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Dos and Don'ts For Second-Floor Laundry Rooms

Laundry can be a cumbersome chore. In homes with more than one story, clothes are put in a hamper, carried down to the washer and dryer, where they are then cleaned, dried, folded, and taken back upstairs to be put away. The entire process can be inefficient, which may contribute to why so many people delay doing laundry for as long as possible. As unenjoyable as it can be, doing laundry is a necessity. Fresh clothing not only looks and smells good, it is essential to personal hygiene. One way to make the process of doing laundry go more smoothly is to consider moving the location of the laundry area. According to the National Association of Home Builders, more homeowners are moving their laundry rooms upstairs so they don't

have to transport laundry baskets up and down the stairs. Before moving their laundry rooms, homeowners should take steps to safeguard their homes, and that may involve finding the ideal location for the new room. Find space for an upstairs laundry room and then consult with an engineer to be sure that the plan is feasible. An engineer and an architect can assess if a home is structurally sound enough to handle the weight and vibration of an upstairs laundry. One of the biggest concerns with regard to moving a laundry room upstairs is the fear of flooding or leaks. There are certain steps to take to minimize these risks. Experts advise installing an easily accessible water shut-off valve. Turn off the valve when the washer is

not in use. Also, steel-braided washer hoses are more sturdy than standard hoses and are less likely to burst. Homeowners also can place the washer in a drain pan, which will catch overflowing water and drain it through a pipe. Some areas may require a floor drain as an alternative. Homeowners also must recognize that noise can be a problem with upstairs laundry rooms. Front-loading appliances may cause more vibration and movement than top-loaders. However, some front-loaders are designed to be quiet. Antivibration pads may help with vibration issues. Before moving their laundry rooms, homeowners should consult with contractors to ensure things go smoothly.

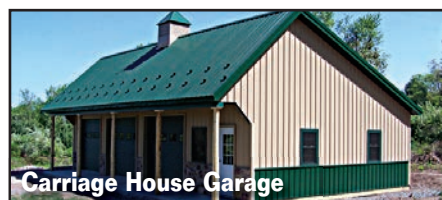
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Steps To Take Before An Appraiser's Visit

Homeowners unfamiliar with the appraisal process might not know if there is anything they can do to make the process go more smoothly. While certain variables involved in the appraisal process, such as location of the home and the value of surrounding homes, are beyond homeowners' control, the Appraisal Institute recommends homeowners take the following steps before an appraiser visits their home.

- Clean the house. A dirty home that is full of clutter will not make the best impression on appraisers. Dirty homes may be vulnerable to insect infestations that can lead to structural problems with the home. While a dirty home is not necessarily an indicator of infestations or a reflection of a home's value, a clean home will create a stronger first impression with the appraiser.
- Make any necessary repairs ahead of the appointment. Homeowners who have been putting off repairs should make them before the appraiser arrives. Homes with repairs that still need to be made will likely be valued less than similar

homes with no such repair issues. Though repairs can be costly, investing in home repairs will likely increase both the appraisal and resale value of the home.

- Obtain all necessary documents before the appraiser arrives. Homeowners who have certain documentation at the ready can speed up the appraisal process. Such documentation may include a survey of the house and property; a deed or title report; a recent tax bill; if applicable, a list of items to be sold with the house; purchase history of the home; and the original plans and specifications of the home.
- Inform the appraiser about recent improvements. Homeowners can inform appraisers about any recent improvements to the home and the cost of those improvements. The value of home improvements with regard to a home's appraisal value vary depending on a host of variables, but having such information at the ready can help appraisers make the most informed appraisal possible.

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Expect The Unexpected When Renovating A Home

While it is still too soon to tabulate all of the figures from 2016, a quick glance at the data indicates renovations have increased across the country. And one only need travel through communities to see a greater number of contractors and homeowners working on homes. Tackling any renovation project is an exercise in patience. Renovations can impede on daily activities and cause a certain level of upheaval in homeowners' lives. Homeowners planning renovations also may find that they must have some wiggle room when it comes to both their budgets and their expectations. Remodeling, particularly with regard to older homes, may unveil unforeseen issues that only arise in the face of the renovation. So what can homeowners expect during a renovation? The following are a few issues

that might arise during home improvement projects.

