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# 3 resources to help you restore an old house

If you own a heritage home, you might be interested in restoring it. Here are three resources that can help you with your renovation project and ensure you respect the building’s history.

## 1. CRAFTSPEOPLE

When it comes to old houses, there are a number of repair and maintenance tasks that require specific tools and training. Look for individuals and companies that specialize in traditional trades, as they’ll have the know-how to assist you with your restoration. Reach out to local guilds to find talented craftspeople in your area.

## 2. TECHNICAL GUIDES

Restoring a historic building is a major undertaking. Fortunately, there are guidebooks available that outline the steps involved and provide recommendations based on the style of your home. They might also give you a better idea about which types of professionals can help with your project.

## 3. BUILDING INSPECTORS

To ensure your restoration project is up to code and respects local regulations, you’ll need to hire an inspector. The Canadian Association of Home and Property Inspectors (CAHPI) is a great resource to help you find building inspectors that specialize in historic houses.

Finally, be sure to contact your municipality before you get started to find out if you need special permits to restore your heritage home.

# 3 tips for hiring an interior designer

If you want to redecorate one or more rooms in your home, an interior designer can help you create a beautiful and functional space. Here’s how to choose the right person for the job.

## 1. DO YOUR RESEARCH

Referrals from friends and relatives can kickstart your search, but make sure you look for someone who specializes in your preferred design style and has the right credentials. Online directories offered by professional associations can be a great resource.

## 2. ASK LOTS OF QUESTIONS

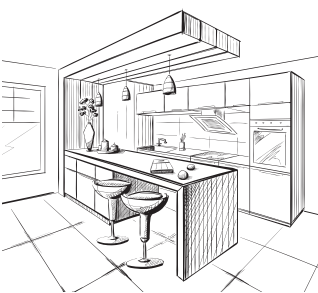
In addition to consulting the person’s portfolio, discuss the specifics of your project with each candidate to find out if it aligns with their expertise. Over the phone or by email, inquire about their

pricing, how they work and what services they offer.

## 3. SCHEDULE A MEETING

Once you’ve narrowed down your list of candidates to two or three people, ask to set up a meeting so you can get to know their personality. Among other things, you should look for someone who listens to your needs and asks about your lifestyle.

Whether you need help choosing new furniture or adding the final touches after a major renovation, taking the time to find an interior designer who understands your style is a must.



# 3 ways to brighten up your closet

Does your closet feel more like a cave? If you’re tired of fumbling around in the dark for clothes, here are three ways you can shed some light on the situation without doing any electrical work.

1. Replace the rods in your closet with illuminated LED models. If there isn’t an outlet nearby, opt for ones that are battery-operated.



2. Place small, battery-operated puck lights in strategic locations such as beneath the upper shelf. Most models include adhesive strips to facilitate installation.

3. Line the inside of the door frame with LED strip lights to provide an even distribution of light. Both wireless and plug-in models usually come with a switch.

Finally, consider freshening up the inside of your closet with a coat of pure white paint to further brighten up the space.

# How to set a budget for your renovation

If you want to renovate your home, it’s essential that you establish a budget before you get started. This will allow you to determine what you can afford and whether you need to adjust your plan. Here are some tips to help you allocate sufficient funds for your renovation.

• Be precise about your project. A surefire way to blow your budget is to improvise. If you want a relatively accurate estimate of how much everything will cost, make sure your plan is as detailed as possible. You should also be mindful of how you spend your money in order to maximize the value you’ll add to your home.

• Assess your financing options. If you plan to upgrade the appliances, windows, doors or insulation in your home, find out if you qualify for an energy efficiency rebate offered by the government. If you’re considering taking out a loan to pay for the renovation, be sure to factor the

interest into your budget.

• Estimate the various costs. Do some research to find out the price of the materials you want to use and the professionals you’ll need to hire. Keep in mind that the size and age of your home may influence the cost of your renovations. If you want a more accurate figure, consider hiring an estimator.

• Plan for unforeseen expenses. When it comes to renovating a home, unexpected costs are almost inevitable. Therefore, you should reserve about 15 per cent of your budget for contingencies. These funds may be needed to remove mould, bring the home up to code or deal with other hidden issues.

