



# Home Improvement GUIDE



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# Bathroom Renovations

According to estimates from HomeAdvisor, the national average cost for a complete bathroom renovation in 2019 is \$10,349. It's a popular room to remodel as it gives many homeowners the chance to add value to their home while making it more livable.

Before jumping into a DIY renovation job, consider the extent of your needs. Since bathrooms feature plen-

ty of water connections, being unfamiliar with routing and sealing joints can create disastrous results. Leaks can cause more than expensive flooring repairs; it also introduces a breeding ground for health hazards like mold.

## INSPECT FLOORING

Before any bathroom renovation project, you should ensure the integrity of the floor, especially for areas around toilets, showers and sinks. If you notice signs of water damage are already present, it's important to resolve them before going forward with the project.

If you will be replacing the flooring, it's easy to find damage by ripping up the old material. However, if you plan to leave the floor in place, make sure

it is free from sagging or signs of mold. These issues may not present themselves until some appliances are moved, so make sure to leave room in your budget for unexpected expenses.

Another issue that is common when water damage goes unresolved are problems to joists below the subfloor. This expensive remediation is necessary as it is a sound part of your home's structural integrity.

## REPLACING APPLIANCES

When new bathroom appliances are in the cards, consider upgrading to energy and water efficient options. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, if every household in the country used these efficient fixtures and appliances, more than three trillion gallons of water would be

saved annually. You will also notice a decrease in your electricity expenses as the energy needed to power them is greatly reduced.

To discover these models at your local home improvement store, look for EPA-approved products labeled with a WaterSense certification and electrical appliances will advertise with a EnergyStar label.

## ADDING NEW WATER SOURCES

When you are adding additional fixtures or appliances that require new water sources, assistance from a licensed plumber can take away most of the headache. For instance, if you will be upgrading to a double sink or adding a shower to a bathtub, piping must be rerouted and sufficient to supply the new components.

# Impactful Weekend Projects

If your home needs some modern updates but you can't find the time or room in your budget for a significant renovation, consider a small project for big results. It doesn't always have to cost a fortune to make a change.

Many jobs with large impacts are easily achievable with a minor understanding of home renovations. While some major projects may be best suited for a professional, don't be afraid to try a simple job as you become familiar with DIY repairs and upgrades.

Here are a few quick and easy ideas to consider when updating your home over a weekend.

## REPLACE FLOORING

A quick renovation that makes a big difference is replacing dated flooring with improved coverings. You can find DIY-friendly materials to do the install yourself like interlocking planks of vinyl or adhesive-backed carpet or tile. For some jobs like installing hardwood or stretching room-sized carpet, some special tools and research may be necessary to perform the jobs without the help of an expert.

## REARRANGE THE FURNITURE

You can give an old room new life by simply rearranging your existing furniture. Follow these tips from Better Homes and Gardens to make a statement with your new display.

Go for a long and lean design with plenty of room for foot traffic and use end

tables on both ends of the sofa.

Arrange your furniture to showcase main focal points in the room. For instance, chairs and couches should face your television setup or a relaxing view in front of the window.

Consider the available lighting in a room from windows and fixtures like lamps.

To add more light, consider installing in-floor outlets to give yourself more options when using a floating furniture design.

## TOUCH UP TRIM

When you don't want to paint an entire room, even minor touch ups to your trim can make a big difference. In

addition to choosing neutral colors as accents, you can make it stand out by using a high-sheen gloss but remember that it may highlight imperfections in the nearby walls.

If the defects are too noticeable, you may benefit from patching them up and coating with a matching paint color.





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# Create New Attic Living Space

When you need to add more living space but don't want to commit to building an addition, sometimes an attic can be the perfect candidate for a transition.

The task is best left to a professional, especially if it requires the installation of new electricity or water pipes.

Get your plan together before contacting a service to

determine how you want to reinvigorate the space. Many people prefer to use the attic as an additional bedroom, an office or even a hangout spot. It's important to check with your local officials about building permits as their unique regulations may require licensing.

Once you get the legalities out of the way, use these tips for a smooth renovation.