- **Dirt and noise:** Homeowners can count on dust, debris and noise throughout the renovation process. Dust appears when walls come down or go up, and construction teams typically erect temporary walls or tarps to contain the debris. Air filtering systems also can limit dust particles. Noise is unavoidable. If it becomes troublesome, arrange to be outside of the home when the bulk of the construction is taking place.
- **Delays or schedule changes:** Even the best contractors cannot control every aspect of the job. They rely on subcontractors and vendors to do portions of the work. Materials may not always arrive on time, or they may fall short of homeowners' expectations. This can push back the project schedule. Homeowners should hope for everything to be done on time,

but it can be less stressful if homeowners anticipate delays and be a pleasant surprise if there are no delays.

- **Hidden issues:** Contractors may uncover all sorts of issues that need to be addressed before a project can progress. Examples include the presence of asbestos (common in older homes), plumbing problems, incorrectly wired electrical systems, and leaks or moisture issues. These problems also can impact the cost of the project, so set aside some money in the budget for unforeseen expenses. Chances are you are going to need some extra money to handle a few surprises during the project. It's important to expect the unexpected when embarking on home renovations. Budgeting for hidden costs, expecting delays and coping with the upheaval to daily schedules are par for the remodeling course. However, the end result is often well worth the time and effort.

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Homeowners often aspire to have attractive backyards that look like they belong in a magazine. While these can be picturesque and functional for adults, they may not be entirely practical for homeowners who have young children, especially when the majority of the yard is covered with paving stones or concrete.

When young children are part of a household, homeowners may benefit by designing yards that are both functional and fun. Incorporating safe play areas for kids is one way to unlock the potential of both big and small backyards. As children run off to enjoy a playground, safety is the last thing on their minds. Kids are

most interested in scaling ladders to treehouses or coasting down slides. That's why adults must take it upon themselves to keep injury prevention in mind. SafestPlayground.com indicates that playground-related injuries routinely result in severe fractures, internal injuries, concussions, and dislocations. In the majority of playground injuries to children younger than age 5, the head and face are affected. Children between the ages of 5 and 9 experience more leg and arm injuries than younger kids. The Consumer Product Safety Commission states 70 percent of children's injuries occur on home playgrounds. More than 28,000 children are injured each year on playgrounds across Canada, according to Parachute, a national injury prevention organization.

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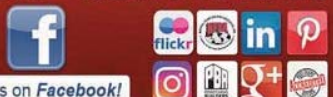


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When considering playground equipment for the yard, parents need to make safety a priority. The Canada Safety Society advises parents to follow the "5 S's of Playground Safety": Surface, structures, site, supervision, and safety.

- Surface: Parents should assume that children will fall. To lessen the blow of falls, choose playground equipment with a perimeter of six feet of a softer surface, such as sand, pea gravel, rubber pieces or wood chips. This material should be between six and 12 inches deep.
 - Structure: The structure of the play equipment should be built from sturdy materials. Pressure-treated lumber was once the standard, but it's not advisable for kids' playgrounds, as the chemicals used in the lumber can leach and young children may actually bite or pick at the wood. Use cedar or another wood that resists decay. Once the structure is built, inspect it frequently for damage.
 - Site: Look around the landscape for an ideal place to locate the playset. There should be no obstacles that children can hit while sliding or swinging. Avoid overhanging branches and do not place equipment too close to trees or fencing. Try to keep the set out of direct sunlight, which can make components heat up and scald young bodies.
 - Supervision: Do not leave children alone while they are playing. Prevent children from using the playset in an incorrect manner.
 - Safety: Follow the directions for installation. Make sure all posts are anchored into the ground securely. Railings should be spaced so that children cannot get stuck between them. Check that metal components have not rusted and that there is no additional excessive wear. Be sure that no tools or other dangerous items are left around the yard.
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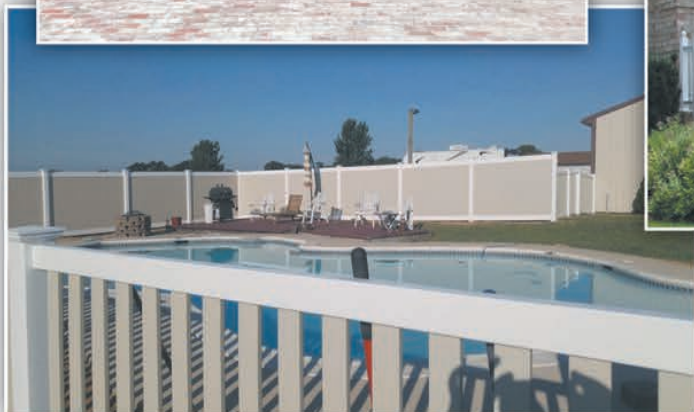
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Create Drama With Bold Paint Colors

