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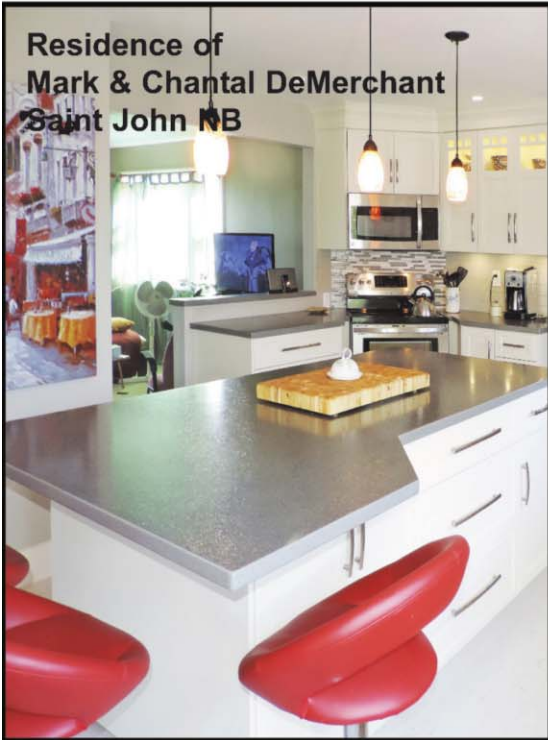
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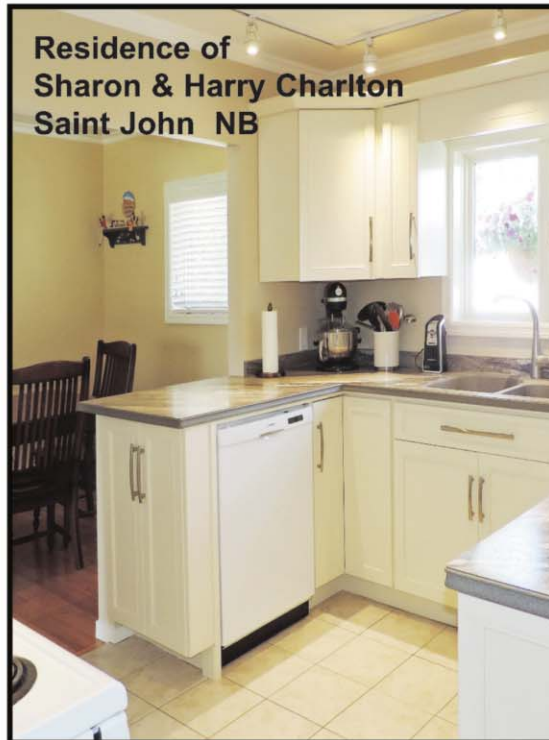
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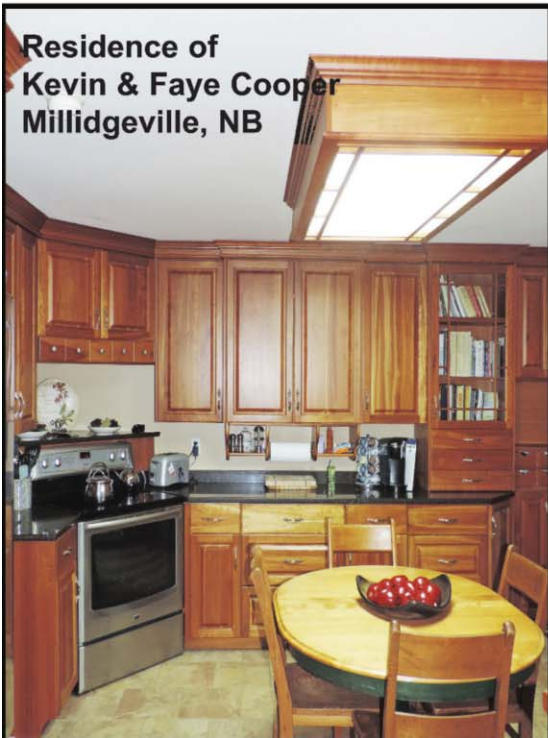
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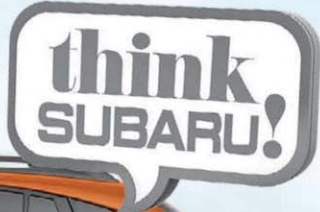


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HGTV host says homeowners need to better respect fire and carbon monoxide dangers

(NC) All homeowners want to ensure the safety of their property. However, many neglect the most crucial safety elements of the home. As the popular host of HGTV's hit home renovation show, Income Property, Scott McGillivray has pretty much seen it all. Infestations, rot and mould, construction shortcuts and DIY electrical and plumbing that are shockingly unsafe.

But one of the things he shakes his head most at is the lack of respect people seem to have for the dangers of fire and carbon monoxide (CO).

"Everyone believes it won't happen to them, but in many cases fate proves them wrong," McGillivray says. "It's no different than quality insulation or windows or flooring – homeowners also need to invest in safety. And that includes high-quality



smoke and carbon monoxide alarms."

For those who rent out income suites, McGillivray says the need is doubly important. "As landlords, you are responsible for providing fire and carbon monoxide protection for your tenants. It's not only their safety, it's your own family's too."

McGillivray is impressed with the range of technology advances being made in smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Aside from devices that factor into whole-home automation, he says today's alarms last longer, require less maintenance and do a better job of identifying a real emergency.

"What excites me most are the new worry-free alarms that contain a sealed lithium battery that lasts for 10 years," he says. "Just by not having to replace bat-

teries every year, the average homeowner saves upwards of \$40. But knowing that the alarm will remain powered a full decade, the same as the alarm's new longer lifespan, is the real breakthrough in my eyes."

The Worry-Free alarms, manufactured by Kidde Canada, also feature new sensors which are better at telling the difference between a real incident and a false alarm. McGillivray says he specs Kidde's Worry-Free combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarms for all his renovations. "The convenience and technology are top notch," he says.

McGillivray notes that he only installs hardwired models which have the sealed 10-year battery for back up in case of a power failure.

"During many of our initial demolitions we see rooms completely unprotected from fire and CO, or with alarms hanging from the ceiling with no batteries, or alarms that were installed over 15 years ago," McGillivray adds. "These are high tech devices. They are there to save your life. Put them up and don't take them down or tamper with them. And when they get to be 10 years old, it's time to replace them without fail."

