

Spring HOME IMPROVEMENT

A Norwich and Sidney Pennysavers Publication

March 8, 2022

Turn your new house into a home



Historically low mortgage interest rates are helping to drive a new wave of home sales. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates roughly 14 percent of the population, or around 40 million people, move every year for various reasons. Statistics Canada’s Canadian Housing Survey found about half of Canadian households have either moved within the past five years or intend to do so within the next five.

you can use a piece of furniture or a few family heirlooms to make your new space feel homey

While people may be inclined to move far from their current residences, the moving resource Move.org notes that some U.S. states are seeing an influx in people leaving while others are absorbing new residents. Illinois, Alaska, New Jersey, New York, and West Virginia are the top five states Americans are leaving, while Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, Oregon, and Montana are gaining residents.

People relocate for various reasons. After moving into a new house, it can take some effort to turn that house into a true home and feel comfortable in your new environs. These steps can help that process along.

- Create at least one complete and serene space. Focus on setting up the bedroom so you can retreat at the end of the day. Invest in new furniture or get new bedding to give the room this comforting feeling.
- Create an organizational plan. It can be tempting to want to throw everything in closets and unpack quickly, but give yourself time to fully analyze where you want to store items, where you may need to paint or reconfigure spaces, as well as any home improvements you want to make before taking out all of your stuff. When you fully unpack, you can immediately enjoy your hard work.

- Hang artwork. Hang a few select pieces of artwork or family photos shortly after moving in. Surround yourself with things that make you feel good.
 - Bring mementos. Your first home may bring about warm feelings. While you can’t recreate it entirely, you can use a piece of furniture or a few family heirlooms to make your new space feel homey.
 - Rely on familiar scents. Break in the new space with familiar aromas, whether it’s preferential air fresheners, scented candles or baking your favorite chocolate chip cookie recipe.
- Moving into a new home can be exciting. Certain touches can help make the new space feel more like home. TF205929



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Converting Garages Into Livable Spaces

Many people decide to upgrade from their apartments or condominiums out of a need for more space. But even after moving into a new home, homeowners may soon begin to outgrow the room they have.

Rather than looking for a new home, some homeowners consider expansion. Expanding a living space can be expensive, and a more affordable option

An architect can help suggest design elements that will camouflage the original garage look and make the space seem like it was always part of the main living area of the home.

may be converting existing basement or garage space into something more livable. Garages already are built on a foundation, have four walls and a roof overhead, so a garage-conversion project is merely a matter of turning this utilitarian area into a living space.

Before beginning the renovation, homeowners should consider the

benefits versus the cost of converting the garage. For those who are planning to grow old in a house, a garage conversion can be a worthy investment. But those who intend to sell their homes rather than retire in them may learn that a converted garage can affect home value and make it less desirable at resale. Compare your home to others in the area and see what your neighbors have done. If converted garages are the norm where you live, your own renovation may fit in with others.

Always apply for the proper permits and learn the zoning laws to see if a garage conversion is acceptable in your town or city. It's best to go by the book so that work can be done in a proper manner and be inspected for safety.

Many homeowners hope their garage-conversion projects will make their

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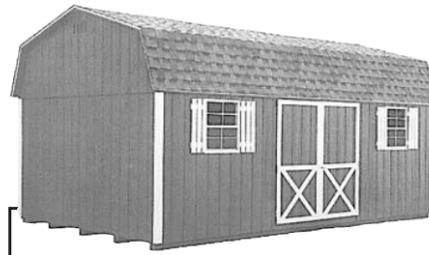
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garages seem like a seamless part of the rest of the house. To do so, you will need to remove evidence the space was once a garage. Slab floor will need to be raised and insulated. Walls also will need to be insulated and finished to improve comfort and soundproofing. Many garages do not have windows, so for the garage to function as a renovated space, windows may need to be added.

One of the biggest transformations will come by way of modifying the garage door entry. Some homeowners prefer to leave the existing door so that the home still has the appearance of a garage from the curb, while others remove the garage door and rebuild the exterior wall so that it has a window or another architectural element. An architect can help suggest design elements that will camouflage the original garage look and make the space seem like it was always part of the main living area of the home. Landscaping work also can minimize the appearance of an old garage. Rather than having the driveway end at the wall of a home, shrubbery, pavers and other techniques can blend the garage renovation into the rest of the yard design.

Transforming a garage into a living space can add several hundred square feet to a home. Hire a reputable contractor and follow the municipal guidelines for modifying the space to ensure the job is done right. FH158413



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Must-have features in your bathroom remodel

Veteran homeowners recognize the value of remodeling their kitchens and bathrooms. Kitchens and baths tend to appear dated more quickly than other spaces, such as living rooms and bedrooms, which can always be revamped with some fresh paint and new furnishings.

