

# Consider Eco-Friendly, Yet Affordable Home Modifications for Accessibility

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For parents who want to protect their children at every step of the way, using eco-friendly materials in their homes is a must. Yet, many parents worry that eco-friendly materials carry a hefty cost that they cannot afford when making modifications to make their homes more accessible. Fortunately, green building materials are much less expensive than they were just a few years ago. If you are in the process of making your home [more accessible](#) and want to find affordable, eco-friendly options, consider the options listed below.



## 1. Cork Flooring

One of the best home modifications you can make to improve accessibility is to remove carpeting that can make maneuvering in a wheelchair, with a walker or crutches difficult. The problem is that you may not know which type of flooring to use instead. In most cases, ceramic tile and linoleum are not eco-friendly and may be slippery; that's why people are opting for [cork flooring](#) instead.

Cork is a sustainable material because the cork is harvested from trees that are not cut down. The bark grows back every three years. Another perk of cork is that it is naturally anti-microbial, which reduces allergens in the home. People also like cork because it can be finished in nearly any color paint or stain and is durable.

## 2. Install Water Aerators

For many people looking to make their homes more accessible, they begin by lowering [sinks](#) or making it easier to maneuver around them. With all the time we spend washing our hands and face each day, it makes sense to begin with the sink. In some cases, people with disabilities leave the water running a little longer than others because it is more difficult for them to turn the faucet on and off. Adding a [water aerator](#) to the faucet makes it more eco-friendly because it pumps air into the water and eliminates the need to run the water at full blast.

## 3. Lowering a Sink

If you are lowering a sink to allow for wheelchair access, there is a good chance you will remove the vanity cabinet to make it easier for your loved one to get to the water. Lowering the sink can also mean that your plumbing will be exposed. If this happens, you will need to add [insulation](#). Foam and fiberglass insulation may contain toxins and are not eco-friendly. Alternative insulation options include natural wool, cotton insulation, cork, and recycled

plastic. You need to research which products are best for your project, especially considering the R-value that you will need.

#### **4. Sustainable Wheelchair Ramps**

Many families also install [wheelchair ramps](#) to improve accessibility, especially for exterior home entrances. Concrete ramps are costly, Aluminum ones are not eco-friendly and can be costly as well. For an eco-friendly option, consider building a wooden wheelchair ramp with wood from a sustainable forest. Wood is strong and can be treated or painted to extend its life. It can be covered with sand to prevent slipping.

#### **5. Glass Shower Stalls**

To make the bathroom more accessible, many families choose to install large shower stalls to accommodate a wheelchair or shower seat. While there may be a large upfront cost to remodeling the bathroom, choosing durable, eco-friendly materials that last for decades makes the modification well worth it, especially if it makes showering safer for your loved one. One such durable, eco-friendly material is [back-painted glass](#). The glass is made of natural materials that are easy to clean with non-toxic cleaners or water and microfiber cloths. The large surface does not require grout and is easy to maintain.

It is possible to make modifications to your home that are eco-friendly and affordable if you look for sustainable materials and choose projects that will last for many years to come.