Lastly, if you decide to work with a contractor, request a detailed timeline of the project. This way, you can keep track of expenses and spread out your payments.



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# 4 factors to consider when converting a basement into an apartment

Do you want to convert your basement into an apartment? If so, you should know this is a major renovation project that requires proper planning. Here are four factors that are important to keep in mind.

## 1. THE LEGAL ASPECT

The first step is to contact your municipality to determine whether this type of renovation is permitted and, if so, what standards you'll need to meet. Among other things, you may be required to have a minimum ceiling height, a fire separation between the units and a certain number of windows and exits. You



should also find out what permits you'll need.

## 2. THE BASIC COMFORTS

In order for a basement to be truly livable, you need to make sure the space has proper ventilation and that dampness isn't an issue. You should also maximize the amount of natural light that enters the apartment, and make sure the space is adequately insulated and soundproofed.

## 3. THE DIVISION OF SPACE

If you're converting an unfinished basement, it might be more cost-effective to design a studio apartment. If your basement already has rooms, consider which walls to keep or remove in order to create a functional kitchen, bathroom, living room and bedroom. You should also incorporate sufficient storage space and, if possible, a laundry room.

## 4. THE FINISHING TOUCHES

Since basements tend to get less natural light and have lower ceilings than the rest of the house, it's a good idea to favour light colours and materials for the walls, flooring and cabinets. This will help make the space feel bigger, brighter and airier.

Finally, be sure to work with certified professionals to ensure your renovation is a success.

# How to add an interior wall to your home

Do you want to improve the layout of your home by creating a new room or dividing an existing one? If so, here's how to add an interior, non-load-bearing wall.

## DECIDE ON THE LOCATION

It's important to take into account the alignment of the ceiling joists when deciding where to build a wall. If they run parallel, for example, you'll need to erect the wall directly beneath one of the joists. Use a stud finder and a square to determine the best spot for the wall. Then, mark the location on the floor and ceiling with a chalk line.

## GATHER THE RIGHT MATERIALS

In addition to buying or renting any tools you don't already own, such as a circular saw or drill, make sure you have all the required materials. Among other things, you'll need dimensional lumber, wood screws, primer and drywall. Make sure to measure the space where the wall will be built so you can determine the quantity of supplies required. If you need advice, you can ask an expert at your local hardware store.

## INSTALL THE PLATES AND STUDS

Start by cutting the plates (the lumber that runs horizontally along the floor and ceiling) to the required length, and then screw them into place. Next, cut the vertical studs to fit between the plates, and screw them in one at a time. They should be evenly spaced



out. Finally, install cross-studs between each stud at the midpoint between the floor and ceiling.

## ADD THE FINISHING TOUCHES

Screw the sheets of drywall into the studs and cross-studs, then finish the drywall joints. Conclude the project by installing the baseboards and painting the new wall.

Find everything you need to complete this simple, affordable project at your local hardware store. Alternatively, hire a contractor to ensure the job gets done right.

# Panelling: 3 materials to use in your home

If you want to install decorative panelling on a wall or ceiling in your home, here are three materials you can use.

## 1. PVC

Lightweight and easy to install, this wall covering is ideal for humid spaces, such as bathrooms, because it doesn't rot. Plus, it can be manufactured to resemble wood, stone and other materials. Keep in mind, however, that PVC can warp if exposed to heat.

## 2. MEDIUM-DENSITY FIBREBOARD

Simple to install, MDF panels are available in a variety of sizes and can be used as is or painted to match the space. Additionally, some models are designed to be fire resistant whereas others are made specifically for humid environments.

## 3. SOLID WOOD

This durable, elegant material can add warmth to a space and be painted, stained or varnished to complement the decor. Choose from species like pine, teak and oak, each of which has unique characteristics. Just make sure the panels aren't warped and that any knots in the wood are solid.

For personalized advice on your home renovation project, visit your local retailers.



# Covering up a ceiling: materials you can use

Do you want to give an old or unsightly ceiling a stylish new look? Here are some of the materials you can use to get the job done.

