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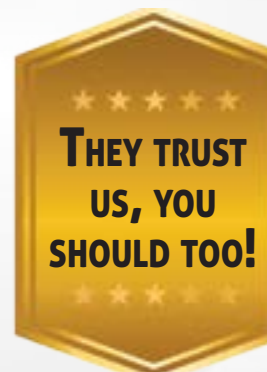
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# 3 ways to get more use out of a garage



Even though no two homes are the same, rooms have a tendency to take on similar characteristics regardless of which property they're a part of. Kitchens tend to be popular gathering spaces, while basements have become go-to spots for game rooms and watch parties.

Garages also tend to share certain characteristics between homes, and one notable attribute is the tendency to become difficult-to-navigate dumping grounds for a wide range of items, including lawn and garden tools, children's toys, sporting goods, and seasonal home decor. Though there's nothing wrong with utilizing a garage as a storage space, the following are three simple ways homeowners can get more out of these

spaces.

1. Utilize the wall space. The walls in a garage have lots of potential. Effective use of walls within a garage can ensure garden tools, small toys and other items do not accumulate on the floor. Such accumulations contribute much to the reputation of garages as dumping grounds for miscellaneous items. By clearing the floors of clutter, and utilizing wall spaces to store items, homeowners can open up the spaces to serve any number of functions, including home gyms, art studios or even parking spaces to protect vehicles from the elements. A storage organizer system with various hooks can be mounted on a garage wall to free up floor space, while shelving can be hung

to store paint cans, power tool batteries and other items.

2. Look upward. If garage ceilings extend several feet above the height of homeowners' vehicles, then the spaces above where cars might be parked can be converted into storage space for large recreational items, like canoes or kayaks, or seasonal decor that does not need to be accessed on a regular basis. A simple kayak hoist utilizing a pulley system clears floor space and allows kayaks to be stored overhead. Lifting storage racks work in similar fashion and make for great additions for anyone who needs to store containers full of seasonal decor but does not want to do so by stacking items on the floor. A hand crank system

for a lifting storage rack makes for easy and safe access.

3. Install new lighting. Without ample lighting, garages may not be conducive to recreational pursuits like painting, crafting or even exercising. A lighting upgrade is a relatively affordable renovation that can make a big difference, illuminating spaces not exactly known for brightness, especially if there's no windows. If you want to spend time in the garage during winter and stay warm, then some new lighting can make that possible.

Homeowners whose garages are currently serving as cluttered storage closets can do much to get more out of these useful spaces. SH262611

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**White Lake Beacon**  
PO Box 98, Whitehall, MI 49461  
(231) 894-5356 • (231) 873-4775 fax

**Interim Publisher:** Paul Heidbreder  
**Sales:** Shelley Kovar, Monica Evans  
**Graphics:** Judy Lytle, Julie Eilers, Madelyn Kerbyson  
**News:** Lois Tomaszewski, Shanna Avery, Alexis Settler, Cristina Juska, Sean Chase, Larry Launstein Jr., Kate Babel  
**Circulation:** Jeriann Steiger  
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# Prepare a yard for evening entertaining

Even when the sun goes down, the opportunity to entertain outdoors is still possible. Transforming a backyard into an evening oasis does not necessarily require major renovations, but it should involve adjusting the atmosphere to facilitate comfort and visibility. The following tips can help hosts optimize outdoor spaces for nighttime events.

## LAYERED LIGHTING

Lighting is the main priority when hosting at night. Lighting establishes ambiance and creates safety in the space. Hosts should avoid floodlights which can be too harsh and create a clinical feeling. Instead,

melding different lighting options together can set the scene. String lights provide a warm, even glow that can outline the perimeter and "ceiling" of an outdoor room. Low-voltage LEDs or solar lights can make walkways more visible and call attention to changes in elevation. Accent lighting, such as small spotlights uplighting trees or architectural features, will create depth and keep the yard from feeling like an abyss beyond the patio or deck.