Painting is one of the easiest and least expensive ways to transform the look of a space. Paint colors can dramatically change the mood and the design of a home. And depending on a homeowner's goals, paint can make a statement or blend into the background. Many people are now looking to bold colors to make spaces stand out. But choosing a paint color can be challenging. Homeowners looking to update walls and complement decor may want to look at some of the more impactful colors that Pantone indicates will be popular for the 2017 season. Primrose Yellow, Lapis Blue, Flame, Pink Yarrow, and Greenery are some of the more eye-catching selections. Once colors are selected, consider these guidelines for using bolder colors in room designs.

- Decide how big an impact you want to make. Are you looking for color overload or just a small focal

point of vivid color? Remember, using bold color doesn't mean every wall must be lathered in that hue. Instead, select one wall to serve as an accent point and use that spot as your bold color display. Otherwise, rely on bold colors to dress up otherwise mundane areas, such as the back wall of a cupboard or moldings and trim.

- Try bold in a small space. Many people are surprised at how well bold colors work in small spaces. Powder rooms can be an ideal spot to experiment with paint colors. Try deep colors that can make the area seem intimate and even exotic. Dark, bold hues can be toned down by different accents, such as neutral colored fixtures and towels.
- Go bold in the kitchen. Incorporate a splash of color in the kitchen without going overboard. Try an appliance or design fixture in a bright shade. Or paint the inside of the cabinets in your

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favorite color and install glass inserts in the cabinet doors so that everyone gets a peek of the color beyond. A neutral kitchen also can be brightened up with the use of silverware, dishes, pots and pans, and other kitchen items featured in bold hues.

- Stick to boldness on interchangeable items. Those who like to experiment with color may find that they like to switch out the colors now and again. Instead of having to repaint every few months, use decorative items in bright shades to make swapping out color that much easier. For example, replace area rugs, throw pillows and draperies. Paint over terra cotta flower pots when the mood strikes.
- Establish balance. Rely on neutral furniture, rugs, moldings and baseboards if you decide to take bold colors up a notch. This will help create a sense of balance in the room.

Painting is a fun way to experiment with color. Many homeowners are not hesitant to use bold shades of color when they learn the right techniques. And because paint is an inexpensive option for making over a room, homeowners who find they do not like a particular color can easily paint over it with a new color.

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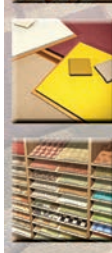
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Factors To Consider When Choosing Carpeting

When the time comes to choose flooring for their homes, homeowners may be overwhelmed by the vast array of options at their disposal. The choice between carpet and hardwood flooring, laminate or tile is a matter of personal preference. People have long extolled the virtues of hardwood flooring, but carpeting can be just as stylish and provides a host of other benefits as well. Carpeting insulates rooms in the summer and winter, adding that extra level of protection against the elements. Carpeting also absorbs sound in a home. Many appreciate the warmth and cozy feeling of carpet, especially when stepping out of bed. Carpeting also can increase the level of safety at home. According to the Carpet and Rug Institute, carpeting makes areas of play safer and may also reduce the severity of an injury in the event of a fall. Today, there are many different types of carpeting available. Selecting the right carpeting for a room comes down to identifying the level of traffic in a particular room, the attributes homeowners would like the carpet to have and any other needs that fit with their lifestyles. The following guidelines can make carpet shopping a bit easier.