## GYPSUM BOARDS

Commonly known as drywall, this cost-effective material is fire resistant and relatively lightweight. However, installing gypsum boards generates a fine dust that can be hard to clean up and risks irritating your eyes and lungs if you don't wear protective equipment.

## CEILING TILES

Available in a variety of materials such as mineral fibre or natural wood fibre, a dropped ceiling can be used to conceal ducts and pipes without restricting access. Plus, these lightweight tiles are easy to install and inexpensive to replace if one gets damaged.

## ALUMINUM

This shiny material is sure to catch the eye. It's also low-maintenance, recyclable and resistant to fire, mois-

ture and mildew. These metal sheets can be either suspended from the ceiling or glued directly to the surface.

## PANELLING

Typically made of wood or PVC, panelling can be glued and nailed in place or installed as a dropped ceiling, provided you have adequate insulation. This ceiling material can add warmth and character to a room, but it might also make the space feel smaller.

## STRETCH CEILING

Made of either fabric or a glossy PVC film, this ceiling type is ideal for a modern design. Plus, it's resistant to fire and moisture. Although stretch ceilings last a long time, they can be quite expensive and require professional installation.

Keep in mind that something as simple as a fresh coat of paint or a bold wallpaper pattern can give new life to an old ceiling. For more ideas, consult an interior designer.



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## What paint should you use in the bathroom?



Since bathrooms are humid environments that fluctuate in temperature, you can't use just any type of paint. Here are a few tips to make sure you choose a product that will look good and hold up under these conditions.

### TYPE

Ideally, you should choose an acrylic latex paint. Also, it's best to avoid a matte finish, as this sheen makes paint less resistant to humidity and frequent cleaning. Keep in mind, however, that a glossy finish will make imperfections more apparent. Therefore, if your walls aren't in the best shape, consider a velvet, pearl or satin finish. However, if you prefer a classic matte finish, look for an antifungal paint specifically designed for use in humid spaces.

### COLOUR

When it comes to paint colours, there are plenty of choices. For a calming, spa-like atmosphere, consider a calming blue-grey. Alternatively, a darker colour could make the space feel more intimate, or you might opt for a vibrant orange to brighten up the room and add warmth.

If you have a small bathroom, keep in mind that lighter tones tend to make spaces feel airier. However, a single dark accent wall can be used to create contrast and depth.

To discover the wide variety of available products, visit the paint and hardware stores in your area.

## A buyer's guide to finding the right bathtub

Are you in the market for a new bathtub? Here's an overview of your options to help you find the one that best suits your needs and preferences.

### STYLES

When shopping for a tub, it's important to think about the size of your bathroom and the experience you want to have when taking a bath. Here are several styles to consider:

- An alcove bathtub is an affordable option that fits between three walls and doesn't require much space.

- A drop-in tub is installed inside a frame made of stone, ceramic or another material designed to match the bathroom's decor.

- A freestanding bathtub takes up more space but can give the room a contemporary flair. For a classic look, go with a clawfoot tub.

- A soaking tub is a spacious model that can be embedded in the floor. It will likely need to be reinforced.

- A walk-in bathtub is ideal for people with limited mobility, as it's equipped with a watertight door, bench and grab bars.

- A whirlpool bathtub is a pricy but therapeutic model, ideal for when you want to relax and ease sore muscles.

Keep in mind that most of these bathtub styles are available in a variety of colours and shapes.

### MATERIALS

As for bathtub materials, these are the most popular options:

- Acrylic. This lightweight option is easy to maintain and retains heat well. However, it can be damaged by acetone and other cleaning solvents.
- Enamelled steel. This affordable material provides a glossy finish that's resistant to stains. The downside is that it can chip under impact.

- Cast iron. This strong, durable material is resistant to damage, but it's also quite heavy.

- Fibreglass. This lightweight tub is easy to install, but it's less resistant to wear than other popular options.

Once you've made your choice, reach out to local professionals to ensure your new bathtub is properly installed.