## CREATE FOCAL POINTS

Individuals will gather around various focal points in the yard. These established zones will encourage

conversation and other activities. A fire pit is a natural magnet for outdoor events. Arrange seating around the fire pit to keep conversation flowing. An outdoor bar also is a great place for people to gather, whether it's stocked with alcoholic or non-alcoholic drinks. Mark off an area where people can mingle and dance. Set up an outdoor speaker in this area.

## OUTDOOR COMFORT

Contending with bugs and weather is a natural side effect of spending time outdoors, particularly in the evening. Citronella candles can keep mosquitoes and gnats at bay. A simple electric floor fan also can

be effective against mosquitoes, which are weak fliers that can't fly against the breeze. A fire pit, propane patio heater and a basket of blankets can help tame the chills if the temperature drops. Keeping pop-up canopies at the ready will help if rain starts to fall.

## ACCESSIBILITY TO FOOD AND DRINK

Beyond the bar, having self-service stations in various spots enables guests to grab food or drink as needed instead of having to trek indoors. Make sure these spots are well-lit. Space drinks away from the food to prevent traffic jams. Invest in some covered containers that will keep food safe from ants.

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# Simple ways to breathe new life into a foyer

A foyer may not garner as much attention as a kitchen, living room or formal dining space, but the entryway to a home is the first place residents see upon arriving home and it's also where guests begin to form their impression of a home. That makes a foyer an important, if easily overlooked, space in a home. Homeowners hoping to give their entryways a little something extra can consider these simple means to breathe new life into a foyer.

- **Add seating.** If a foyer is large enough to accommodate one or two armchairs, such an addition can immediately contribute to a welcoming and comfortable ambiance. Upholstered chairs can offer some color and provide a space for residents and guests to put on and remove their footwear.

- **Make a statement with lighting.** Foyer lighting is meant to make an entryway warm and welcoming, but it also can be used to make a statement. An impressive pendant light fixture in the foyer can make a strong first impression on guests and establish a vibe residents can keep in mind when addressing other interior spaces throughout the home.

- **Conquer clutter.** Foyers big and small can feel a little claustrophobic if there's too much going on. Though furnishings like seating and console tables can dress up a

space, make a concerted effort to ensure they don't become dumping grounds for outerwear and unread mail. In addition, designate an ideally concealed space to store footwear if the foyer will serve as residents' primary entryway.

- **Add some artwork.** If an existing foyer lacks personality, some simple artwork can add a pop of color without overstimulating residents and guests. Artwork can be hung above a console table to create a calm and welcoming vibe. Homeowners can even utilize artwork to change the vibe in the entryway so it reflects the seasons, hanging a picturesque winter landscape painting or print when the weather is cold and some bright and breezy beach art come the summertime.

- **Incorporate plants into the entryway.** Plants can add vibrancy and a pop of color to an entryway. Plants also can brighten up the space. If the foyer tends to be a bit dark throughout the day, consider faux plants so residents and guests are not greeted with withered, sun-starved greenery upon entering the home.

A foyer is easily overlooked when designing a home's interior. But an inviting entryway can set the tone for other interior spaces in a home. HI264731



# Features that can redefine a living room

Spring is widely cherished as a season of rejuvenation. As winter winds down, many people embrace the arrival of spring blooms and the regrowth of grass on the ground and leaves on the trees, which can breathe new life into landscapes that might have grown a bit stale in previous months.

That same staleness can affect a home's interior as well. Home interiors can benefit from periodic updates in much the same way a landscape benefits when spring blooms return. As homeowners seek to refresh their living spaces, they can consider these features to redefine their living rooms.

- **Fireplace:** A wood-burning fireplace is undeniably a game changer when looking to redefine a living space. But such a project could be a significant

undertaking in a home that does not already feature a wood-burning fireplace. Homeowners who want to add a wood-burning fireplace can reinvent a living room, but they will likely need to adhere to building codes, secure permits and even consult with an engineer to ensure such an addition does not affect the structural integrity of the home. A gas-powered fireplace is a less demanding project, but will also require some extra work if homeowners need to connect a gas line where no such line currently exists. A plug-in electric fireplace can create a new ambiance and will not require as much time, effort and money as the alternatives.