The home improvement pricing resource Home Guide indicates an average bathroom remodel costs anywhere from \$5,500 to \$15,000 depending on the size and scope of the renovation. However, a bath redo can increase a home's resale value and can return as much as 68 percent of homeowners' investments. As homeowners plan their bathroom renovations, it's a good time to consider improvements that will improve function and add design appeal for years to come.

- **Floating vanity:** Add an airy feeling to the room by creating space between the vanity and the floor. A floating vanity can be a counter with a vessel sink or even have cabinets, as long as the vanity doesn't extend to the floor.
- **Freestanding traditional sink or tub:** There's something elegant about a freestanding tub or pedestal sink. Such features can lend a classic vibe to a space. However, freestanding fixtures also come in modern or eclectic forms, so there are options for any design style.
- **Frameless showers:** Switch to a walk-in shower option, which improves aesthetics and makes it easier to "age in place" in a home. Pair that frameless shower with clear glass shower doors so sightline in the space remains unencumbered.
- **Natural textures:** Create a calm and serene sanctuary in the bathroom with light, natural hues and materials. Nature-inspired colors on tiles, walls and vanities can add to the spa vibe.
- **Dual sinks and vanities:** With a double vanity, two people can share the space and easily use the bathroom without getting in each other's way. One vanity with two sinks works, but homeowners can create even more personal space by dividing vanities and mirrors.
- **Small textured tile on shower floors:** Small textures are appealing and add



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safety. The added texture and grouting will keep feet from slipping on wet floors. Also, opt for mold-resistant grout to make cleanup even easier.

- **Special shower heads:** Invest in shower heads that can run the gamut from creating steam showers to rainfall effects. Some showers will have multiple shower jets to offer an invigorating experience.
- **Improve drainage:** Increase the diameter of the drain pipe in the bathroom from the standard to a two-inch drain pipe. This will reduce the risk of clogs and overflow leaks.
- **Install a window:** Natural light and air flow can reduce the risk for mold and mildew growth, and windows add some aesthetic appeal to a space. Just be sure to choose frosted privacy glass.

Additional considerations for a bath remodel include heated floors, well-placed and attractive storage options and a toilet enclosure (water closet) for added privacy. These and other bathroom renovation ideas can add value and improve the appeal of the room. TF21A423





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Did you know?

Certain home improvement projects are more complex than others. Projects that involve working with gas lines are among the most complicated and risky undertakings, and even seasoned do-it-yourselfers are urged to leave such tasks to certified professionals. According to Angi, the average cost to move a gas line is between \$15 and \$25 per linear foot, and homeowners can expect to pay an additional \$1 to \$10 per linear foot for pipe materials. A natural gas plumber can install, extend and repair natural gas lines and ensure that the project is completed safely, on time and within homeowners' budgets. Angi notes that the average cost to move a gas line is between \$250 and \$750 for the whole project. However, if a buried line must be excavated, that cost could run into the thousands of dollars. SH222678

Did you know?

It's no secret that a good-looking lawn can entice buyers when selling a home, but homeowners may not realize just how much they can benefit from even the smallest investments of time and money in their home exteriors. According to the Top Agent Insights Q2 2019 Report from HomeLight, low-cost outdoor home improvements to a landscape provide sizable returns on investment. For example, the report found that a \$268 investment in a lawn care service can lead to a \$1,211 increase in home value at resale. Similarly, \$340 worth of fresh mulch can increase home value at resale by \$769. More than 85 percent of real estate professionals recommended other small and simple projects, including removing dirt, grime and cobwebs from a home entrance and trimming trees and shrubs prior to putting a home on the market. GT224830