## Exposed beams and pipes: tips to hide or highlight them

Do you have an unfinished basement that you want to make more appealing? Or maybe you have an old house with exposed pipes? In either case, here are some ideas for how you can cleverly conceal or proudly showcase the beams and pipes in your home.

### BEAMS

To hide your beams, consider installing a dropped ceiling below them. If you want to add more character to the space, however, you can cover them up with draped fabric. Alternatively, you may want to paint the beams so they blend in with the ceiling, or use a contrasting colour to create interest.

Keep in mind that you might be able to use exposed beams to hang various items, such as a swing for your kids, a hammock for naps or string lights to give the room a warm, welcoming atmosphere.

### PIPES

While ideal for an industrial-style loft, exposed pipes don't necessarily suit every design style. If you have pipes that run near the junction of a wall and ceiling, one option is to hide them behind crown moulding. This can add an air of sophistication to the space. For pipes located elsewhere, you can box them in with



drywall or plywood painted to match the surrounding surface.

Alternatively, you can paint the pipes themselves, either to add a pop of colour to the room or make their presence less apparent. Depending on where the pipes are located, you may want to use them as rods to hang towels or clothes. Another option is to wrap the pipes with artificial flowering vines or strings of LED fairy lights.

Whether you choose to camouflage or embellish the beams and pipes in your home, you can find everything you need at the stores in your area.

## 3 tips for creating the ideal dining area

Do you want to add a dining room to your open-concept living space? Or perhaps you want to make room for a breakfast nook in your kitchen? In either case, here are a few tips to help you create a beautiful and functional eating area.

### 1. USE YOUR IMAGINATION

If your home doesn't have a designated dining room, you'll need to get creative. Fortunately, there are plenty of ways to incorporate an eating area into your living room or kitchen. For example, you could:

- Opt for an extendable table with bench seating
- Use a kitchen island or peninsula as a bar
- Set up a few bistro-style tables rather than one large table
- Install a corner bench to provide seating and storage
- Choose a coffee table with a lift top

### 2. DEFINE THE SPACE

If possible, add features that make the dining area distinct from the space around it. This can be done by placing a rug under the table, rearranging furniture to divide the space, using wallpaper to create an accent wall or painting the

ceiling above the dining area a different colour.

### 3. ADD A DECORATIVE TOUCH

To make your dining area more inviting, be sure to include a few decorative accessories. A stylish tablecloth, a vase with fresh cut flowers, a piece of art on the wall and patterned seat cushions are all items that can spruce up the space without making it feel cluttered.

To find the furniture and accessories you need for your dining space, visit the stores in your region.



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# 4 tips to keep your fabric sofa in good condition

If you want to keep your fabric sofa in good condition, it's important to take proper care of it. Here are four tips to help you extend the lifespan of this type of furniture.

- 1. Protect it from the sun. Black, blue and other dark fabrics are particularly vulnerable to sunlight and can start to fade within the first year. Arrange your furniture to keep the sofa out of the sun, or close the blinds when you're not using the room.
- 2. Follow the instructions. To avoid damaging the fabric, be sure to wash the cushion covers according to the manufacturer's instructions. Only use cleaning products designed for the specific type of fabric on your sofa.
- 3. Vacuum it on a regular basis. Brush crumbs and other debris off the sofa as soon as possible to

prevent stains. You should also use the upholstery attachment on your vacuum to suck up dust at least once a week.

- 4. Rotate the cushions. If the back or seat cushions of your sofa can be removed, you should regularly flip and rotate them. This will help extend their lifespan, as it allows the fabric to wear out and fade evenly.

If your fabric sofa needs to be replaced, visit local furniture stores to find a new model that matches your living room decor. Consider opting for a fabric that's easy to clean, such as nylon or polyester, rather than linen, which is quite absorbent.

Some cleaning companies have specialized equipment and products to effectively clean and deodorize upholstery. Contact the ones in your area to learn more.



# 4 ways to incorporate a TV into your decor



Whether it's in your living room, dining room or bedroom, your TV probably takes up quite a bit of space. Here are four ideas for integrating this device into your decor so it doesn't interfere with the style and flow of the room where it's located.