- **Coffered ceiling:** A coffered ceiling can immediately redefine the impres-

sion people get of a living space. Coffered ceilings feature a series of rectangular, square or octagonal grids that are typically accentuated by molding. Coffered ceilings provide a luxurious and even historic aesthetic, making them an ideal addition for homeowners looking to redefine an existing space.

- **Windows:** New windows are another option when homeowners are hoping to redefine a living room. Modern windows are energy-efficient, so replacing aging windows may help homeowners combat rising energy costs. If a yard is a notable feature of a home's exterior, new windows that accentuate the view from a living space can quickly redefine how residents and guests see the room. Permits may be necessary if you're expanding existing

windows, but that can be worth it if you're able to design the space around the view. All that extra natural light also may reinvent the feeling people get upon entering the space.

- **Wallpaper:** Interior design specialists note that wallpaper is making a comeback. Wallpaper can be used to draw attention to a wall in much the same way bold colors are chosen for accent walls. Wallpaper on an accent wall can feature a bold pattern or a strong color to add a sense of personality to a room that might be lacking if the walls are currently painted in neutral colors.

Homeowners can consider any number of features when looking to give their living spaces a fresh look. HI264730

# Put some spring in your cleaning step

Spring is the season of nature's rebirth. Trees and flowers begin to bloom anew each spring, and young animals can be seen frolicking with their parents. During a time when it seems like the entire planet gets a refresh, many homeowners turn their thoughts to refreshing their homes as well.

As the days lengthen and the weather warms, spring cleaning takes center stage. Spring cleaning is more extensive than simply washing away grime, as cleaning a home often offers a psychological reset for the coming months. A clear strategy can make the task of spring cleaning feel less daunting, and these tips can help cut down on clutter and other interior annoyances that have arisen after months spent indoors.

## DECLUTTER BEFORE CLEANING

The rule of thumb when starting on spring cleaning is to combat clutter before cleaning. Trying to clean around clutter is inefficient and may result in

throwing in the towel prematurely. It is important to remove as much as possible from each room before you begin cleaning. As homeowners move through each room, they can assess whether they've used items in the last year or whether they serve any functional or aesthetic purposes. If not, they can be trashed or donated.

## MOVE TOP TO BOTTOM

It's important to follow the rules of science when spring cleaning. That means that dust and debris will be affected by gravity. Engaging in a top-down approach will help make cleaning more efficient. Beginning at the ceiling and working down towards the floors will help people avoid having to clean the same surface twice.

Using a duster or a microfiber cloth, individuals can clear cobwebs from corners and dust from crown molding. Fingerprints will accumulate near light switches and door handles, so those areas should

be wiped down, too.

Homeowners can conduct a thorough cleaning of heating and cooling output and intake vents as they likely have gathered dust over the winter. A down of floor moldings can get to any area near the floor or under furniture that doesn't get frequent cleaning.

## DO A KITCHEN RESET

Focusing attention on the kitchen, which tends to be the busiest room in the house, is a wise idea for spring cleaning plans. This is the time for individuals to pull everything out of the refrigerator and pantry and check for expiration dates. Wiping down the shelves means cleaning away any accumulated food drips or spills. Additional areas to consider include behind the refrigerator, inside the dishwasher filter and inside the microwave.

## FOCUS ON AIR QUALITY

It's key to replace the HVAC system



filters come springtime, as well as any air purifiers in the home. This will help reduce allergens and ensure that the cooling system will run efficiently when it's time to turn it on.