More renovation and safety tips can be found at www.scottmcgillivray.com.

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Combat moisture issues when choosing insulation

By Scott McGillivray

(NC) We insulate our homes primarily to keep them warm in the winter and cool in the summer. As a result, most of us evaluate insulation based on its thermal properties, which is definitely important to consider. However, there is another aspect of wall and ceiling insulation that should be considered before making a final decision, and that's moisture. If you choose the wrong insulation, moisture can seriously damage its long-term performance, drastically reducing the benefits it offers to your home.

Although wall and ceiling cavities may be out of sight after a home is built, they are very important spaces in residential construction and remodeling projects. They play a critical role in managing the interior temperature, noise level, air flow and mould levels. It's important that the insulation in the walls and ceilings works just as well many years after installation as it does the day after the project is complete. This means that the insulation needs to stay consistent over time—any sagging, compressing or rotting will compromise the safety and comfort of your home.

To combat these potential problems, look for insulation that does not absorb water, but repels it. Stone wool insulation, like that produced by Canadian manufacturer Roxul, is a good choice. Water resistance is important year-round, but especially in summer when humidity levels rise and in spring and fall when rain and moisture levels can increase dramatically. It's vital that your insulation won't compress or sag within the wall or ceiling cavity, because when insulation materials compress and sag, they leave gaps, compromising the thermal performance of the wall. Cold, heat and sound can pass through much more easily, creating a living space that's less comfortable and more expensive to heat and cool.

Another important consideration when choosing insulation is mould resistance. Materials, like stone wool resist mould growth, and that is essential to the health of your home and family. Because mould feeds on organic matter, selecting an insulation that is composed of non-organic materials is ideal to prevent rot.

Keeping moisture and mould at bay with a quality insulation will contribute to a safer indoor environment and provide energy savings and comfort benefits that can last for the lifetime of a home.

Scott McGillivray is the award-winning TV host of the hit series *Income Property* on HGTV Canada, a full-time real estate investor, contractor, author, and educator. Follow him on Twitter @smcgillivray.
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Reds are a go for design in 2016

(NC) We've all done it. Gone down the rabbit hole of Pinterest and countless other sites, spending hours looking at beautiful homes and yearning over them all. The aftermath is that you're now inspired to redesign your own space, but don't quite know where to begin. What will the design be? What style do I choose? A good place to start is with colour. Colour is emotional and has the ability to awaken the senses. And no colour radiates passion and vitality more than red, so why not start there?

Bold red has long been making a statement in the world of fashion and beauty, but over the past few years, its various shades and tones have become very popular in the world of interior design. This is why we see more and more rich reds, often considered traditional, incorporated into contemporary designs. Tied to everything from food to fashion to history and politics, red hues are a symbol of power, passion, energy and life. But when it comes to using them in your home, the key is to know where and how to make them work.

Red is the perfect choice for many a space, accent wall or dare we say ceiling. Try it in a dining room or bedroom for a



luxurious look or even on a front door – because nothing says welcome more than a bright red entrance. Another subtle way to incorporate red is to use it in a room with wood furniture or richly-saturated mahogany floors. It also accentuates a room with clean, modern pieces. When it comes to choosing a complementing colour, it pairs well with soft blush tones like Para Paints' Orb Sparkle (PF 33) or soft greys such as Princess Cut (PF 57).

Red is a classic, so embrace this colour trend and try it out in your own home with Para's 2016 colour of the year Cherries Jubilee (P5079-85). Keep an eye out for more colour trends coming this fall.
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Reduce your heating bill this winter

(NC) As we encounter cooler days our attention inevitably focuses indoors. "Turning up the heat can be hard on the pocket book, but there are simple ways to reduce your heating bills," says Alan Stewart, broker-manager with Royal LePage Sussex in North Vancouver. Stewart recommends these three cost-saving tips:

1. Replace or clean furnace filters once per month. Dirty filters restrict airflow and increase energy use. Keeping your furnace clean, lubricated and properly adjusted can save up to five per cent of heating costs.

2. Remove window screens. For the most part, homeowners keep their windows closed during the cold winter months to

seal in warm air. Screens can block up to 20 per cent of the sun's warm rays. Remove your screens and take advantage of nature's heat.

3. Run your ceiling fans in reverse. Doing so, at a moderate speed, will recycle any warm air sitting near your ceilings and push it back down into your living areas. Turning your fan in a clockwise direction during the winter can help you recycle up to 10 per cent of your home's heat.

Heating comprises about 60 per cent of a home's energy bills during winter. More information on home maintenance can be found at www.royallepage.ca.

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Common mistakes made on home renovation projects

Home improvement projects can turn a house into a home. Homeowners plan scores of renovations to transform living spaces into rooms that reflect their personal tastes and comforts.

Homeowners going it alone may find things do not always go as planned. In fact, a Harris Interactive study found that 85 percent of homeowners say remodeling is a more stressful undertaking than buying a home. But homeowners about to embark on home improvement projects can make the

process go more smoothly by avoiding these common pitfalls.

Failing to understand the scope of the project

Some homeowners don't realize just how big a commitment they have made until they get their hands dirty. But understanding the scope of the project, including how much demolition and reconstruction is involved and how much time a project will take can help homeowners avoid some of the stress that comes with renovation projects.

For example, a bathroom renovation may require the removal of drywall, reinforcement of flooring to accommodate a new bathtub or shower enclosure and the installation of new plumbing and wiring behind walls. So such a renovation is far more detailed than simply replacing faucets.

Not establishing a budget

Homeowners must develop a project budget to ensure their projects do not drain their finances. If your budget is so inflexible that you can't afford the materials you prefer, you may want to postpone the project and save more money so you can eventually afford to do it right.

Without a budget in place, it is easy to overspend, and that can put you in financial peril down the line. Worrying about coming up with money to pay for materials and labor also can induce stress. Avoid the anxiety by setting a firm budget.

Making trendy or overpersonal improvements

Homeowners who plan to stay in their homes for the long run have more free reign when it comes to renovating their homes. Such homeowners can create a billiards room or paint a room hot pink if they so prefer. However, if the goal is to make improvements in order to sell a property, overly personal touches may make a property less appealing to prospective buyers. Trends come and go, and improvements can be expensive. If your ultimate goal is to sell your home, opt for renovations that will look beautiful through the ages and avoid bold choices that may only appeal to a select few buyers.