TYPE OF CARPETING
There are many different types of carpeting, some of which are best suited to certain situations. For example, plush and saxony carpets are better in low-traffic areas. These carpets may show footprints and also vacuum tracks and dirt, but they're higher on the comfort spectrum than other types of carpet. Berber, which is more flat and dense, helps mask stains and tracks. It is durable in high-traffic areas. Textured carpets like frieze are cut from fibers of different heights, so they mask stains and are also softer on the feet than berber.

PADDING
Padding can impact the way carpeting feels and how long it lasts. It isn't always necessary to purchase the most expensive or thickest padding. However, it is wise to pick a pad that matches the type of carpeting you're selecting and one that aligns with how you plan to use the room. You may be able to go

with a thinner pad in low-traffic rooms and beneath dense carpeting like berber. In high-traffic rooms, choose a thicker, more durable padding. Padding prevents carpet backing and fibers from coming apart over time. It pays to invest in a padding that will last as well.

INSTALLATION
Select a reliable carpet retailer and installer for your business. Competent installers will lay the carpeting in the correct manner so that it will look beautiful and maintain its durability for the life of the product. Shop around to find the right installer or even do the work yourself if you feel capable.

Take time when shopping for carpeting, which is a substantial investment that can last for many years if the right material is chosen and installed correctly.

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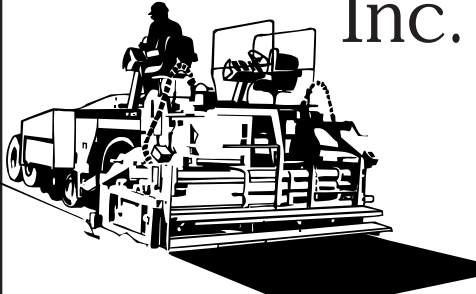
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Addressing Spring Ant Problems

The return of warm weather in the spring often marks the return of animals and insects as well. The spring season is a popular time for insects to mate and build nests. This also may be a time when homeowners see ant "swarms" in or around their homes.

Ants and termites are social creatures, and when their colonies become too large, flying ants will spread out in search of new territories and to establish new queens. This mobility may also be coupled with an increasing number of ants marching on the ground and scaling walls.

Although many species of ants are harmless, homeowners do not want to see ants inside their homes, especially in large numbers. The following strategies can help homeowners address ant infestations this spring.

- Identify the type of ant around your property. Consult with online guides or books to identify the species of ant on your property. Knowing which species of ant is in or around your home can help you address the problem more effectively.
- Create a food trap. Ants are attracted to various food sources, such as fats, sweets and proteins. Mixing a very small amount of a food with boric acid can help control ant populations. Ants will bring tainted food back to their colonies and perish.
- Keep a clean house. Use vinegar, soap and water to clean areas where ants are seen. Many leave a scent trail of pheromones to tell others where to go for a food source.
- Treat carpenter ants at the source. Carpenter ants will not bring back food to the nest. Instead, sprinkle diatomaceous earth, or DE, around outdoor nests to eradicate colonies.
- Work with an exterminator. If home remedies do not work, consult with a trained exterminator.



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Roofing Materials Transform The Look & Functionality Of A Home

When renovating a home, homeowners may not give ample thought to the roof unless there is a leak or another sign of damage. It's easy to forget about the roof when materials are working properly. Some people put off replacing or repairing a roof simply because of the costs of such undertakings. However, the right roof can improve the appearance of a home and provide protection against the elements, potentially preventing damage to a home's interior as well. Roofing materials have evolved over the years, but the most common type of roofing material is the asphalt shingle. These shingles are a relatively modern invention, with the first "asphalt prepared roofing" serving as a forerunner to asphalt shingles, appearing in the late 1800s. Roofing materials will need to meet a particular area's fire codes and must be able to withstand any extreme weather conditions common to the geographic region where the home is located. Certain roofing materials may be heavier than others and may require special framing. Work with an experienced roofing contractor to learn more about your available options and to shed light on any special installation or maintenance issues to consider before construction begins. The following are just some of the roofing materials homeowners may want to consider.

