



## Door Handles

**Small tasks like not being able to open a door yourself can have a huge effect on your independence.**

### The Facts

*1. The simple actions that make up our daily routines are largely taken for granted by the majority of us until we are unable to perform them without assistance.*

*2. Door handles and locks are often overlooked by many as a small insignificant detail.*

*3. Seemingly small things like having user friendly door handles can actually have a large impact on your independence in day to day life.*

### Control of your environment

A major part of living happily and comfortably in your own home as you age is the ability to regulate, control and move through your own environment independently and with ease.

The simple act of opening a door can become a hard and possibly painful task if you experience limited hand movement or other restrictions.

There are several factors that contribute to the easy operation of doors, including the size and weight of the door and the motion of opening it.

One of the main factors is the door handle: type, location, size and action.

The design of door handles is an important consideration for both external and internal doors.

### Handle type

If you have reduced hand mobility or have trouble gripping items one of the first things that you should address is the types of door handles you have in your home.

## Consider replacing handles on the doors in your home you use often.

Lever action handles are better suited than a knob or other style for swing doors and for sliding doors a 'D' shaped handle with sufficient clearance between the handle and the door face is ideal.

### Size and clearance

Door handles should be a size that allows you to easily grip and firmly hold the handle.

As we age skin tends to become thinner and skin injuries can be more common and take longer to heal.

Brushing or knocking your hand constantly against the surface of a door when opening or closing it can cause injury and this can become a potential problem.

The clearance between the door face and the handle becomes an important consideration.

The handle, regardless of the type of door it is installed on, should have sufficient clearance to ensure that your hand does not scrape the door or become stuck in the opening between the handle and the door.

A clearance of 35-40 mm is suitable for most people.

### Location

The door handle should be installed between 900-1000mm above the floor level to suit a range of users both ambulant and those people using a wheelchair.

The handle on a sliding door should be located back from the edge of the door sufficiently to allow enough space between the handle and the jamb to prevent your hand becoming trapped or injured when using the door.

### Shape and finish

Door handles should have a smooth finish with no sharp edges that can catch skin or clothing.

Lever handles that taper down at the end may cause your hand to slide off the end potentially causing you to lose your balance and fall.

Ergonomically designed handles that contour to your hand can assist with the motion of operating the door.

### Installation and durability

People with reduced strength in their hands and arms tend to use their body weight to compensate for the lack of strength and lean on the handle or door when opening it.

Handles should be made of durable materials and securely fixed.

### Door operation options

When most people think of opening and closing a door they think 'door handle' and the installation of an easy to operate handle is suitable for most needs.

However, there are those circumstances that may arise where a door handle is not the most suitable option.

In this case there are alternatives to consider including, elbow or foot operated doors, sensor activated doors or remotely controlled doors.

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