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Forgetting to properly vet all workers

It is important to vet your contractor, but don't forget to vet potential subcontractors as well. Failing to do so can prove a costly mistake. Contractors often look to subcontractors to perform certain parts of a job, and it is the responsibility of homeowners to vet these workers.

Expecting everything to go as planned

Optimism is great, but you also should be a realist. Knowing what potentially could go wrong puts you in a better position to handle any problems should they arise. The project might go off without a hitch, but plan for a few hiccups along the way.

Overestimating DIY abilities

Overzealous homeowners may see a renovation project in a magazine or on television and immediately think they can do the work themselves. Unless you have the tools and the skills necessary to do the work, tackling too much can be problematic. In the long run, leaving the work to a professional may save you money.

Home improvements can be stressful, but homeowners can lessen that stress by avoiding common renovation mistakes. SH152893



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How to green up your home improvements

(NC) Canadians are avid home improvers. Did you know that, according to some reports, spending on renovations in this country has been the fastest growing part of residential investment – above new home builds and resales?

But along with this trend, more and more homeowners aren't just looking for visual upgrades, they want to go green too. If you are also wondering about quick and easy improvements to upgrade your home while reducing your environmental footprint – here are three:

1. Make eco-friendly upgrades – For instance, while older shower heads can use up to 26 litres of water per minute, the newer water-saving models provide the same pressure while cutting the H₂O used to as low as 5.5 litres per minute. The same goes for newer dual flush toilets that can save as much as 65,000 litres of water per year. Replace older fluorescent and incandescent bulbs with LED alternatives. This will reduce your environmental footprint while also reducing your utility bills.

2. Choose sustainable materials – An easy way to update a house while being environmentally-conscious is to use sustainable materials.

Try giving your home a facelift with a fresh coat of eco-friendly paint. While green paint options used to be a costly alternative, now many large brands offer a comparatively priced environmentally friendly option. Make sure to look for low- or zero-VOC (volatile organic compound) products.

3. Dispose of your construction waste properly – From the used batteries in your power tools to the old dry wall you've just replaced, each item needs to be disposed of properly. To recycle hazardous household waste, check your local municipal website for detailed information. For old, single-use and rechargeable batteries, visit www.Call2Recycle.ca to find one of 7,000-plus collection sites across Canada.

Those were just three of the easiest steps to ensure that all renovations help both our pocket book and the environment. But don't stop there. Keep looking for countless additional ways to improve your home while also reducing your environmental footprint.

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How to tackle your home's stubborn stains and odors

(NC) From wall stains to washing machines, indoor stains and smells can be a challenge to tackle. Luckily, there are surprisingly simple methods to erase them for good. Here are a few tips to freshen up the most stubborn spots in your home.

Conceal wall stains with primer

Have your kids made artwork of your walls, or has your leaky roof caused a water-damaged mess? Tough wall stains like these can be hard to get rid of, but are easily sealed by applying a high-quality, stain-blocking primer. For example, KILZ Hide-All Primer Sealer covers problem areas on surfaces from drywall and woodwork to concrete and brick. It even masks over dark stains without allowing color to bleed through. With only a one-hour drying time before applying a topcoat, this is the perfect one-weekend project to cross off your list. KILZ primer can also seal off odors caused by pets or smoke.

Eliminate refrigerator odors

Refrigerators are subject to a variety of spills and odors. Making time for fridge maintenance can help prevent unusual odors and keep your food fresh longer. To cleanse and polish your fridge, begin by emptying the contents of your fridge and throwing out, recycling or composting any food that is expired or beginning to smell.

Next, pull out any removable drawers or shelving and place them in the sink. Using a damp, soft cloth or non-abrasive sponge, wipe down these pieces, the interior of your fridge and the door with a multi-purpose cleaner. Or, mix two tablespoons of baking soda with one quart of hot water for a natural soap alternative. Don't forget the seams of the shelves and rubber door seal.



If your fridge requires an extra-deep cleaning, unplug it while you work to avoid wasting energy. Before putting all of your food back into the fridge, wipe down the exterior of each jar or container with a damp cloth. Repeat this process every two or three months for the best results.

Make grout lines shine

Tile surfaces are prone to dirt and debris, especially in bathrooms or high-traffic areas. To keep tile looking fresh and new, grab an old toothbrush or electric toothbrush for a deeper scrub. Before you start, wash the surface with water then mix two parts baking soda with one part water. Scrub the resulting paste into the cracks and crevices, then douse with water again. If the grout lines are stained, spray a mixture of equal parts vinegar and warm water onto the area and brush. After a final rinse, the grime will be gone.

Prevent a moldy washing machine

If you own a front-loading washing machine, you've probably noticed the unpleasant smell that can linger after completing a load of laundry. Despite being more energy-efficient, these machines have a tendency to hold odors and harbor mold. To clean and prevent grimy buildup, try this: instead of detergent, cycle two cups of vinegar and a quarter-cup of baking soda on a hot setting. When it's done, use a clean sponge to scrub down the inside. Finally, rinse with a plain-water cycle, and you'll see (and smell) the results.

Whether in the kitchen, bathroom or laundry room, tricky stains and odors in your home can be a tough job, but with these four tips you'll be able to eliminate a few messy tasks in no time.

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Transform your Bathroom in a Weekend

(NC) Your bathroom is more than just a place to wash up. It's a space to relax, unwind and refresh. This small room can make a big impact on your home and can easily be transformed into a personal spa. Sharon Grech, Benjamin Moore Colour & Design Expert, helps to transform your bathroom into a relaxing oasis over a weekend in four easy steps.

Upgrade your Hardware: Updating your hardware such as faucets and showerheads can be transformative without breaking your budget. Hardware has gone in bold new directions and colours this year including gold, white, bronze, chrome and brushed stainless steel. "Gold hardware can bring incredible drama when used as an accent," advises Grech. "Where as white can add elegance and a clean, modern look."

Choosing the Right Colour and Finish: To create an open, airy feel in a small bathroom, Grech recommends using subtle colours and working with a monochromatic colour scheme that features various paint finishes. "You can create dimension in any room by playing around with varying sheen levels. Painting wood paneling on walls or ceilings in a different finish is an excellent way to add depth," says Grech.