- Asphalt shingles: The most popular roofing material, asphalt shingles are guaranteed for 20 to 30 years, which helps solidify this choice as a smart-value product. For some homeowners, a downside to shingles is that, because they are so popular, they're seen everywhere. So those homeowners looking to make a unique statement with their roofing materials may want to choose a different option.
- Wood shingles and shakes: A wood roof is another possibility, but some homeowners find wood roofs require more money to install and more effort to maintain than roofs made with other materials. Wood shingles are sawn from logs and are thin, while shakes are thick, rough and formed by being split from logs.
- Clay or concrete tiles: These tiles add texture and elegance to a roof, says HGTV. Clay or concrete tiles are very durable and quite heavy, so they must be installed by a professional. These tiles can make Mediterranean-, Spanish- or mission-style houses stand out even more. Their long-lasting nature can help offset the price tag.
- Metal: Metal roofs are usually made from fully recyclable steel, aluminum or alloy, making them an eco-friendly choice. Metal roofs also reflect the sun's rays and can be an energy-efficient option in hot climates.
- Slate: One of the longest-lasting materials available in roofing products, slate is fireproof and comes in various natural colors and shapes. Once installed, slate requires very little maintenance. However, slate can be cost-prohibitive because its delicacy and weight requires extra roofing support and professional installation.

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Ways To Tackle Spring Cleaning Projects In A Single Weekend

Spring cleaning is an annual rite of passage in many households. Because winter weather tends to encourage people to stay indoors more than they would during other times of the year, clutter can slowly but surely accumulate in a home over the course of a typical winter. That makes spring cleaning a necessity. Few homeowners likely enjoy spring cleaning. The warm weather associated with the arrival of spring makes many people who have spent the previous months indoors less than enthusiastic about spending a spring weekend indoors cleaning and clearing away a season's worth of clutter. But homeowners who organize their spring cleaning projects can ensure such efforts take just a weekend or less.

ENLIST THE WHOLE FAMILY. Chances are everyone who lives in the home can lay claim to some of the dirt, grime and clutter that built up over the winter. So it only makes sense that everyone then pitches in to clean the home come springtime. Parents and heads of household can delegate tasks to everyone, incentivizing cooperation with the promise of rewards if the cleaning is completed in a single weekend.

CLEAR YOUR SCHEDULE. Another way for homeowners to ensure their spring cleaning projects are started and finished in a single weekend is to clear their schedules for the entire weekend. Homeowners who expect to spend part of their day away from home and still finish their spring cleaning projects will likely find the job unfinished come Sunday night. When planning a spring cleaning weekend, schedule projects for a weekend when you have no prior commitments or plan far enough in advance that you can avoid making plans on a given weekend. While it might not make for the most eventful weekend, it will greatly increase your chances of getting everything cleaned and cleared out in two days.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK. Homeowners who want to complete their spring cleaning in a single weekend should do their homework with regard to finding local recycling centers or charitable organizations to whom they intend to donate items. Many charitable organizations will come to private homes to pick up donations, but such pickups often must be arranged in advance rather than on the morning of the day homeowners want items to be taken away. In addition, if recycling will be a part of your spring cleaning efforts, familiarize yourself with the weekend hours of nearby recycling plants so you can drop items off on your cleaning weekend instead of leaving them lying around to be donated later. Spring cleaning might not seem to be the most enjoyable way for homeowners to spend a weekend. But planning ahead and making efficient use of the time available to them can help homeowners tackle their spring cleaning projects in a single weekend.



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Is It Time To Update Your Home's Electrical System?

The invisible systems in a home often are taken for granted. When such systems are working as expected, daily life moves along smoothly. However, when a system goes awry, it can negatively impact routines and may create a dangerous home environment. This is especially true when something goes wrong with a home's electrical system. Faulty wiring is a leading cause of residential fires. Many homeowners, particularly those who live in older homes, might be living in properties that have outdated electrical systems. Having old wiring and/or insufficient amperage in a house can endanger residents. It also may damage appliances and make it difficult to sell a property in the future.

It can be difficult to gauge exactly when to overhaul an electrical system. Unless circuits routinely trip or lights often dim, homeowners may put off the work. But degrading wires or overextended circuitry can pose a fire risk, so it is best to address electrical systems promptly.

