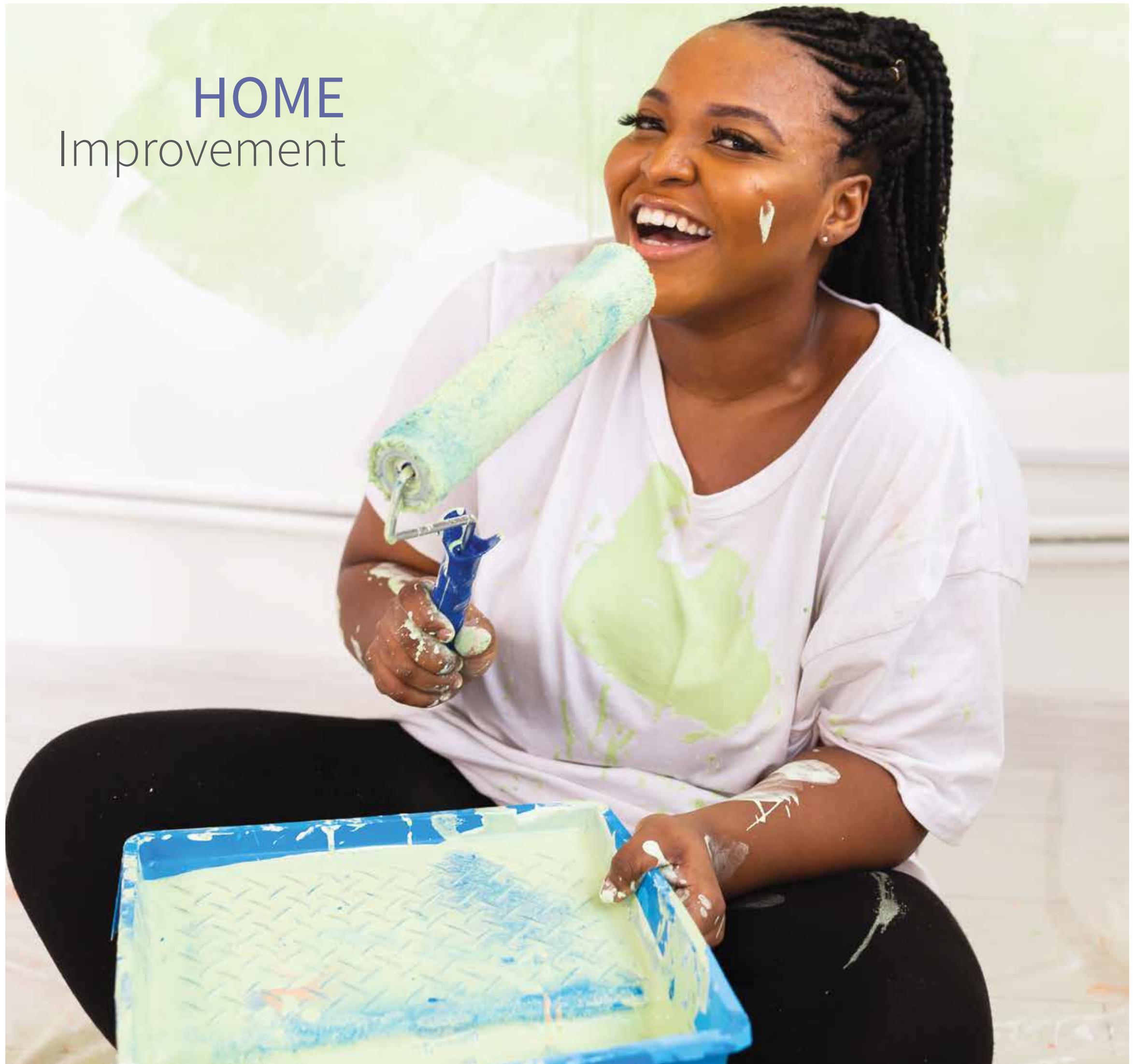


HOME Improvement





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Colored Kitchen Cabinets Are Back

All-white or off-white kitchens were all the rage for years. Now this generation has discovered what every other generation who enamored of a sparkling white kitchen realized: They are impossible to keep perfectly clean.