Anyone who enjoys a satisfying soak should also pay special attention to the ceiling. "Incorporating an accent colour



to your ceiling can bring life to your bathroom and something lovely to enjoy while gazing up," says Grech.

Select the Paint for a Professional Job: Since there's a great deal of moisture in the bathroom, it's important to pick a quality paint that is moisture and mildew resistant. Grech recommends Benjamin Moore Aura Bath & Spa because it locks out moisture and maintains colour integrity in even the steamiest conditions in a matte finish.

Personalize with Accents: Towels, floor mats, artwork and accessories are your chance to show off your style. Grech recommends experimenting with different materials and textures within your colour scheme or incorporating one bold punch of contrasting colour to energize the room. "A bright colour can be just the thing to help wake you up on a sluggish morning," she notes.

To learn more about Benjamin Moore Aura Bath & Spa, visit your local retailer or BenjaminMoore.ca.

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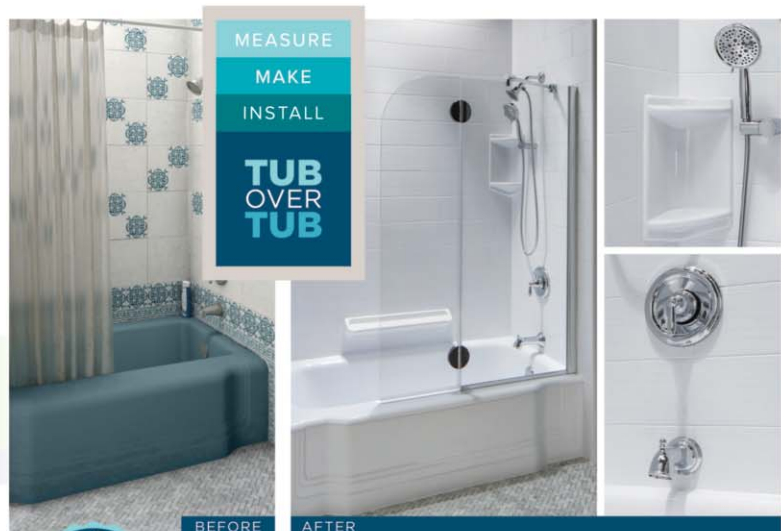
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Seniors and Baby Boomers

Yes, it is time to think about it....

Pre-planning with a funeral home most often does not include the burial arrangements.

So many times families have come to us at the time of the death of their loved one and are surprised at the extra expenses and decisions they need to make. A common comment is

“My Mother said she have everything arranged.”

Here are some of the things you need to consider:

Will I prefer a Traditional or Cremation burial? After you have decided your preference you can then choose your lot or niche. Tips: Be sure you check with the Cemetery to find how many burials per lot can be accommodated for future planning. Also ask if they have a payment plan available.

There are Opening / Closing charges associated with each burial. Most cemeteries accept prepayment for these charges. The good news about taking care of this with a pre-arrangement is you have locked in the price at today's rates.

While you are in the mind set to make these final arrangements you should consider your monument.

These are unsettling decisions; no one enjoys dealing with this. Let me tell you, your Family will be so grateful that you have done this.

.... you and your Family will feel better that you did.

Donna Gray
Executive Director
Cedar Hill-Greenwood Cemetery

5 Best Ways To Winterize Your Home



It's a tedious job, but cleaning your gutters before winter hits will prevent long term damage

(NC) Avoid being left out in the cold this winter by preparing your home sufficiently ahead of time. The experts at HomeStars are sharing five important tips to keep your place toasty, cozy and safe during the frigid months ahead, as follows:

- 1. Clean up outside:** No one likes to do this, but cleaning the gutters before winter hits will help prevent icicles and ice damming. Consider installing gutter screens so you don't have to climb a ladder. Clear out shrubs and annuals in the garden to avoid a mess come spring and consider planting bulbs for a spring surprise.
- 2. Clean inside too:** Just like spring cleaning, fall cleaning will help you get rid of unwanted dust build up. Since your windows aren't open as much, it'll help improve your home's indoor air quality.
- 3. Seal it up:** Run your hands around the windows and doors of your home. If you feel a draft coming in, seal it by weatherstripping the window or door where it meets the framework. To seal cracks, use caulking on the interior and exterior of the window or door trim.
- 4. Reverse the ceiling fan:** If your home has a ceiling fan, reverse to the clockwise position to make sure the air is blowing up in the winter. This pushes the warm air off the ceiling and onto the cold walls.
- 5. Replace your furnace filters:** Regular filter maintenance will help keep your furnace running longer while saving you money on heating bills – and saving money is always a good thing.

Additional tips, including information on hiring local contractors is available at www.HomeStars.com.

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5 Tips For Painting Like A Pro This Fall

(NC) Like the changing of the leaves, fall is the perfect time to update the colors in your home. With open windows, a cool breeze and the tips below, you can check painting off your list in a snap and head back outdoors to enjoy your favorite autumn activities.

1. Buy high-quality paint for the best coverage and deepest color saturation

When it comes to paint, quality matters. Search for a combination paint-and-primer to save a few steps and ensure complete coverage. Good options have high hiding ability and resist stains and scuffs.

Behr Marquee Interior Paint & Primer is a great example. This durable paint offers a one-coat guarantee when tinted to one of 372 classic and contemporary hues in the Behr Marquee Interior One-Coat Color Collection. It's scrubbable and with a one-coat guarantee, you can spend less time painting and more time sipping apple cider or getting the kids ready to head back to school.

Behr Marquee is available at The Home Depot stores nationwide. For more information, visit Behr.com/marqueeguarantee.

2. Use websites and apps tools to simplify your search

Once you've chosen your product, it's time to pick a color. Color selection can seem intimidating, but is a chance to infuse your personality into your home. Many online resources are available for homeowners to explore, coordinate and experiment with different looks. Pinterest, Houzz and Apartment Therapy are great websites for browsing images and finding home décor inspiration and colors that speak to you.

3. Use paint samples, rather than chips

The easiest way to see the color in your home is to see it in action. Many paint retailers offer small sample cans for just a few dollars. Use these to paint a few stripes of each color option in the room you'll be painting, then watch as the color changes in different lighting conditions.