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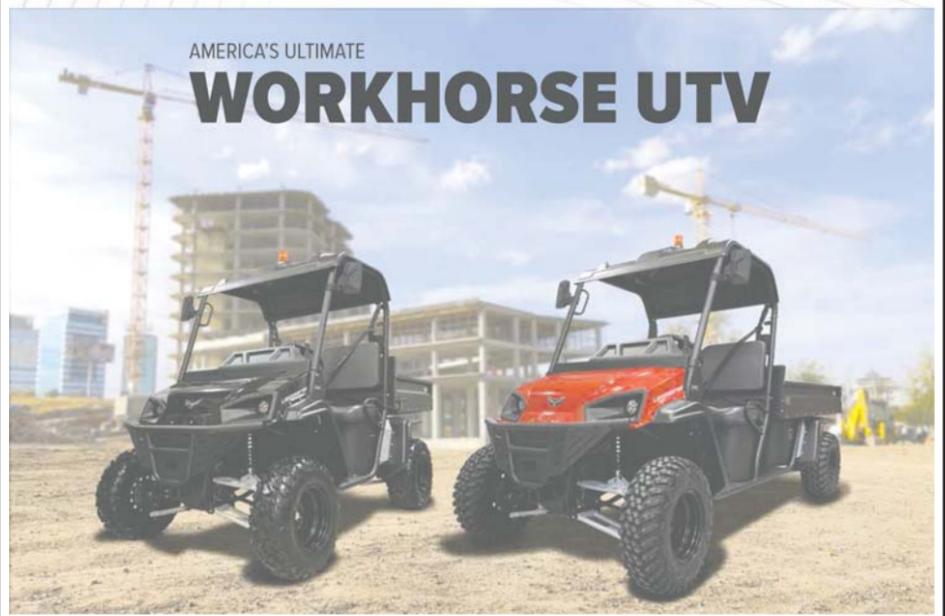
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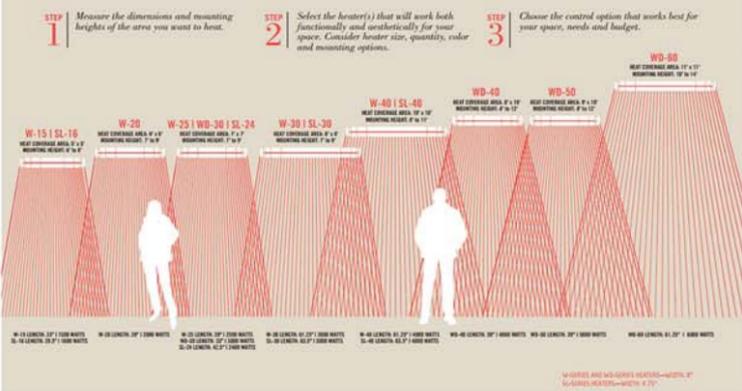
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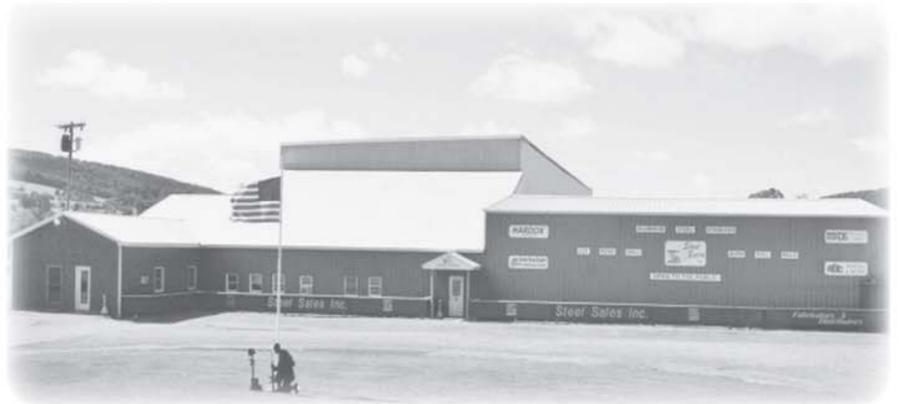
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No Room For A Door? Slide It Aside The Wall

(HIT) - There are many places through most houses where doors that slide rather than swing can provide space saving advantages. But genuine pocket doors that slide inside of walls can't always be installed, due to obstacles such as room configuration or costs.

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Virtually any door may be mounted because the hardware can support even solid core doors of up to 125 pounds.

by using a unique hardware system to install a wall mount door. Unlike a normal pocket door, a wall mount door is surface mounted outside the wall. Because it slides on a track, a wall mount door is ideal for locations where space required for a swinging door would be wasted.

It only takes a moment to think of how many of these locations there are in typical households. The obvious ones include baths, kitchens,

halls, closets, storage or utility rooms, garage entryways, playrooms and home offices. With imagination, you will come up with many more. The ease of operating wall mount doors also makes them suitable for homes where there are disabled residents.

Wall Mount Door Hardware makes installation an easy job. No close fitting is required, and the hardware can be readily adapted for particular installations. Virtually any door may be mounted because the hardware can support even solid core doors of up to 125 pounds.

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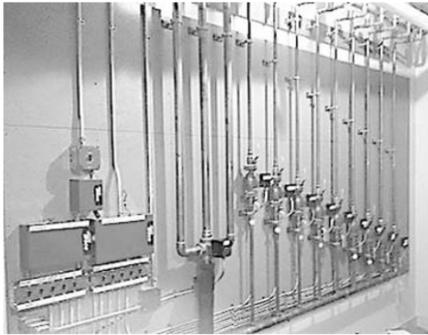
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Common Mistakes Made On Home Renovation Projects

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

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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.



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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