Comfort and Convenience for Senior Living

Home Design Guide
THE COMFORTS OF HOME

At Sunrise Senior Living, each community is a unique home. From beautifully decorated spaces to layouts designed for seniors’ needs, we create comfortable, convenient living environments. It’s one of the many things that make Sunrise the best choice in senior living.

Sunrise has created this design guide to help you create inviting, personal spaces within your home. Our team of interior design experts partnered with HGTV host and professional designer Emily Henderson to address a variety of design needs, such as:

• Planning a Smooth Transition
• Strategies for Safety and Comfort
• Design Solutions for Aging Eyesight
• Creating Familiar Spaces for Memory Support
• Making Your Space Unique

Look for Emily’s senior-friendly design tips as you explore this guide.

About Emily

Emily Henderson is the Season Five winner of HGTV’s Design Star, and now hosts the channel’s Secrets from a Stylist. In each episode, she customizes rooms layer by layer, creating a style unique to the resident. Emily owns a design firm and writes the style blog StyleByEmilyHenderson.com, where she shares daily style secrets, trends and personal stories.
PLANNING A SMOOTH TRANSITION

At Sunrise, we do everything we can to ease each resident’s transition to their new home. Moving to a senior living community may be the right decision, but it can also be stressful. It takes time to meet new neighbors, learn how to sleep in a new bedroom and understand the ins and outs of the community.

We encourage our residents to express their personal taste and style by bringing their own furniture and decorating their new apartment—right down to the paint color.

TIPS FOR DOWNSIZING

Over time, we all accumulate furniture, clothing and a variety of personal items. Moving provides a good opportunity to identify what’s important to keep—and what can be offered to friends and family, or donated to charity.

Do

... Get the specifics on the size and layout of your new home. Plan to bring only those items that will fit comfortably.

... Create a must-have list tailored to favorite daily activities. For example, avid readers may want to include bookshelves.

... Get creative. Recreate the look of a previous home with fewer pieces, such as a loveseat (instead of the entire sofa set and chair).

Don’t

... Make packing decisions alone. Enlist someone who’s less emotionally attached to items that might not fit or be useful in a smaller home.

... Leave loved ones out of the process. If you’re helping a senior move to a new community, let him or her make as many decisions as possible.

... Waste money on new accessories. Sentimental photos, art, blankets and other mementos make a new home feel familiar.

Emily’s Tip

Just Add Greenery. Plants can add a lot of life. They filter the air and literally freshen a space. Ferns, snake plants, peace lilies and money trees are all easy to maintain. Prefer no maintenance? High-quality silk plants can work, too.

Choose Multi-Tasking Furniture. Maximize function and decrease clutter with a dining table that can be stored as a sideboard or an ottoman that can stow blankets.

Sunrise suggests this approach to furniture placement in our typical one-bedroom suite.
Sunrise champions quality of life for seniors—and safety is a primary concern. Many seniors face physical challenges like limited mobility, balance, sight and hearing. Keep these tips in mind when decorating a new home:

**Finesse the Furniture.** Strategically place major pieces so they can be used for balance while moving through the room. Keep pathways clear, particularly if walkers or wheelchairs are necessary.

**Improve Access.** Place frequently used items in waist-high cabinets and drawers. Keep phones near beds and sitting areas. Situate lamps for unrestricted access, and ensure switches are easy to operate. Switch dresser knobs to drawer pulls for an easier grip.

**Prevent Falls.** Avoid unsecured scatter rugs. All rugs should be non-slip and contrast in color with the flooring beneath. Tuck electrical cords behind furniture or use cable management products, which are available in most office supply stores.

**Increase Visibility.** Create strong contrasts in color between major pieces of furniture, walls, drapes and floors. During the day, allow as much natural light as possible into living areas. At night, illuminate the path between the bed and bathroom with motion-sensor nightlights.

**Create a Fall-Proof Bathroom.** Place seating in front of the sink and in the shower for easy, comfortable grooming. Install non-slip strips on the shower floor and grab bars near the shower, tub and toilet.

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### Emily’s Tip

**Start with Calming, Happy Colors.** Great colors include cool, serene blues and greens. Warm neutrals, especially shades of beige, also impart calm feelings. Like pastels? To avoid a babyish feel, choose pastels that have gray tones like Benjamin Moore Palladian Blue or Popcorn Kernel. If you have a favorite color, consider using it as an accent—or the center of your room palette.

**Invest in Storage Boxes.**
Keep clutter at bay by storing piles of papers, photos and miscellaneous items in pretty, stackable storage boxes. Label the outside of the box so you know where everything is. One note: Although they can vary in size, keep the boxes relatively small so they don’t get too heavy.

**Furniture Know-How.**
Opt for furniture that’s safe, sturdy and easy to maneuver around. Pieces that can support weight and can be leaned on, if necessary, are a good choice. Choose round side tables instead of square tables with sharp corners, avoid glass furniture that’s hard to see, and think about warm woods that don’t need maintenance.
Sunrise offers The View, a unique design program for our residents with vision challenges. The View package consists of design elements such as dark curtains to outline windows, light switch plates that contrast with the walls, large-print wall calendars, talking clocks and large-button phones.