Colored kitchen cabinets are back, and here are the hottest ways to embrace the trend.

GO BOLD, GO HOME

Big, bold colors like turquoise, Kelly green and deep oranges are having a heyday in the kitchen. Designers are also going for turning the color wheel, picking opposites like deep greens and shell pinks for maximum contrast. Unexpected shades are all the rage, but you do what makes you feel good. Mark Wilkinson, founder of Mark Wilkinson

furniture, tells Homes and Gardens that's what's most important in a color is not that it's on-trend or on magazine covers, it's what makes you feel good.

"The color in a kitchen — be it on walls or fittings — should last for at least five years, minimum, so try to look beyond immediate trends and choose a kitchen color scheme that will keep you feeling good long term," he said.

TAKE BABY STEPS

Not brave enough to deck all the

walls? Then choose one part of your cabinetry to color, such as a kitchen island or cabinets above or below a bar. That way, you get a pop of color without a huge commitment.

Yellow, a classic sunny kitchen color, can bring new life and vibrancy to an island, and looks especially chic with dark countertops.

If you want to keep the space light but don't want white, try cool minty or light blue colors. Add darker hardware for some drama. Gray is always a classic color and looks great in contempo-

rary or more rustic spaces.

LITTLE CHANGES, BIG STATEMENT

While you're painting and have the cabinet hardware off anyway, consider changing it out to breathe a whole new life into your space. First, pick a finish that accentuates that new color. Start with one that matches your kitchen faucet and go from there. Don't be afraid to mix and match metals, but remember you want everything to coordinate, even if it doesn't match perfectly.

Home Office Conversions

Remote work, a side effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, is here to stay.

Projections say that a quarter of all professional jobs in North America will be remote by the end of this year, and that trend is expected to steadily increase. That means you'll need somewhere more permanent than your dinner table to set up office. Here's how to set up your most productive space.

PICKING A LOCATION

Look for a room in your house — or a space that you can find some privacy — to set up your office. Remember that this will need to be somewhere fairly quiet, maybe with a lockable door for those important meetings. Look for places that are out of the way of most of the traffic in your home and away from distractions.

FURNISHINGS

Next, you'll need to make it comfortable. Start with the biggest piece of furniture, the desk. There are all kinds of desk options on the market, including ones that fold away for quick storage, all the way to giant executive models with plenty of room for laying out all your work tasks. Pick one that will fit your space and how you work. If you're sharing the room with something else, like using a guest room as your home office or the family dining room, look for a lean-



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ing desk or one with a roll-top or doors so you can put work away when you need to.

You'll also need a comfortable desk chair that you can sit in all day without pain. Choose one that will let you sit with

your knees bent at 90 degrees and your feet flat on the ground. If you tend to fidget, consider adjustable models that will allow you to keep your chair ergonomic no matter your position.

LIGHTING AND MORE

Make sure your space has plenty of electrical cords for your work setup. Have an electrician install a few more outlets is a small job that may be worth it to make sure every-

thing is safely plugged in. You may also have your internet provider install a line so that you can hardwire your computer directly to a connection for security and optimal speed.

Statement Wallpaper

Wallpaper, that design look from the 1990s that never really went away, is having another moment.

Powder rooms, bathrooms and bedrooms are all getting rolls of patterned paper where statement walls once reigned supreme. Here are some wallpaper trends to get stuck on this year.

TEXTURE

Today's wallpapers aren't your mother's country geese. Many of today's designs feature luxe textures that can give a room a plush feel. And it goes beyond seagrass and fabric-like textures, too. Arte International's Metal X line looks like oxidized metal sheeting.

Wallpapers also mimic the look of brick, concrete and even rustic woods. Feature these textures on a statement wall in a bedroom for an earthy, relaxing space.

FLORALS

Floral patterns never go out of style, but in today's biophilic design world, look for patterns that soften the atmosphere. And don't be afraid to play with bold patterns in small spaces.

