



FALL HOME IMPROVEMENT



BATHROOM

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room. Dark, small spaces can be made to look more expansive with lighter colors. Cavernous bathrooms that look empty may prove more inviting with darker hues. Pick a paint that is designed for bathroom application so that it will inhibit the growth of mold and mildew.

Update hardware

A new faucet or some new cabinet pulls can make the room look new and fresh without breaking the bank. Match finishes throughout the bathroom so everything will be cohesive. When shopping for a new shower head, choose a model that also conserves water. This way you will be making cosmetic and energy-saving renova-

tions at the same time.

DIY

Handling labor yourself instead of hiring workers can reduce the cost of bathroom remodels considerably. It is possible to buy fully assembled bathroom vanities and install them yourself. Even installing a new toilet is relatively easy with the help of a friend.

There are a number of ways to make bathroom renovations a bit easier and more affordable. Even nominal changes can give the space an entirely different look and feel, which can make the room more enjoyable and help improve a home's resale value in the process.

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How to Increase Storage in Tight Spaces



Cozy, quaint homes attract many home buyers and renters. Be it a cottage-style house or a studio apartment, smaller living spaces often involve getting creative with storage.

People live in a smaller homes for a variety of reasons. Some choose to live in a smaller home so they can be right in the thick of things in a city or urban center. Others scale back on living space in an effort to save money. But storage space in small quarters is often at a premium, and thinking creatively is a necessity to keep the home tidy and items out of view.

Rainy or chilly days are the perfect times to tackle indoor organization projects. When the outdoors isn't beckoning, you can devote all of your attention to addressing storage issues in your home. To begin, take inventory of what you have, going through your possessions and determining what can stay and what can go. Part with anything you haven't used in quite some time.

The next step is to sort items and get organized. Then you can find a place for everything. For exam-

ple, if you have a dozen bath towels but only one sauce pot, you will need to find more room for linens than kitchen cookware. You may need to borrow space from one area of the home to give to another area. The following are some additional tips to increase space in an otherwise cramped home.

* Add shelves. Increase cabinet and closet space by adding shelves into them. This may double or even triple the amount of usable space, especially if you customize the shelving to fit storage containers you use to store everything from shoes to craft items.

* Opt for dual-purpose furniture. Benches with lids that lift up and sofas that convert into guest beds are just a few of the many ways you can keep a small home neat and increase storage space. An ottoman is a great place to store extra blankets and linens, while a trunk or crate with a sturdy top can be used in lieu of a traditional coffee table to keep books or board games.

* Think vertically. When

floor space is at a premium, you may need to look up for storage. Frequently used pots and pans can be hung from a decorative rack in your kitchen. Use magnets on jars to store a spice rack on the wall near the stove. Racks above cabinets or on doors can be used to store everything from shoes to jewelry to toiletries. Shelving in children's rooms can store lesser used toys away from the floor. Empty walls are valuable real estate in a small home, and tall bookshelves can house a number of different things.

* Take advantage of oddly shaped crevices. If you have space under a staircase or a spot by a dormer or in an attic eave, use the space to store items. You may need to get creative, such as adding a door and small closet into the staircase, but such spaces make practical storage areas and add character to a home.

* Use see-through storage containers. Many people find that plastic storage bins are neater and more stackable than boxes. See-through bins enable you to quickly find items so that you are not searching around the house for lost items and creating a bigger mess along the way. Clear storage containers work in the refrigerator, too. You can more easily spot leftovers, and uniform stacking containers free up more room for bulkier items.

* Make use of space

beneath your bed. There likely is ample room to store more things than just dust bunnies beneath your bed. A bed frame with built-in drawers is the perfect place to keep bed linens and out-of-season clothes. Beds can be raised on blocks to create more space underneath for storing rolling plastic containers and even seldom-used suitcases.

* Opt for an armoire. Armoires are not exclusive to bedrooms. Armoires can be used in dining spaces or in dens to store items out of sight. An armoire can be used when retrofitted with a pull-out shelf as a laptop desk, storing all office items behind closed doors when not needed.

* Improve storage in the bathroom. Try to choose a vanity that has under-the-sink storage so you will have a place to store some toiletries. Home improvement centers sell cabinets and etagers that can be placed above the toilet tank as a storage space for bathroom items. In the shower, hang a second tension-loaded shower curtain rod on the inside of the shower enclosure that can be used to hold bags of kids bath toys and other toiletries, keeping them off the tub ledges.

When you think creatively, you can maximize storage space even in a small home.

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Budget-Friendly Outdoor Renovation Ideas

Homeowners are increasingly extending their living spaces outside the walls of their homes. Expansive and intricate stonework patios and decked-out outdoor kitchens are the kind of additions many homeowners dream of. Those with unlimited budgets can enjoy just about any look they desire, but many homeowners may not have the money to go all the way with their outdoor living spaces. But that doesn't mean it's impossible to create budget-friendly spaces that are functional, fun and eye catching.

Decks and patios are popular gathering spots outside a home, and homeowners have numerous inexpensive options at their disposal when choosing patio materials. And those who can do their own labor when installing a patio can save a substantial amount of money. Instead of higher-priced composite or resin decks, homeowners can go with standard wood, which will need to be stained periodically. Scaling back the size of the deck means less materials to buy and less labor involved.

Though not all homeowners can afford to create the backyard of their dreams, with a little ingenuity and some sweat hard work, homeowners can still create an outdoor oasis.

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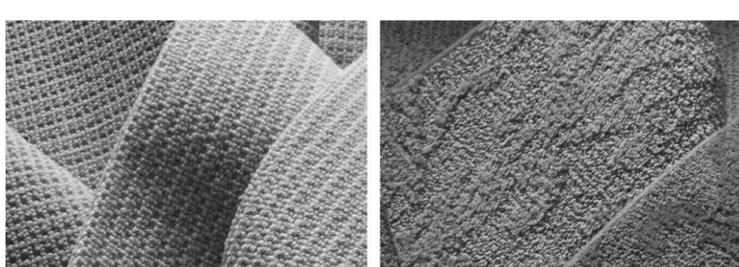
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