## **BUILDING A SUBFLOOR**

Your home's attic was likely built to add storage for items like boxes, suitcases or trunks. Unfortunately, many contractor's or home builders don't

foresee the need for an attic to become a living space, so before you can upgrade it, a subfloor must be installed over the bare joists.

To add a floor, it's not always as simple as laying plywood down on the current supports. Many times, homes are built with bare joists that are unsuitable for the additional weight of furniture, people or pets who will frequent the new space.

However, to create a safe area, an expert can cut boards of the same length and nail them to the existing joints to create a durable structure.

## **HEATING AND AIR**

When planning an attic renovation, it's important to include plans on heating and cooling the new room. If you want it to be included in your current system's ductwork, hiring a professional HVAC technician is the best way to ensure it is rerouted properly and efficiently.

If you want to forgo the expense of redirecting air into your attic, you can get by with the assistance of a window unit in the summer and by using space heaters during cooler temperatures.

Make sure to keep nearby

items away from the additional heating tool as the

The National Fire Protection Association blamed them for 15% of all home fires between 2012 and 2016.

## **FINISHING THE ATTIC**

In addition to covering your newly built floor, you'll have to decide a wall cover too. Many who renovate their attics add a modern touch with paintable drywall or choose a type of paneling to fit their design scheme. Consider how you will use the space to determine how to finish the walls and ceilings.

# Create an Open Floor Plan

If you're a fan of home improvement reality shows or follow renovation trends, you know that an open floor plan is a popular design that many homeowners want.

In fact, the National Association of Home Builders reports that 70% of recent buyers were interested in at least an open kitchen plan while 32% preferred a completely open arrangement.

Performing this renovation to an established home requires detailed knowledge about a home's structure. Since you will likely be taking down walls and rerouting electrical diagrams, an expert can ensure the integrity will not be affected.

## **BENEFITS OF BEING OPEN**

There are multiple reasons that open floor plans are extremely popular.

One major advantage is the connection hosts feel with their guests while preparing party favors in the kitchen and engaging with their company in the living space. Family dinners and events with friends are more enjoyable when rooms flow into each other. Parents of young children also benefit from the ability to keep an eye on their little ones as



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they roam throughout the open space.

## **IDENTIFYING LOAD BEARING WALLS**

Before removing walls to create your open floor plan, it's crucial to identify load-bearing walls. They are imperative to distributing weight forces of your property and typically

bear the load of a roof structure above. Most of the time, you can easily identify this important support by walls that run perpendicular to their joists. Since it may be difficult to tell without removing a wall's covering, getting advice from an expert is a beneficial resource before you find yourself with an expensive repair.

## **WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR NEW SPACE**

The key to decorating an open floor plan is to make it appear symmetrical. You can start in the living room by arranging it around a focal point. The experts at Home and Garden Television recommend taking advantage of attractive centerpieces like a

fireplace or gallery wall.

Modern kitchens often utilize the sleek appearance of an island or peninsula rather than a traditional dinner table.

Organizing bar stools around their perimeter provides more space for guests without disrupting the flow of your open floor plan.

# Improve your Driveway

Whether you're looking to redo your driveway to boost the appeal of your home's exterior or need it rerouted to accommodate new vehicles like a camper or trailer, you have several options to complete the job.

From choosing the right material for your needs to hiring a team of experts, a driveway renovation can be a valuable project.

## CHOOSING A CONTRACTOR

When researching and receiving different quotes from potential contractors, always ensure they are licensed to work and are insured. The job sometimes requires heavy equipment to finish successfully. If an accident happens, it's important your home insurance isn't liable. You should also find an expert who is proficient in the type of material you choose. Whether it's concrete, asphalt or even gravel, an installers knowledge will play a large role in the outcome.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT MATERIAL

When planning a driveway renovation, there are numerous materials to choose from.



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Make sure to consider your budget when deciding which to use as some installations can become costly. You'll also want to factor in maintenance as for some driveway options, it can be important to maintain its integrity.