Spring cleaning takes place each year. Prioritizing decluttering and following a systematic path through the home helps people eliminate stress and mess at the same time. TF263722

# Is a sunroom right for you?

There is no denying the appeal of a sunroom. Sunrooms bring more of the outdoors inside by bridging the gap between home and yard. Demand is shifting, with more than 61 percent of homeowners now preferring four-season insulated rooms for year-round use, according to Market Reports World. A sunroom has the potential to offer a roughly 50 percent return

on investment and can cost anywhere from \$22,000 to \$72,000 on average.

A sunroom addition is a significant investment and a decision not to take lightly, as it changes both the interior floor plan and backyard space. To decide if a sunroom really is a worthwhile endeavor, it's important for homeowners to consider the footprint of their homes/yards, how they plan

to use the space, and the amount of sun the home receives.

## HOME FOOTPRINT

Professionals with the National Association of Realtors say that a sunroom should not consume more than 30 percent of the remaining backyard and urge homeowners to avoid over-developing a lot. If installing a sunroom will leave a homeowner with only a small patch of yard afterwards, the result can feel heavy and unbalanced. It also won't match the neighborhood. Another consideration is the local zoning ordinances where a person lives. The City of Los Angeles, for example, warns that most towns require a setback between the sunroom structure and the property line. It's also important to look at the home's roof and whether or not the sunroom will fall right under the eaves or if it will require an expensive tie-in to the existing roof.

## UTILITY

It is vital that homeowners determine how they will use the space and when. This will dictate the type of sunroom that should be built. A three-season room is typically uninsulated with only single-pane glass. This is ideal if someone is looking for a screened-in retreat without all of the bugs and a little weather protection. Four-season rooms are fully insulated and tie into a home's HVAC system. This space will be functional all year long, but it is a more expensive undertaking as well.

## LIGHT EVALUATION

The purpose of a sunroom is to benefit from the sun. The value of the space will depend entirely on which way the room faces. North-facing sunrooms have soft light with minimal heat or glare that likely can be used all day. Morning people can appreciate an east-facing sunroom while drinking coffee or reading, and the space will cool down in the afternoon. South-facing rooms will be bright most of the day and may need high-end HVAC hookups or shades to stay comfortable, even in cooler months. West-fac-

ing sunrooms are great for watching sunsets, but the hot afternoon sun must be considered. UV-rated glass to prevent floor fading and even sunburn likely will be needed.

It is important to work with a company that specializes in sunrooms. Such firms are experienced in helping homeowners design and ultimately build these spaces to avoid common pitfalls, advises Champion, a window, sunroom and home exterior company.



## Did you know?

The market research experts at Business Research Insights report that the three-season sunroom market size is projected to nearly double between 2025 and 2035. BRI reports that 65 percent of homeowners prefer cost-effective sunrooms when seeking to extend their living space. The popularity of sunrooms can be traced to a number of variables, including year-round access to a home's surrounding landscape. That access might be hindered if the only spaces to experience nature is a patio, deck or another traditional type of outdoor living space. But sunrooms, particularly those equipped with heating and cooling, can bring homeowners in touch with nature.



# Unique features for outdoor living spaces

Outdoor living spaces are wildly popular. A 2023 study conducted by Brown Jordan Outdoor Kitchens found that 63 percent of homeowners indicated they would prioritize an outdoor living space if they were to remodel their homes.

Homeowners cite a multitude of motivations regarding their interest in upgrading their outdoor living spaces. The 2024 U.S. Outdoor Trends Study from Houzz Research found that more than half of homeowners who participated in the study (51 percent) want to renovate to improve aesthetics, while 37 percent hoped to enhance entertaining spaces. One-third view renovating outdoor spaces as a great way to extend the living space of their homes. Homeowners who share these motivations and are committed to renovating their outdoor living areas can look to these unique features to fulfill all three goals.

· Water fountain: Water fountains can serve as stunning focal points in

outdoor living spaces. Outdoor fountains are ideal for anyone hoping to create an outdoor oasis, as few sights and sounds promote a calming atmosphere as effectively as softly flowing water in a cast stone fountain. Fountains also attract birds, which can add to the soothing sounds of a backyard escape.