"Sunlight, shadows and furniture can all alter the appearance of paint in your space," says Erika Woelfel, the VP of Color Marketing at Behr. "Before fully committing to a hue, make



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Embrace the cooler temps with a crisp and easy paint job this season.

sure it's one you'll love morning, noon and night.”

4. Use the right painting supplies

High-quality painting tools save you time over the course of your project and produce the most beautiful finish. For best results, use a high-quality, lint-free roller cover. Select brushes made of nylon and polyester, and for flawless edges, use a painter's tape specifically designed for your surface type.

Spend time preparing for your project

Proper preparation is the key to achieving long-lasting color. Begin by removing all wall fixtures you can, such as pictures, doors and light switches. If you have small cracks or holes in your walls, remove any dust and apply a patching material. Make sure to allow this to dry completely before sanding the finished area.

Wash away oil, grease or wax stains by dampening the surface, applying mild detergent with a sponge and then rinse the wall clean. Once dried, you'll be ready for smooth application and beautiful color.

With these five tips and a free afternoon, you can easily transform the inside of your home into a cozy retreat for fall.

www.newscanada.com

Leftover Paint

Recycling your leftover paint is simple and free! Return your unwanted paint, cans, and containers at the following locations:

You may recycle full, partly full and empty containers. Paint must be in original container and all containers must be properly sealed and labeled.

Restants de peinture

Recycler vos restants de peinture est simple et gratuit! Vous n'avez qu'à les déposer aux endroits suivants :

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How to keep unwanted creatures from your yard

(NC) Woodland animals may look harmless, but they can cause serious damage to your home and yard. They're capable of physical confrontation, spreading disease, causing odours, creating noise disturbances, destroying landscaping and vegetable gardens and even chewing through wires. While these pests are typically thought of as a rural issue, experts note that our cohabitation with nature will always bring pest issues.

"Even the most urban settings can experience wildlife and its associated issues – ranging from simple annoyances or bold attacks to serious health risks," says Alice Sinia, Ph.D., resident entomologist with Orkin Canada. "These pests can be particularly difficult to treat reactively so taking preventative measures is the best solution when dealing with wildlife."

Experts at Orkin recommend these tips to protect your yard from the wild this fall:

W – Waste containers and trashcans should be made of tough material like hard plastic or metal and should have tight-fitting lids. Make sure they are securely supported so nocturnal food raiders can't tip them over.

I – Inspect and monitor for accumulations of moisture on the roof, around air conditioners and in other favourable nesting locations. Birds and wildlife, like all pests, are constantly in search of water sources and most, only need minimal amounts to survive.

L – Lawns should be clear of tall grasses and brush. Maintain landscaping by treating for grubs, or beetle larvae, as they can be a food source for raccoons and other wildlife. Keep



trees and vegetation trimmed at least half a metre away from your home to limit pest access.

D – Discourage infestations through quick action. While some wildlife, like raccoons, are stealthy, others, like birds, are not. Infestations usually become evident with the increase of adult birds, the frequent occurrence of chirping, the sighting of nests, and an increased quantity of droppings in the area. If you suspect a problem, contact your local pest control provider immediately.

The great outdoors provides a breath of fresh air, and fall is the perfect seasonal window to the wild. Proper pest management can help reduce the associated wildlife risks. Should you experience issues, a pest management company can tailor a program specific to the habitat and biology around your home.

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Basement basics to elevate your home

(NC) Finishing an underutilized basement makes financial sense in certain situations, and may add to your home's resale value. "For a family who has outgrown their current space and wants to avoid buying a more expensive, larger home, finishing the basement can be worthwhile," says Alan Stewart, broker-manager with Royal LePage Sussex in North Vancouver. "Yet, there are considerations to ensure your project will be worth the time, effort and expense.

Stewart offers these guidelines to determine if your basement is a good candidate for a renovation and will deliver adequate return on your investment:

• **Is there enough headroom?** A finished floor-to-ceiling height of at least 7.5 feet is required. Include in your calculation 2.5 inches for flooring and ceiling finishing materials. If you own an older home with insufficient floor to ceiling space, you may need to consider additional costs to lower and underpin the foundation to create sufficient headroom.

• **Is your basement wet?** You'll want to address any moisture problems before you begin. In older homes, moisture issues can be severe. In some cases, you'll need to waterproof the foundation from the outside. Waterproofing can add substantially to the cost as excavation, waterproofing, weeping tile and backfill may be required.

• **Are your windows adequate?** The outside bottom edges of all basement windows should be at least six inches above the soil. Consider the size and condition of the windows. Are any large enough for fire escape? Are they operable, damage-free, airtight and energy-efficient? Be sure to calculate the cost of any needed window upgrades when estimating your costs.



Finished basements provide a myriad of possibilities including guest rooms, nanny suites, play rooms and home theatres. Whether you're looking to increase the value of your home, or enhance your living space, do your research to ensure a successful project.

More information is available at www.royallepage.ca.

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Winterizing Your Home for Good Indoor Air Quality

(ARA) – As the weather begins to cool, we start preparing our homes for the winter season. Closing up the house and using your heater can really have an impact on indoor air quality. The best way to keep the air in your home clean throughout the cooler months is to get your heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system cleaned.

“When people go to turn their heat on, the dust and debris that has been collecting in the coils either burns into fumes or gets distributed throughout the home,” says John Schulte, executive director of the National Air Duct Cleaners Association (NADCA). “The warm environment can also be a haven for mold and mildew, all of which can cause air quality to plummet.”

HVAC systems have been shown to act as a collection source for a variety of contaminants that have the potential to affect health, such as mold, fungi, bacteria and very small particles of dust. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, indoor air can be two to five times more polluted than outdoor air. The removal of such contaminants from your HVAC system is crucial to improve indoor air quality. Plus, a clean system can save you money on your energy bill.

Further research from the EPA has demonstrated that HVAC system cleaning may allow systems to run more efficiently by removing debris from sensitive mechanical components. Clean, efficient systems are less likely to break down, have a longer life span, and generally operate more effectively than dirty systems.

“About half of the energy used in a building is on heating and cooling,” says Schulte. “Having your system cleaned can save up to 30 percent in energy costs. So not only are you improving indoor air quality, but you’re saving money and helping the environment.”