- 1. Hide it in a piece of furniture. If you don't want your TV to be the focal point of the room, consider placing it inside a cabinet. This way, you can close the doors when the device isn't being used.
- 2. Cover it with a decorative accessory. Install a sliding panel in front of your TV, and decorate it with a painting, picture frames or a large mirror. Alternatively, you can hang a tapestry in front of your

TV and roll it out of the way as needed.

- 3. Camouflage it with black decor. You can decorate the room your TV is in with black furniture and accessories, or install the device against a black accent wall so it blends in with the decor when it's turned off.

- 4. Mount it on the wall. This option allows you to swivel the TV so it's at the perfect angle for watching, and then press it up against the wall when it's not in use. Another option is to install the TV in an alcove.

If you want a custom solution to seamlessly incorporate your TV into a room's decor, reach out to a local interior designer.

# Tar and gravel: a practical option for flat roofs

An ideal way to cover homes that have a flat roof is with tar and gravel. This option involves using four or five sheets of asphalt-coated roofing felt, which is then covered with gravel to protect the underlying material from sun damage.

This multi-layered surface can resist impact from hail and falling debris. It also greatly reduces the risk of water infiltration. While durable and easy to repair, a tar and gravel roof must be properly maintained in order to reach its life expectancy of 25 years.

Most importantly, you should inspect the roof once a year and add gravel as needed to ensure the roofing felt isn't weakened by the sun's UV rays.

An affordable option for flat surfaces, a tar and gravel roof can be easily adapted to accommodate chimneys, skylights and other features. However, it's not compatible with certain types of insulation.

To avoid any issues, your tar and gravel roof should be



installed by an experienced professional. Reach out to a local roofing company to ensure optimal results.



# How to choose between horizontal and vertical blinds

If you're looking for a window treatment, blinds are a practical choice because they allow you to control how much light enters your home. Here's some advice to help you choose between horizontal and vertical blinds.



## HORIZONTAL BLINDS

Classic and timeless, these blinds are well suited for square or rectangular windows that are either small, narrow or high up. They're easy to maintain and come in various styles, materials and colours. Plus, the slats can be tilted upward to provide privacy while still allowing light to filter into the room.



## VERTICAL BLINDS

The long slats of vertical blinds are ideal for hanging in front of patio doors and large windows. Unlike horizontal blinds, they can be easily opened on either side or in the middle, depending on the model. They're also virtually effortless to clean and resistant to both heat and moisture.

Visit a local home improvement store or blind retailer to find the right window treatment to complement your decor.

# 4 advantages of smart thermostats

Smart thermostats are home automation devices that can be used to control heating, cooling and ventilation systems. Since they connect to your smartphone or tablet, you can easily adjust them remotely. Here are four benefits of installing smart thermostats in your home:

- 1. They can send notifications to your smartphone to alert you if the temperature in your home crosses a certain limit.
- 2. They lower the cost of your energy bills because you can program them to adjust the temperature based on factors such as the time of day and the weather

forecast.

- 3. They connect to user-friendly applications, which makes them easier to operate than standard programmable electronic thermostats.

- 4. They help make your home more energy efficient and eco-friendly by allowing you to turn off your heating or cooling system when no one's home.

To enjoy these and other benefits, be sure to equip your home with smart thermostats.





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### Benefits

Heating and cooling equipment requires yearly maintenance. Having your equipment cleaned and check annually will lower your utility cost and extend the life of your equipment. Including new equipment, it's also recommended and/or required by all manufacturers. In addition to increasing the efficiency of your system, benefits of Leo Jones & Son ***"Home Town Comfort Plan"***

### Added Benefits

- **Extending the life of your equipment.** Equipment not properly maintained will have a shorter life expectancy. Some suggest a reduced life expectancy as much as 50%
- **Saves money every month.** Equipment not properly maintained will use more electricity every month. Equipment can drop in efficiency as much as 50% if not properly maintained yearly.
- **Safety.** The heat exchangers in gas furnaces rust from the inside out. Each year many deaths are contributed to Carbon Monoxide. Freon in air conditioners and heat pumps has been determined by the government to deplete our earth's ozone level and can be harmful.



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