

Planning your home can be a stressful process. We built this checklist like we build our homes – with careful consideration and meticulous attention to detail.

Hopefully this list helps lower your stress and increases your excitement as you consider all the ways you can customize and personalize your future forever home.

Designing Your Forever Home – Checklist [✓]






General Design

- [] **Home orientation** – Consider the sun and leverage the fact it rises in the east and sets in the west to your advantage. Avoid overheating your Texas home by minimizing western-facing windows.
- [] **Distance between kitchen and garage** – Lugging groceries from the car to your kitchen can be quite the chore when your garage is all the way across the house.
- [] **Water heater location(s)** – Place the water heater as close as possible to the kitchen and/or master bath to reduce the time it takes to get hot water out of the faucets. However, avoid the temptation to place it in the attic as leaks are damaging when they come down from the ceiling!
- [] **Distance between laundry room and master closet** – Washing clothes is never fun. Dragging them across the house each time makes this chore even more burdensome.
- [] **Levers vs. door knobs** – Consider levers for more accessibility (easier for children and seasoned individuals to operate, however some large dogs can too!) and for elbow operation when your hands are otherwise occupied.
- [] **USB charging stations** – Strategically located charging outlets for your phones and devices are a must-have for the modern home. Popular placements include the kitchen, bedroom and entryways.
- [] **Self-closing door hinges** – Never again forget to close the door to the garage, pantry, toilet room, etc. Install self-closing hinges to ensure particular doors are never left open.
- [] **Wi-Fi router placement** – Careful placement of your wi-fi router (or access points) can significantly boost the coverage and speed of your home's network. Place it high and in the middle of the home (or the area you want to ensure is well covered) and wire your home accordingly.
- [] **Insulation and sound-proofing** – A foam-insulated home is an excellent way to improve energy efficiency. It significantly reduces the demand on your air conditioner. However, for internal walls, foam insulation can actually increase the sound heard through walls. Consider batt insulation for interior walls if you wish to reduce the sound traveling between walls and rooms.
- [] **Automatic light switches** – Consider automatic movement-based light switches for key rooms such as closets, the kitchen pantry, the garage, etc. They're convenient and save power too!



= Impacts energy efficiency = Improves accessibility = Particularly bright idea!






General Design (continued)


- [] **Upstairs vs downstairs** – If accessibility is important for your forever home, the master suite (or at least a guest suite) should be located on the first floor. This is also important when hosting seasoned guests. 
- [] **Wide doors and hallways** – To ensure your forever home can accommodate wheel chairs in the future, ensure doors are at least 36" wide, including walk-in closets and showers. Hallways should be at least 66" wide. 
- [] **Extra bracing in walls** – During the framing of the home, plan ahead and have the carpenters install extra bracing wherever handrails might be needed in the future. And while you're at it, consider where you might hang a TV or heavy art and have them install extra bracing there too.  
- [] **Avoid slab drops** – As you consider the design of your foundation, try to avoid "slab drops" where door thresholds are an inch or two higher than the porch. Ensuring all entries into and throughout the home are flat or at least ramped will help with future accessibility. 


Kitchen


- [] **More drawers, less cupboards** – Bending over and finding items in the back of a lower cupboard is a pain. Invest in large, deep drawers instead.  
- [] **Soft closing drawers and cabinets** – Add some peace and tranquility to your kitchen with soft (auto) closing drawers and cabinets. This small added expense is a great upgrade to consider, however this can also make it harder to open doors for seasoned individuals, so be sure to test these out before you decide. 
- [] **Height of kitchen window** – If your kitchen allows for a window above the sink, consider the height of the people most likely to be doing the majority of the standing in front of it.  
- [] **Appliance "garage"** – A popular enhancement to modern kitchens is a large counter-level cupboard to house your common appliances such as coffee maker, toaster, kettle, etc. And don't forget to install electrical in it! 
- [] **Pot filler** – Save your back and install a pot water filler spicket on the wall behind your stovetop. 
- [] **Electrical outlets in island** – If your kitchen includes an island, be sure to carefully consider the location of electrical outlets, as it's likely to be a central hub for laptops, tablets, etc.  

Outdoors

- [] **Covered porch** – One of the best defenses against the Texas heat is a well-designed covered porch.  
- [] **Hose bib locations** – Plan ahead and ensure you've got hose bibs strategically places for all your watering and car-washing needs. A soft-water hose bib is extra handy for avoiding water spots as you rinse your car.
- [] **Conduit under driveway** – You never know when you might want water or electrical on the other side of the driveway. Plan ahead and bury some conduit to save yourself a potential major hassle in the future. 
- [] **Electrical outlets in soffits** – Install a few (switched) electrical outlets up in the soffits for Christmas lighting. Tie them to a programmable switch and save on the electric bill too!  
- [] **Extra circuit for outdoor lighting** – Have your electrician install an extra circuit and box for future outdoor lighting. Place it along the foundation where it's closest to wherever you might plan to add lighting.

 = Impacts energy efficiency

 = Improves accessibility

 = Particularly bright idea!

Master Suite

- [] **Wall space for headboard** – Be sure to leave a large enough wall space for your bed's headboard.
- [] **Outlets next to bed** – Locate electrical outlets on each side of your headboard for charging devices and bedside lamps.
- [] **Roll in shower** – Plan for the future and consider making your shower accessible for rolling in a wheelchair.
- [] **Electrical outlets in bathroom cabinet** – Install electrical outlets inside a cabinet to charge razors and other devices out of sight.
- [] **Bright "daylight" lighting in closet** – Install lighting in your master closet that will replicate daylight as closely as possible to ensure your clothing selections are the colors you expect.
- [] **Save a spot for a full-length mirror** – Design your closet and/or bathroom with a wall space to hang a full-length mirror.
- [] **Shoe cubbies (lots of them!)** – You can never have enough shoe cubbies.
- [] **Sitting bench in master closet** – Plan for room for a chair in your master closet, or consider installing a built-in sitting bench.



Garage

- [] **Widen your garage door** – An extra wide garage door is a useful enhancement, especially if you have Texas-sized vehicles. This is especially important for that 3rd car door (single-wide).
- [] **Leave extra space for accessibility** – Consider the space needed to load a wheelchair as you plan your garage dimensions.
- [] **What else will you be storing?** – Most people store more than their cars in their garage. Riding lawn mower? Tools? ATV? Boat? Freezer? Don't forget to include enough room for all your extra stuff.
- [] **Electrical & water outlets** – Plan ahead if you intend to have a 2nd refrigerator and have your architect map out power and water (a 2nd ice maker is super useful!) accordingly.
- [] **Utility room** – Consider a small utility room in your garage where you can place your water heater, water softener, water filter and other utility appliances.
- [] **Pet door** – A well-planned pet door that exits to a fenced yard or dog run is a great way to give your pet the freedom to be inside or out while you're gone. They even make doors that unlock only for your pet's collar.
- [] **Attic storage** – A few sheets of plywood and a heavy duty set of pull-down attic stairs makes for a good deal of additional storage in the rafters of your garage.



= Impacts energy efficiency



= Improves accessibility



= Particularly bright idea!