The top issues that effect a home’s HVAC system, its efficiency and air quality are:

1) Filtration Issues

Low-efficiency filters, lack of a filter replacement program, and improperly sized filters can allow particles and debris to flow into a home or building.

2) Duct Work Contamination

It is estimated that more than 90 percent of HVAC systems installed

longer than 10 years will have some level of insulation deterioration. Over time, the insulation fibers are distributed and blown into occupied spaces every time the blower turns on.

3) Dirty Evaporator Coil

Over time, evaporator coils become matted with dust and dirt. During cold months, the heated air can flow over the dirty coils and be distributed into your home’s interior space.

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The best way to determine if your HVAC system is clean is to perform a visual inspection. If any dust or debris can be seen, the system needs to be serviced. Some of the things that may lead a home owner to consider more frequent cleaning include:

- Smokers in the household.
- Pets that shed high amounts of hair and dander.
- Water contamination or damage to the home or HVAC system.
- Residents with allergies or asthma.
- Home renovations or remodeling.

“The most effective way to clean air ducts and ventilation systems is to employ Source Removal methods of cleaning,” says Schulte. “This requires a contractor to place the system under negative pressure, through the use of a specialized, powerful vacuum.”

NADCA has published an internationally recognized standard that specifies requirements for proper cleaning. NADCA is a widely recognized non-profit trade organization representing certified contractors worldwide that sets standards and provides certification and training for the industry. For more information about HVAC cleaning and to find a certified and knowledgeable contractor, visit www.NADCA.com.

Courtesy of ARA content



Create atmosphere for the indoor seasons

(NC) As the temperatures cool down, it's time to add warmth to your home – for both appearance and comfort. Trade in your lawn chairs for a cozy seat by the fireplace and take care of the small things around the house that can make a big difference for you and your family as you head indoors.

You may be surprised to see, for example, how much a fresh coat of paint will rejuvenate your rooms – and conceal any scuffs and scratches at the same time. After thoroughly cleaning the walls, begin by taping the trim, windows, and door frames using a quality tape like the popular Painter's Mate Green brand. This medium-adhesion tape delivers premium results without the premium price, leaving you with a professional-looking project. Painting is a simple process that can change the entire aura of a space and help to prepare your home for visitors.

To keep the inside of your home comfortable amid the cold, consider weatherizing. Not only will it shield against colder temperatures, but weatherizing will also save on your energy bills. Duck brand makes this easy with their Roll-On Window Kit. It helps to block air drafts and leaks, which in turn, keeps your home warm and toasty. Simply apply the clear, shrink film over your entire window as a barrier to keep warmth indoors. The film comes with a pre-taped edge for easy roll-on installation, requires no measuring and fits snugly to window frames to provide an airtight seal.



Freshen up your foyer with a runner that complements your entryway and provides a warm welcome for guests that enter your home. Choose a dark option that will easily disguise dirt and withstand moisture from wet boots. To further enhance your entryway and incorporate organization, add a stylish foyer bench with a storage compartment to stow cold weather accessories. Select a bench that complements the existing space for a harmonizing look.

Outfitting your home with new accessories is a creative way to change up the tone. Add candles throughout in pleasant scents to welcome the new season. Position stylish vases in various sizes on your mantel or end tables for a pinch of panache and consider swapping out your centrepieces for new ones that align with the time of the year. Subtle changes can make a big impact on your overall décor.

Making your home a cozy haven as the seasons change can be an inspiring project. Find additional help on how to do this online at paintersmategreen.com.

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Fall Lawn & Garden Advice

Many times when the cool winds blow on bright Autumn days, the thoughts of gardening stray farther from the mind. We forget that even though the lazy days of summer are gone, the gardening season is not. September and October are wonderful months to garden and continue to care for lawns, shrubs and trees.

Consider keeping the following maintenance work in your schedule until the goblins of Halloween appear.

Lawn Fertilization - Fertilizers that are applied in the Autumn timeframe are important in the development of a strong root system. We tend to evaluate turf quality and health by the colour of the lawn and how much it grows. We forget that an important component of fertilization is what it does for the grass underneath the sod, in the soil. Fertilizer applications later on in the fall are not specifically designed to "green-up" the lawn, but rather to build up food reserves in the root system. This works most effectively in the Fall when the frost causes the top growth to slow down. When this occurs, the plant diverts its energy into food storage. Nitrogen is converted into carbohydrates and is stored in the root system and is used as food energy for the development of new grass shoots in the Spring. Other nutrients such as potassium and phosphorus are utilized to improve plant hardiness and increase endurance from stresses such as harsh winter conditions.

Seeding Work - Late August into mid September is an ideal time to reseed any thin areas on the lawn that need some extra help. The cooler temperatures and increased moisture encourage a faster and fuller germination of grass seed. By seeding in the Fall, the new seed has the advantage of two growth periods (Fall and Spring) before the summer drought period stresses it. Topdressing and aeration should accompany seeding work in order for the germination to be as successful as possible. The success rate of seeding after mid September is diminished with each passing day since the grass may not have time to harden off before the potentially heavy frosts and cold temperatures of October. Sodding, however, can easily be successfully accomplished throughout the Fall until the end of October since the grass plant is already mature.

Shrub Trimming - If pruning did not get done during the summer, don't despair. Most shrubs can be pruned at any point in the season, including the fall. If leaves are starting to fall from the shrub before you are ready to trim, that will actually give you a better vantage point of the plant's branching structure. However, early Spring blooming plants such as Forsythia and Lilac should be pruned in early summer before flower buds begin to set for the next year.

Shrub Protection - Some shrubs are more susceptible than others to the harsh winter winds and occasional freeze and thaw activity that happens during the winter. Check out the zone hardiness of any plants that might be newly installed in your landscape. If they have a hardiness factor of 5a or 5b, and they are planted in an exposed area, you may want to consider protection to give as much of a chance for survival as possible. These shrubs would benefit from a burlap barrier to cut the wind and reduce "winter burn".

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Design your living space by numbers

(NC) Equations are for more than just math class. Did you know there's a proper order of operations for your home too? Whether it's arranging your couch and television for optimal viewing, or making sure towel bars are right within reach, knowing a few key numbers can help you determine the ideal place for each item in your home – creating spaces that look great and are easy-to-use.