Home inspections may uncover electrical problems. Some homeowners may discover potential trouble while making renovations that require opening up walls or tearing them down, exposing the wires. Still other homeowners learn about electrical systems when they're adding new, large appliances or other gadgets that consume more power than existing items. These devices may continually cause power outages in the house, such as tripping the circuit breaker or popping a fuse. When it comes time to update the electrical system, it is always best to work with licensed and bonded electricians who have the expertise to work with electrical wiring without getting injured. This is not a do-it-yourself type of job since it requires specialized training.

Electricians likely will recommend upgrading the electrical panel to bring more power from the utility poles into the home. This can include replacing the existing meter and circuit breaker box to allow it to handle more power or replacing items that are obsolete or dangerous.

Many older homes are only capable of handling a minimum number of amps, utilizing just a few circuits. But nowadays, when homeowners have far more electronics in their homes than they once did, increased demand on electricity can overload a circuit (all of the outlets linked on one wire). Tripping a circuit breaker is a safety measure to prevent the wire from becoming overheated and causing a fire. However, in some old systems, the circuit breaker will not trip, and this can be problematic.

Rewiring a home is another step. Wire insulation can deteriorate over time, and new wires may be needed. This can be messy and



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time-consuming, but it's a small price to pay for safety. When rewiring an electrician also may suggest new outlets. Many home building codes now require outlets with ground fault interruptors, or GFIs, in kitchens, bathrooms and other rooms exposed to moisture. Some older homes may not even have three-pronged outlets, so this will necessitate an update as well. Electrical systems are the heart of a home, delivering power where it is needed. It is essential to keep such systems up-to-date so they can handle the power demands of everyday life.

Tips To Make An Older Home More Energy Efficient

(MS)- While new homes are being built to be more energy efficient than ever before, thanks to a growing green building movement and increasingly strict building codes, the age of existing dwellings continues to present challenges. More than 40 percent of the housing stock in the United States was built before 1969 and simply wouldn't stand up to today's standards. Yet, much can be done to help homeowners improve their building envelope to reduce energy use and increase efficiency.

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Improving your home's energy efficiency can help save money, keep you more comfortable, reduce pollution, and prevent global warming. Try these five simple measures to maximize the energy efficiency of your home:

1. Seal cracks and gaps around your home's windows, doors, and vents. These can be a considerable source of energy loss, allowing conditioned air to escape and unconditioned air to infiltrate your home, placing stress on your furnace and air conditioner in the process. An easy DIY solution is to caulk around windows, doors, and vents, and install or replace worn weatherstripping. An average home loses up to 30 percent of its energy through air leaks, so sealing your home is a worthwhile exercise.
2. Top up or replace old insulation in your attic. A poorly insulated attic is a primary source of energy loss. Also, over time, some types of insulation can settle and compact, allowing heat to escape through gaps.
3. Insulate basement headers. Uninsulated basement headers are common, especially in older homes. They can act as a gateway for air to escape. Fixing the problem is fast and easy. Insulating this throughout your basement will prevent heat loss and can potentially save hundreds of dollars each year.

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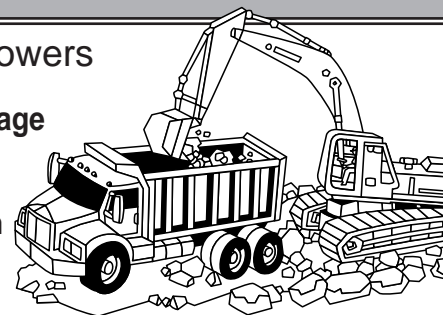
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The Benefits Of Hiring Professional Contractors

The DIY movement has inspired many homeowners to tackle home repair and remodeling projects on their own. But no matter how simple popular home renovation television shows make remodeling projects appear, homeowners should know that such undertakings are far more difficult than they appear on television. Those who overestimate their abilities and the time they have to complete projects can cost themselves substantial amounts of money. There are a variety of reasons homeowners might want to work with professional contractors when tackling home improvement projects.

EXPERIENCE: A trial and error approach can work with various projects and problems. But applying such an approach to home improvement projects is risky and potentially dangerous, not to mention costly. Experienced professional contractors with strong track records (seek recommendations from friends or neighbors) won't have to go through trial and error and are therefore more likely than DIYers to complete a project on time and on budget.