"As a result of spending more time at home, our clients are more on board with adventurous patterns, texture and bold color, or play with scale and form," Rosie Ward of Ward & Co. told House Beautiful.

Heather Hackett of Christy sug-

gests going big with patterns but keeping the tone classic to allow for longevity in your design.

PEEL AND STICK

No longer do you need a professional to hang paper, and you don't have to live with your bold design choice forever. Peel-and-stick wallpaper is getting better every year, and the number of on-trend patterns to choose from can be overwhelming. These wallpapers can even work in rentals to help make a first apartment a first home.

Start out by choosing just one wall, particularly if you've chosen a bold color, texture or pattern (and especially if you've chosen all three at once). Look for a heavier paper to get the best quality and measure your room carefully to make sure you get enough paper to cover your space. Take into account doors and windows and always order more than you think you'll need.

You may need a couple of extra tools to make the job easier. Always defer to manufacturer instructions, but consider things like a flexible smoothing tool for working out air bubbles and a small craft knife to help you cut the paper. Clean the walls before you start and, if you can, lightly sand the wall to help the wallpaper stick.



Adding Motion Lighting

Lighting controls today go way beyond the switch.

Consider installing motion sensors (not the kind in your driveway) to help you save energy inside your home. These sensors work the same way the ones you may have outside for security, but they work inside to save not your belongings from thieves but your money from the electric company.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF SENSORS

You're probably familiar with motion sensors. They turn lights on when they detect motion and then turn them off some set time after that motion. Outdoor lighting and security lighting usually come equipped with some kind of motion sensor.

Indoors, these sensors are usually called occupancy sensors and they detect motion within a certain area. This means that when your kids enter a room, the lights come on and stay on while they're in there. Once they leave, the lights turn off, no yelling required.

Occupancy sensors need to be located where they can see the whole space and may also include sensors for sounds, heat and motion. That way the Roomba doesn't turn on the lights. Photosensors can help keep the lights from turning on during daylight hours.



HOW TO INSTALL OCCUPANCY SENSORS

You can get lights with occupancy sensors already installed, but if you like your existing features, you can also swap out a switch to add an occupancy sensor to the room. The sensors are attached to the

switch, so keep that in mind if the switch isn't placed so it can see the whole room. Depending on the system you install, you may be able to get sensors to extend a switch's range.

Switch models often include more than one type of sensor to help detect occupancy, such

as a motion sensor and an infrared sensor. Sensing switches cost around \$20 and usually have programming to turn off the lights in minute increments up to 30 minutes. They install quickly and easily over existing switch hardware and may even feature coordi-

nating wallplates to seamlessly match your decor.

When choosing an occupancy sensor switch, be aware that there are different models for different sized rooms. Choose the one that best fits the room you're covering to make sure it works properly in your area.

Flooring Trends

Clean lines are where it's at this year in flooring.

Waterproof options, big tiles and the luxe look of wide planks are in fashion as well.

"Everything's going a little bit cleaner," Kathryn Gluibizzi, a senior designer for Armstrong Flooring, told Houzz.

WARM IS IN

As far as color goes, palettes are going warmer as spaces get softer and more intimate. Even that standby flooring color, gray, is getting warmer with brown undertones and airy coastal looks. New finishes and materials are allowing for multitone color that brings a richness to your flooring project. Even stone, terrazzo and concrete looks are going for warm, natural colors rather than cool, contemporary shades.

LUXURY VINYL

Look for new flooring options in vinyl planking and tiles. Improved technology means that these durable faux products look more and more like real wood and stone. Stone polymer composites and rigid-core vinyl tiles offer more durability than older products, and are also easier to clean and keep. New vinyl flooring also takes into consideration environmental quality, using products and adhesives that meet



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indoor air quality standards.

LAMINATES

Laminate flooring has also come a long way. Laminate flooring is a layered composite flooring with compressed wood on a fiberwood base, but the top layer looks much more realistic than older laminates. It can even be textured to mimic real wood and compete with

the best luxury vinyl planks.

HARDWOOD

Hardwood flooring is still an option, too, even amid all the talk of new laminates and luxury vinyl. These, too, are trending in warmer tones and hand-scraped surfaces. Look for wider and longer hardwood planking with character-giving knots and cracks that give it a

warm, homey feel.