Kitchen Calculations

Do you ever feel like you've got too many cooks in the kitchen? Creating an effective layout following the principles of 'the kitchen work triangle, will ensure that you never feel cramped again. Comprised of your three main work areas – the stovetop, refrigerator and sink – the triangle should provide enough space to move around, but not be so large that cooking is difficult. Keep these areas between four and nine feet apart for the most efficient use of space. To keep the kitchen flow going, ensure all other appliances are in proportion to one another, with complementary ones grouped together. For example, minimize the mess from wet dishes by placing the sink and dishwasher a maximum of 91.4 centimetres apart.

When you're whipping up a family favourite, easy access to kitchen areas is essential. Finding the right height for important elements will make your kitchen even more accessible – most countertops are about one metre high, while microwaves are typically no higher than 1.14 metres for easy reach. Be sure to choose the correct faucet height so it's in proportion with other fixtures and works with your layout. You don't want a too-tall faucet that blocks your window, or one so low it's difficult to fill sizable containers or pitchers. For example, Moen Canada says it has designed the Voss pullout kitchen faucet to be just the right height. Its lower-profile spout is ideal for installations near a window or on an island, while still providing ample room to fill large pots, reduce splashing and improve rinsing in and around the sink.

Living Room Logarithm

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Here are a few tips to ensure your living room is comfy and functional:

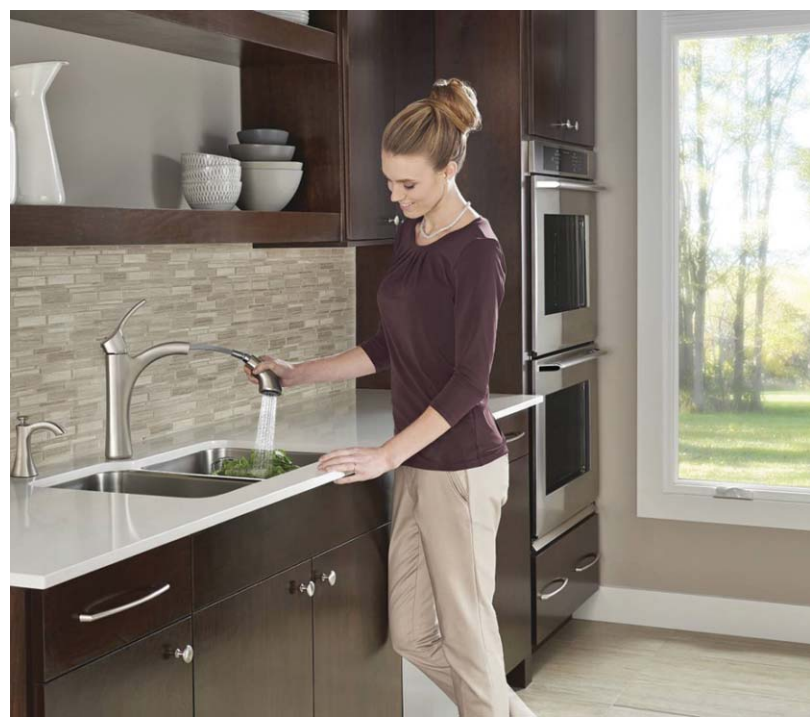
- Position the couch and coffee table 45 centimetres apart to provide plenty of leg room.
- Keep the table and sofa heights within a few inches of each other to make it easy to grab the remote or a tasty beverage.
- Arrange seating a maximum of three metres apart to inspire conversation.

Make binge watching your favorite shows more fun – and avoid eye strain – by positioning your television carefully. The larger your television is, the more distance is required between the screen and your couch. A good rule of thumb is 6.9 centimetres of space for every inch of diagonal screen size for an HD plasma, LED or LCD television.

Perfectly Proportioned Bathroom

Functionality is key when you're getting your grooming going. Ensure your bathroom has plenty of room for personal care by keeping a few essential measurements in mind. Start by making certain the layout provides proper clearance for any doors, including cabinetry and shower stalls, and aim for at least 76.2 centimetres of space between the three major areas – tub or shower stall, sink and toilet. Toilets should range between 109 and 121 centimetres in height from floor to seat, with at least 45 centimetres of elbow room on the sides. And make sure the shower is roomy, too – shower stalls should be at least 91.4 centimetres by 91.4 centimeters with showerheads placed at a comfortable level for the individuals in your home.

Similar to kitchen countertops, vanities with sinks should be about 36 inches high, with accompanying lighting at eye level



for shaving or makeup application. Avoid dripping hands, says Moen, by hanging towel bars in a spot that's easy to reach, ideally near the sink. Its popular range of towel bars, robe hooks and other accessories are simple to install. Now that you know the numbers, you'll find it's simple to create spaces that improve how your home and life functions – no arithmetic required.

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Take the touch out of DIY home renovation

(NC) There's nothing more personally and financially rewarding than completing a DIY home renovation project. Unfortunately, all of the hammering, lifting, painting, stripping and sanding can lead to an assortment of injuries and pain.

The most common injuries linked to DIY home renovation projects include: knee pain from flooring and ladders, tennis elbow from painting, neck pain from reaching, shoulder injuries from the use of power tools and lower back pain from heavy lifting. For those already suffering from pain from arthritis and osteoarthritis, pain from these DIY maneuvers is even more severe.

Here are some tips to follow to ensure a pain-free home reno project:

- Make sure you have the right equipment for the job, including footwear, eye, head and knee protection.
- Treat your home renovation project like an intense workout or sport - warm up before with stretching exercises to ensure your muscles are warm and you have good flexibility.
- Clear the floor and pathway of your work area to limit the chance of accidental injury or falls.
- Take regular breaks and look for immediate assistance for small injuries before they affect your ability to continue the project.
- Position ladders and trestles below shoulder height to minimize reaching and injury risk.
- When lifting ensure the weight is not too heavy for one person and look for help or equipment to assist in the task.
- If you do get injured, care for it as you would a sports injury and look for pain and swelling relief with a leading natural nutritional supplement



remedy such as Reeliv5. Well known in the sports and active lifestyle community for the relief of back, knee, shoulder, hip, hand and foot pain, this supplement is a mixture powerful all natural active ingredients which helps to reduce joint pain and inflammation, increase mobility and flexibility, repair cartilage damage and boost tissue regeneration. Ideal for the relief of aches and pain so you can move on to your next home renovation masterpiece. More information on coping with pain can be found at www.reeliv5.com www.newscanada.com

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Kitchen Talk" BY Jim Lawrence

Kitchen Reno with no layout changes? Most unlikely !

