

Our future homes will meet our every need

The future is urban. With so many people moving into cities at exponential rates, we need to figure out where everyone will live. Horizontal land is expensive, probably because we are swiftly running out of available land.

The only viable option is up.

The future city will be [vertical](#). Our cityscapes will be dominated by high-rise buildings. And that's a good thing. They won't just serve as our homes but will cater to all aspects of our lives. We have a chance to redesign our cities to create first-class living experiences.

In this article, we will explore how future high-rise buildings will use different technologies to become modern and "smart" for their inhabitants. We'll also explore the future experience of living in these smart buildings.

Trends driving high-rise growth

1. **Longer life expectancy** I've mentioned before that Africa's life expectancy is set to rise from 57 in 2010 to 64 by 2030 thanks to new technology and more effective medicine. This will set the foundation for increased urbanization. Where are all these people going to live? A majority will live in high-rise buildings as horizontal space becomes limited and expensive.
2. **Millennials settling down later** An increased life expectancy will fundamentally change living habits. Millennials are settling down later in life, with more women having children [in their forties](#). One- and two-person households have seen the greatest growth globally between 1980 and today – both up by 183%, compared to an increase of just 91.7% for couples with children. Single-person households are already the dominant group in North America and Western Europe. This will be the fastest-growing profile worldwide between 2014 and 2030.
3. **Elderly independence** Sixty is the new forty. "Seniors", or people aged 65+, are more active than preceding generations. As people live longer, they will want to retain their independence for as long as they can. Age-related health problems don't make multi-story homes attractive given the amount of upkeep, not to mention stairs. These changing needs are best suited in high-rise homes, which are often smaller and more affordable.

How our future homes will work

With limited horizontal space, all the necessary resources and amenities will be integrated into a seamless user experience. Here's a list explaining how high-rise living will change for the better.

- 1. Biophilic design** Meaning “love of nature”, future high-rise buildings will [mimic the natural environment](#). This will counter an increasingly urban setting. A study showed that the color green is considered [an emotionally calming color](#) since it reminds people of nature. Green also offers a sense of refreshment and harmony and helps people adjust to new environments. Additionally, in keeping with the nature theme, many developers are experimenting with [wood as a substitute](#) for steel and concrete.
- 2. Community engagement** With one- and two-person households on the rise, one side effect can be loneliness, [which is bad for your health](#). Therefore, future high-rise buildings will be designed for community engagement. These mixed-use developments - some of which are already in place - will have all the amenities to promote social relationships.
- 3. Personalized experience** Each home will be “smart”, that is, have an operating system that will cater to your every need, much like what the smart assistants like Amazon Alexa and Google Home are doing today. New technologies will create an environment specifically for you. Your home will read your mood by how you speak and walk and customize your domestic environment so you can operate to your fullest potential.
- 4. New building materials** To further enable personalization, new buildings will be modular in order to change as quickly as people's tastes. Buildings will also become more adaptable through the advent of self-assembling materials, also known as [aleatory](#) architecture. When these one- and two-person households starting having children, parents will be able to build another room in their house at a fraction of the cost and time it takes traditionally construction techniques.
- 5. New elevator technology** I wrote another article about the promise of new elevator design which I will quickly summarize here. New lightweight cables and even magnetic levitation (maglev) means that high-rises will no longer be restricted by height. Elevators will also be able to move left and right, allowing developers to build more unique looking buildings. And multiple cabins will operate within the same elevator shaft, increasing service and reducing wait times.