Engineered woods are another option in the hardwood space. Engineered products have a natural wood surface with a composite plank and it tends to be less expensive than hardwood. However, it can't be refinished as many times as traditional hardwood flooring as each refinishing wears through that natural wood exterior.

STONE

Travertine and travertine-like products are still on-trend, in muted, warm shades. Terrazzo is having a moment along with other mid-century design trends. Today's terrazzo is a composite of quartz, marble, metals or glass in resin or cement. More economical porcelain tile imitations are available.



Let there Be Light

If you want to make a space feel brand new again, consider swapping out the light fixtures. Light fixtures are often overlooked, but they can make or break a space.

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Just like with colors and patterns, fixtures are going big and bold this year. Want to liven up an entry way, powder room or other small space?

“Add an oversized chandelier,” Living Spaces’ designer and manager of production design Jessica Harris told *The Spruce*. “This is a great, affordable refresh to a room or entryway that will be noticed by guests right away.”

This, of course, means that chandeliers are moving out of the dining room and into, well, anywhere in the house.

Add a luxurious touch to the bedroom with a chandelier attached to a dimmer switch. Chandeliers can also add glamor to guest rooms, entryways and just about anywhere the ceilings are high enough to accommodate it.

If you’re looking to simplify your space (and just maybe your life), look for linear lighting fixtures. No, not track lighting. Look instead for contemporary, clean pieces that fit rectangular spaces, such as over the kitchen bar or dining table. Rows of pendant lights fit this cat-

egory, too, and not just linear multilight fixtures. Because linear lighting can feature more than one fixture, consider how the pieces work together as a unit. This doesn’t mean they all have to look the same, by the way.

One thing to consider on almost any light fixture you choose is the metal. Most fixtures include metal either on the arms of a chandelier, the chain of a pendant lamp, the housing of a flush-mount light. Choose a metal that compliments or coordinates (remember, you

can mix metals now) with the rest of your space.

This year also sees the return of layering lights — meaning that there’s more than one source of light for any room. Large rooms can use lighting to differentiate spaces and add depth and mood. Multiple fixtures and lamps add texture to a room just like rugs and furniture can. Consider installing dimmer switches and separate controls for each source to adjust your lighting to virtually any situation.

Getting Ready for Weather

While we may not spend as much time outdoors in winter, there are certain things that need to be done around the house before temperatures drop.

Here's a checklist to make sure you're prepared for the elements before Old Man Winter comes knocking.

WEATHERPROOFING

Keep cold air out and warm air in with weather stripping on your doors and windows. Now's the perfect time to make sure your weather stripping is in good shape. Depending on what part of the country you live in, you may also want to install a storm door and storm windows to further weatherproof your home. Also get your plumbing ready for winter weather by wrapping up your pipes to keep them from freezing.

Run fresh caulk around your windows and use foam outlet protectors to further keep cold out. Also check your attic insulation to make sure you have enough to keep the heat in (and your utility bills low).

CHECK THE FIREPLACE

Call and book your fireplace inspection now before building the first fire of the season. Soot, animal nests, creosote



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and more can build up in your chimney, making that first fire deadly. Have a chimney sweep clean it out and vacuum up any accumulated ash from the firebox before you start stacking wood.

CLEAN THE GUTTERS

As soon as the last leaves

fall, clean out your gutters to prevent clogging and allow rain and melted snow to drain properly. You may also want to consider installing gutter guards to keep debris from clogging up your gutters. They will need to be brushed off, but it's not as strenuous as cleaning an open gutter.

BRING IN OUTDOOR FURNITURE

Cold and wintry weather can damage outdoor furniture and grills, so it's time to put them away in a garage or basement for the season. If you use a propane tank, close the tank valve and disconnect the tank. Store it outside and

put the grill indoors.

It's also time to clean outdoor power tools, such as mowers and string trimmers, and do any required annual maintenance before storing them away for the winter. Make a plan for any plants that need shelter from wintry temperatures.