As a professional kitchen designer I often hear from the homeowners that the layout has to stay the same, because they may think that is the only way it will work, or other designers has told them that, or maybe they think it cost too much to move the layout around. May I respectfully add, that all of the above being most likely is not true.

It is possible that the layout has to stay the same. I would have to say no changes would be the extreme exception , for example I have designed and installed not 100s but 1000s of kitchens, I can only think of one or two, that we did not make any changes to the layouts and those were rental units.

As a professional designer, when I look at the old kitchen, and should main layout have to stay the same, then I and the homeowner start looking at and exploring, the small changes to enhance the make over. A few small changes can add up to big impacts.

Take small changes then add Avondale's special seamless sinks and counters, these will give you the granite look and quality of granite for Formica prices, you will have a whole new kitchen with the WOW-Factor.

Do you have designers block, on your kitchen makeover? Or have you had a design done and it just does not excite you? Check out www.AvondaleKitchens.com, we have professional designers in your area every week. You may be pleasantly surprised with what they can come up with.

This article was written by Jim Lawrence
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What's trending in home décor



**Décor expert
Karl Lohnes.**

(NC) Here's a look at some key trends being seen in homes across Canada, according to Karl Lohnes, a home interior and product design authority.

Colour: Rooms will feel comforting and intimate with charcoal and butterscotch, two great neutrals. Bring them into your home from the floor to the ceiling and don't forget the windows. Bone is also the new white. The new hue helps to warm up the ever-popular greys and blues.

Pattern/Textures: Natural, unembellished fabrics and furnishings are becoming increasingly popular. On the pattern front, plaid fabrics will replace summery gingham checks in fabrics and wallpaper.

Furniture: Modern furniture shapes are still popular, but have a soft or round edge; reminiscent of Scandinavian styles from the 1970s and 1980s.

At the Window: Heavy draperies that block views and natural light sources are being replaced by pared-down window treatments that let in light without looking dated.

The Connected Home: Technology has become an expected feature in any new home and existing homeowners are also loving the wire-free aesthetic (and safety aspect) that it offers. Imagine being at work and having the ability to go online to close your window shades, turn on lights or change the temperature within your home. New PowerView Motor-

ization, available on a wide array of Hunter Douglas window treatments, allows your shades to adjust themselves automatically.

www.newscanada.com



Charcoal hues, natural nubby textures and Hunter Douglas Vignette Modern Roman Shades with PowerView Motorization that allows the shade to adjust itself automatically are on-trend in this showhouse den by designer Jenny Norris.

Make a plan for garage organization

Spring cleaning plans are on the minds of many once the weather warms up. Many homeowners feel a sense of renewal in the spring, when the desire to clean house and get organized becomes a priority.

Garages are often targets for homeowners hoping to target clutter. Once a space reserved for cars, garages are no longer strictly for vehicles, used instead to store items that simply do not fit inside the home or a backyard shed. Organizing the garage is typically a weekend or several-day project. Here's how to turn a cluttered mess into a space suited for storing items of all shapes and sizes.

- Enlist a helper. Organizing a garage is a significant undertaking that is best tackled with two or more people. Enlist a helper to make the project less intimidating.

- * Decide what is important to keep. Start the organization process by clearing out the garage and taking inventory of what you have. Items that have not been used for several years can likely be tossed. Make a pile of what will be kept and then put the rest at the curb or donate useful items to charity.

- Give thought to where you want to store particular items. Tools and items that are used more often should be stored within reach or where easily visible, while items that are not used as frequently can be stored higher up. Think about how you operate in the garage. Recycling bins can be stored closer to the door into the home, while bicycles and skates can be nearer to the garage door for easy access.

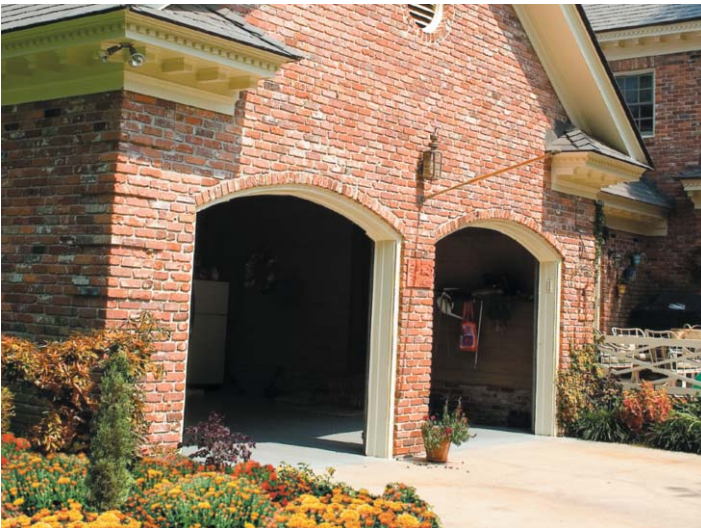
- Group like items together. Categorize items that will be kept. Garden tools, camping gear, sporting equipment, and automotive supplies should be categorized and stored in their own areas of the garage, determining if certain items can be stored inside the home to free up garage space. Grouping items together will make them easier to locate in the garage.

- Move boxed items into clear storage containers. It's much easier to see what you have when it is stored in clear containers. Some containers are interlocking or stackable, making it much more convenient to store items vertically and free up more floor space.

- Invest in vertical storage systems. Moving items from the floor and putting them on shelving or behind cabinets can make the garage more organized. Hooks and bins also can be used. Employ a peg board full of hooks for oft-used tools or other items you need at the ready.

- Leave space for hobby and work areas. Garages are where many improvement projects begin or where hobbies, such as woodworking or crafting, take place. Leave space for these tasks and hobbies.

- Give the space a fresh coat of paint. Some garages are dingy and dark. Bright paint on the walls and floor can open up the space and, when combined with more lighting, can make it lighter and brighter. Garage organization is a common spring cleaning project. But it shouldn't be reserved for this season alone. Periodic checks of the garage and straightening up can keep a garage clean and organized throughout the entire year and make yearly spring cleaning much more manageable. SH142914



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