· Shade structure: Gone are the days when homeowners' most accessible option to create shade on patios and decks were umbrellas extending out from the center of outdoor dining tables. Pergolas and gazebos are now available in a wide range of shapes and styles, making these a must-have for



homeowners who want to entertain while ensuring guests remain comfortable on hot days. A hardtop gazebo with roof hooks to accommodate fans, lights and

even plants can serve as an aesthetically appealing safe haven from summer sun.

· Hammock: A hammock is a simple yet unique, functional and affordable feature to consider for an outdoor living space. If the existing landscaping allows, situate a hammock between two tall, sturdy trees. Such a sight can contribute to a welcoming and calming ambiance in an outdoor living space, and provide extra room

to lounge and relax beneath the shade of trees.

· Game zone: If entertaining is the primary motivation behind an outdoor living space renovation, then designate part of the space for games and activities. A designated bocce court will draw visitors who want to relax and enjoy a little friendly competition away from dining areas and other spaces. A small putting green can allow golfers to work on their short games, and such spaces can offer ample opportunities for fun if homeowners are inclined to host putting contests during backyard barbecues. Whatever game tickles homeowners' fancy, designating a space exclusively for games can up the entertainment value of an outdoor living space.

The popularity of outdoor living spaces remains high. Homeowners hoping to enhance their existing spaces can consider a number of unique features to meet their goals. SH262605

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# High-ROI outdoor living components

Outdoor living has become a coveted feature for many homeowners and those looking to buy. In 2026, landscape architecture has shifted from something that is purely ornamental to features that are functional and resilient. The American Society of Landscape Architects says a professionally designed landscape can increase a home's value by anywhere from 15 to 20 percent. Some projects can yield a return on investment of even more — even recuperating the entire cost.

Where is a homeowner to start when it comes to maximizing the potential of a landscape? These projects and components can be a good place to start.

- **Natural stone patios:** A high-quality patio can offer a great ROI. These patios may use the same stone levels and lines as the interior of the home.

- **Outdoor kitchens:** HGTV says an outdoor kitchen ROI can range from 55 percent to 200 percent, depending on the location and comparable homes in the area. High-value versions include built-in grills, weather-resistant cabinetry, and stone prep areas.

- **Climate-controlled pergolas:** Pergolas on their own can add interest and function to outdoor spaces. Those that feature motorized louvers that adjust for sun and rain have become a luxury essential for many homeowners. They help extend the usability of outdoor spaces during various seasons.

- **Smart lighting systems:** Integrated systems with LED lights controlled by apps are now major selling points for homes. These systems improve security and curb appeal at night. According to Urban Oasis Contracting, outdoor lighting doesn't just show a space, but also transforms it. Adding carefully placed lights can redefine the property in distinct ways.

- **Softscaping improvements:** Mature trees can add character to a property and also reduce cooling costs via natural shade. Landscapes that require low irrigation are outperforming traditional lawns, according to Organic Valley.

Homeowners looking to get great returns on outdoor living investments can consider prized improvements that transform exterior living spaces. TF264800



# How to make a laundry room a more functional space

Functionality is important when designing the interior spaces in a home. Homeowners who redesign their interior spaces can emphasize functionality to help reduce clutter and create a more efficient and even calming space.

Laundry rooms may not be the most glamorous rooms in a home, but they do get lots of usage, particularly in homes with children. Because laundry rooms tend to be well-trafficked areas, it makes sense for homeowners to make them as functional and user-friendly as possible. With that in mind, homeowners can consider these tips to make laundry rooms more functional spaces.

- **Purchase laundry pedestals with**

storage capacity. Laundry pedestals make useful additions to a laundry room. Many homeowners place their washing machines and dryers on top of pedestals with storage drawers, which can be used to store everything from dryer sheets to clothes irons to stain removal kits. Pedestals can be particularly useful in cramped laundry rooms where the only means to adding storage is to go up and not out.

