals**

Inexpensive, hot, nutritious meals are available either through a [home-delivery meal program](#), or at a congregate dining site where food can be enjoyed along with the companionship of others.

## **Socialization**

Senior centers provide the opportunity for socialization and recreational activities for older adults. These centers may also offer legal, financial, and counseling services. They are typically operated by churches, park districts, or the community in which they are located, and often provide transportation.

## **Friendly visitor and telephone reassurance programs**

These services can provide companionship and someone to check on you or your loved one. Typically, volunteer or religiously affiliated social service agencies are providers of these services.

## **Adult day services**

Long-term care communities, retirement communities, local governments, or religious, civic and other groups often operate adult day care centers that can provide social and rehabilitative activities for the older adult so the caregiver can get some rest.

## **Respite care**

Long-term care communities, home health agencies, and other social service organizations also offer respite care for varying amounts of time from a few hours to a few weeks. This service allows family members time away from their caregiving responsibilities.

## **Household services**

Contact your local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) or check with local home health care agencies or [residential property management companies](#) in your community to get help with minor household repairs, yard work, housekeeping or seasonal work.

## **In-Home Care:**

[In-home care services](#) are becoming a popular alternative to moving to an assisted living or skilled nursing community. Check with local home health care agencies about what services they provide:

- **Non-medical home care** includes companionship (shopping, errands, transportation to and from appointments and gatherings); homemaking services (cooking, laundry, light housekeeping); and personal care (bathing, feeding, dressing, continence care, transferring, assistance with ambulation).
- **Home health care** covers a wide variety of clinical services offered to older adults in the home setting. It includes medical services provided by trained professionals, such as registered nurses or physical therapists. These services require a higher level of skill than the private duty/non-medical care noted above, and fees will likely be higher as well.

Agencies may require a minimum number of daily hours to help them schedule their caregivers in a cost and time-effective manner. Also, many states now require private duty home care agencies to be licensed or registered to provide personal home care services for older adults and those with disabilities.

The most important thing to remember is that open, honest communication and planning are key components of successful home or lifestyle transition. “To some, it seems like age changes everything, but in reality, you can control many of those changes,” Buckles concludes.

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## About Caring Transitions

As life changes, it may become necessary to leave a familiar home and part with personal belongings in order to downsize and relocate to a smaller home or retirement community. At Caring Transitions, we help our clients understand the process, evaluate their options and make informed decisions that suit their best interests. We are committed to making each client’s experience positive by minimizing stress and maximizing results.

Visit us online at [www.CaringTransitions.net](http://www.CaringTransitions.net)

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