Aggregate or gravel is one of the most affordable and low-maintenance options. It

is also extremely durable and easily repairable by adding more rock. Some downsides include the need for a drainage system, it's not as aesthetically pleasing, and snow removal can be difficult.

Asphalt can be a bit more strenuous on your budget but offers attractive curb appeal and high performance. It's

high maintenance and requires periodic sealant and a resurface every few years. This process can be relatively expensive in relation to aggregate maintenance so you should leave room in your budget if you choose this material.

If you're looking for low maintenance and an appeal-

ing aesthetic, concrete is a quality option, but it comes at an expensive price. While it is much more durable than asphalt, the initial install will be more costly. Consider if the front-load expense is more attractive than an affordable installation with higher maintenance costs down the road.

# Modernize Dated Design Schemes

Especially if you live in an older home, the featured materials may not fit into today's popular styles.

Whether you are planning to pursue a real estate sale or further improve your forever home, the condition of your property can have a significant impact.

If you're unfamiliar with trends that are past their prime, here are some things to look for when you're deciding what to update.

## PANELING AND WALLPAPER

Dated wall coverings can quickly make a home look drab and uninspiring. Instead, consider removing old-fashioned paneling or wallpaper and replacing it with a layer of drywall. A professional install is relatively inexpensive, at a national average of \$1.50 per-square-foot, according to Home Advisor. It's also easy to work with when coating it with unique coats of paint and using accents to highlight other features in your rooms.

## GLASS BLOCK WINDOWS

These windows gained popularity because of their ability to allow light to pass through walls and illuminate to other rooms. However, the trend that was used in many bathrooms doesn't fit in most



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of today's modernized styles.

Depending on the size of the window, a replacement can be a costly renovation. However, replacing it with a modern option can enhance the appearance. If you find yourself missing the additional light they provided, consider installing a skylight to

allow natural light to wash into your room.

## ANALOG THERMOSTAT

An attractive wall can be held back by the presence of an analog thermostat. While many view this tool as a simple way to control their heating and cooling system, an

updated model can bring a sleek appearance to a room.

Digital options are available to bring a splash of modernization to your home but a color touchscreen model can become a powerful accent that works both visually and practically.

Do your research on smart

thermostats that can be controlled from an app on your smartphone from anywhere in the world.

They're not only attractive but will also save you money since you are able to activate or deactivate your HVAC system while you're away from home.

# Advanced Insulation

Insulation plays a large role in maintaining temperatures during both winter and summer and takes some of the brunt off our heating and air systems.

The American Society of Home Inspectors encourages us to pay attention to this element as its purpose is to slow the rate of heat transfer.

Traditionally, the most common insulation used in homes is made from materials like cellulose, fiberglass and mineral wool. The United States Department of Energy reports most fiberglass products contain 40 to 60 percent of recycled glass. While this material can be efficient in keeping the air inside your home, advanced options are available and can result in even more savings toward your electricity bill.



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## WHERE TO INSULATE

One of the most common areas Americans choose to use insulation is the attic. Not only is it cost effective, it's a simple way to add extra protection to your home. In unfinished areas, it is recommended to place the barrier between floor joists to seal the living space below.

Here are some other popular places to add insulation as recommended by the United

States DOE:

- All exterior walls between unheated spaces like a garage, shed or storage areas;
- Floors above cold spaces like crawl spaces and basements; and
- Foundation walls above ground level.

## CHOOSING INSULATION

In addition to the tried-and-

true fiberglass insulation, the DOE also recommends these advanced options. Consider the advantages these innovative materials will provide for your family.

Choosing foam board or rigid foam to insulate unfinished walls and unvented-slope roofs provides a high-insulation value.

In hot climates, a reflective

insulation system is optimal. It features a radiant barrier which works to reflect heat absorbed by a roof. To be effective, it must face an air space to keep the hot temperatures in your attic rather than in your living space.

An all-in-one insulation that can benefit any area in your home and be efficiently installed to an established

structure is spray foam. Hire a licensed expert to install the barrier as specialized tools are sometimes required.

Keep your home comfortable all year by determining the most effective insulation for your climate. Obtain a few quotes from different contractors to get their advice based on your home's footprint and location.