INSPIRATION: One oft-overlooked benefit of working with professional contractors is the likelihood that they can draw up ideas for projects that homeowners might otherwise never have thought up on their own. Homeowners without specific ideas in mind can ask contractors to come up with various scenarios before committing to a particular one. Veteran contractors can draw on years of experience to create designs that DIYers might be incapable of coming up with and/or incapable of seeing through to completion.

COST: Conventional wisdom suggests it's less expensive to do something yourself than to hire someone else to do it for you, but that's not necessarily true of home improvement projects. Labor costs typically account for a substantial amount of professionally contracted projects, but homeowners can cut those costs by volunteering to do some of the

simpler tasks themselves. In addition, contractors often purchase materials at a much lower cost than individual homeowners because contractors buy in bulk. So while labor costs might be lower on DIY projects, the cost of materials can offset those savings. **RESALE VALUE:** Many homeowners renovate their homes with eyes on improving the resale value of those homes. But if homeowners want to showcase a newly remodeled kitchen when selling their homes, they should be prepared for prospective buyers to ask who worked on the project. Fearing potential problems down the road, some buyers might be put off by homes that were remodeled by DIYers and not professional contractors. Renovating a home on your own can be a rewarding project for homeowners. But it's important that homeowners recognize the many benefits of working with professional contractors before making any final decisions with regard to who will tackle their next project.

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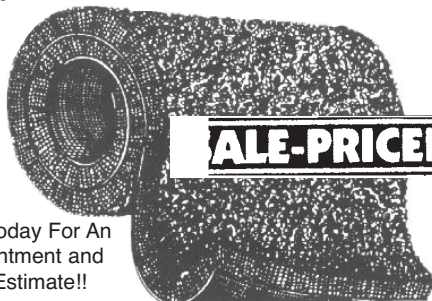
Bring More Natural Light Into A Home

Maximizing natural light in a home is a smart and sometimes low-cost renovation. Homes that are dark and drab can drain energy levels and reduce productivity. In addition, dark rooms may not be inviting places to gather as a family or when entertaining. Certain factors contribute to a dark home. Houses that face north or east may not get the same level of sunlight as those that primarily face south and west. Geographic location also plays a role in the amount of natural sunlight. Mountains, buildings and even latitude can affect the amount of natural light that enters a home. The style of a home and its attributes also may create dark conditions. Deep house eaves as well as small

windows or too few windows also can contribute to a deficit of light indoors. A major remodel certainly can remedy the situation. However, there also are other less-extensive strategies to improve natural light.

- Assess the situation before renovating. Walk around the house and determine which rooms get the most light and which conditions may be contributing to the problem in other areas. Dark floors and walls may be absorbing natural light and compounding the situation. You may find that only one or two rooms need attention, saving you the cost and effort associated with a major home overhaul.
- Lighten up window treatments. Heavy drapes or thick blinds can be replaced with translucent alter-

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natives. Translucent shades will allow light into the room without compromising privacy.

- Use mirrors strategically. A mirror placed opposite a window will reflect light all around the room. This can make a small room seem larger and a dark space instantly brighter.
- Install new windows and doors. If the budget allows, installing larger windows in a home will allow more natural light in. French doors or sliding doors also may make a home's interior more bright. Think about adding windows to a side of the house that has none, or increase the size of the windows on the side of the house that gets the most light.
- Maximize sunlight from above. Skylights will bring light into a home as the sun passes overhead.
- Use reflective decor. Reflective surfaces, including glass and metal, can brighten up a room and diffuse light around a room. Glossy backsplashes, pendant lighting and shiny metal that reflect light can increase the natural light, balancing out dark spaces.
- Prune trees regularly. Cut back branches and keep trees tidy to maximize sunlight. Avoid planting tall shrubbery in front of windows.
- Routinely clean windows and glass doors. Dirt and other grime can prevent light from getting through. Regularly give windows a thorough washing.

Natural light is an important commodity in a home. Sunlight can improve mood and go a long way toward keeping home occupants healthy and happy.



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