Design Solutions for Aging Eyesight

Sunrise encourages and empowers independence. Our visually impaired residents will find it easier to navigate on their own with the help of these design tips:

1. Create strong color contrasts between major pieces of furniture, walls, drapes and floors. The same applies to different pieces of bedding—and even in the bathroom, where the toilet seat should be noticeably darker or lighter than the floor.

2. Outline windows with curtain fabrics that stand out from the walls. Add cording to couches and chairs to better define these pieces.

3. Natural light not only helps keep things visible—it improves sleep cycles.

4. Keep reading areas well lit. Adhesive under-cabinet lighting in the kitchen helps with food preparation as well.

5. Did you know that aging eyes cannot distinguish between blues and greens? Only use these colors as accents against a primarily red or gold palette.

6. Nightlights and motion-sensor lights—especially between the bedroom and bathroom—make for easier navigation and reduce the risk of falls.

7. Artwork and other accessories should be bright, crisp and clear.

8. Position reflective furniture to minimize glare. Avoid glass-top tables, which reflect light and can also be difficult to see in dim rooms.

Contrast Your Textile Colors. Aging vision needs a little help to differentiate layers. Think about using different textures, colors and patterns for your bed’s top sheet, pillows, bottom sheet and duvet. Then mix in some different textures with your throw pillows—velvets, linens and cable knits work great.

Emily’s Tip

Think Smart Lighting. Select lamps with easy-touch sensors and three-way lighting: dim, medium and bright. Go for fabric shades over paper or metal shades—the light is more ambient. Plus, in the bedroom, choose wall sconces to free up nightstand space.
Creating Familiar Spaces for Memory Support

At Sunrise, we know that Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of memory loss affect every one of our residents differently. Our team values each senior’s individual needs. We believe the home environment can also be a therapeutic tool to create security, promote self-esteem and engage the senses.

Smell

- Familiar, pleasant scents like coffee or popcorn can serve as calming aromatherapy.
- While flame candles present a fire hazard, scented electric candles mimic the flicker of a real flame and release a pleasant aroma.

Touch

- Textures stimulate memory; items upholstered with touches of lace, fur and even denim can evoke particular life events.
- Tactile wall art encourages touch and sparks conversation.

Sight

- Familiar photos and meaningful décor can spark memories and conversation.
- Busy patterns can create frustration and confusion; avoid designs with dark spots that may be misinterpreted as dirt or holes.

Taste

- Primary colors enhance appetite. Solid yellow bowls and dishes contrast best with food.
- Cups and bowls with two handles improve ease of use.
- Don’t fake it—plastic fruits, vegetables, or even berries on silk plants can be confused with real food.

Sunrise offers Reminiscence Neighborhoods for our residents with memory loss. These secure areas incorporate many of the sensory elements mentioned here. Reminiscence Neighborhoods are also designed so that resident suites are located next to living and dining areas, promoting easy navigation and social interaction.
At Sunrise, we hang a personalized shadow box outside each suite to showcase residents’ unique stories, talents and interests. The piece not only encourages conversation with neighbors—it also enhances our residents’ feeling of familiarity and belonging.

Making Your Space Unique

Above all, Sunrise builds and designs its communities to warmly welcome each and every resident. Once safety, convenience and overall support are incorporated into the design, it’s time for the fun part: Individual style.

LET PERSONALITY SHINE
• From quilting to figurine collections to favorite artists, décor should reflect the resident’s tastes and interests.
• Personalized interiors also provide conversation starters for visitors.

ENCOURAGE SOCIAL INTERACTION
• Ensure plenty of guest seating.
• Group furniture in a way that encourages conversation, such as placing seating in a semicircle.
• Display interesting art, awards, photos and other personal items in a way that sparks conversation. Stack photo albums where visitors will feel comfortable flipping through them.

Emily’s Tip

Keep Accessories Meaningful, Beautiful and Functional. Downsizing makes it hard to figure out what to keep, what to store and what to hand down to family. Trays, boxes and vases make great go-to accessories. They’re pretty and functional—and if you have some that conjure up a memory, then you’ve achieved all three!
Install Art Shelves. Framed photos tend to clutter up surfaces. Instead, arrange family pictures on art shelves. You can replace photos more easily, and hammers and nails are never needed.

Mix Open and Closed Storage. Too much closed storage can make your space seem sterile. However, too much open storage invites a mess. Keep files and paperwork in closed bottom cabinets, and books and mementos displayed higher, on open shelving.

Sunrise believes growing older doesn’t mean that home should be any less comfortable, stylish or inviting. We encourage our residents and their families to use this guide to create homes that celebrate the past, present and future!

For more tips from Sunrise and Emily Henderson, and to see a list of Emily’s recommended products, visit: SunriseSeniorLiving.com/Design
The Sunrise Design Team is a full-service, in-house interior design firm with expertise in aesthetically pleasing, functional and safe home design for seniors. With the utmost dedication to our Principles of Service and Core Values, the team creates homes that incorporate:

- Thoughtfully selected design features, finishes, furniture, fabrics, window treatments and more.
- Space planning and placement of lighting, art and accessories in a manner that best meets seniors’ needs.
- Full compliance with relevant building codes and furnishing standards.