- **Install a freestanding laundry sink.** A laundry sink also adds function to a laundry room by enabling homeowners to hand wash certain clothes and apply stain removal products in the same space where the rest of their clothes are being cleaned. Installing a laundry

sink is a relatively inexpensive job, but the cost may go up if new plumbing, venting or electrical work is necessary.

- **Add a countertop work space.** If you already have ample storage and won't be placing the washer or dryer atop a laundry pedestal, then installing some countertop above the appliances can add function and aesthetic appeal. A countertop workspace above a dryer provides an accessible space to fold laundry the moment it dries, reducing the likelihood that clothes will become wrinkled and ensuring you won't put off folding.

- **Install floating shelves.** Floating shelves won't cost a lot of money, but they can be ideal in cramped

laundry rooms. Shelves provide a space to store detergent and other items that may not fit inside laundry pedestals, including baskets.

- **Add hanging storage.** Some articles of clothing should not be dried in a dryer for fear of shrinking the fabric or destroying the item. In such instances, some readily accessible hanging storage capacity can make the laundry room more functional. Items can be hung on hangers or over a hanging rack suspended from the ceiling if space is minimal.

Laundry rooms are heavily used spaces in a home, so it makes sense to take steps to make these areas as functional as possible. HI264732

# Renovating on a budget

Renovations around the house require an investment of time and often considerable amounts of money. Findings from the 2024 U.S. Houzz & Home Study show that home renovations are becoming more expensive. The median renovation spending for homeowners has gone up 60 percent since 2020. Angi, a home services website, reports the average renovation cost for homes between 1,250 and 1,600 square feet is \$51,772, but the final cost of home renovations depends on the scope of the project.

Homeowners who are conserving funds can rest assured that it is possible to make meaningful changes both inside and outside a home without breaking the bank. Here are some ways to renovate a home on a budget.

- **Create a budget and don't waver.** Figure out exactly what you can af-

ford for a renovation and then make that your maximum dollars spent. Research comparable projects in your area and be honest about whether you can afford the renovation as-is or if you must adapt ideas to fit your price. Make sure to build in a cushion of around 15 to 20 percent for any unforeseen expenses that may arise once a renovation is underway.

- **Maximize an existing floor plan.** This Old House suggests looking for ways to maximize your current layout before you invest in major renovations like an expansion. Bring in a designer with an eye for utilizing space. For example, see how you might be able to replace shelves with pull-out drawers in the kitchen. Moving furniture around or rethinking floor plans also can help to lower costs.

- **Balance DIY with hiring contrac-**

tors. You can save money by tackling some projects yourself, but only if you are confident in your renovation skills. Rather than risk making costly mistakes and having to redo things, hire well-vetted professionals but ask if there's any DIY work you can do to cut costs.

- **Check clearance and resale stores.** Shop discount stores for building materials to save money. For example, if a builder ordered too many cabinets they may offer them to Habitat for Humanity ReStores, which are nonprofit home improvement stores and donation centers. Checking the clearance and markdown sections of other stores may yield considerable savings on items needed for a renovation. Warehouse retailers like Costco or Sam's Club also can be great places to find certain home improvement materials and furnishings.

- **Take advantage of free services.** Certain stores may offer things like free consultations with designers who can show you what a renovation can look like. This is advantageous to the stores because once you see the potential you're more likely to buy the products, even if it's not mandatory.

- **Resurface instead of redo.** Certain items can be made to look new with minimal effort. Paint is a relatively inexpensive tool that can transform walls and more. A good hardwood flooring company can buff out a floor and put a new coating instead of an entirely new floor. Kitchen cabinets can be resurfaced instead of replaced as well.

Finding ways to perform home renovations on a budget may require some creative thinking, but it's possible to get results at the right price point. EL255830



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# Symptoms of plumbing problems

The drip of a faucet, the bang of pipes and the visible signs of a leak under the sink are some notable indicators of plumbing problems. Other, potentially serious issues may not be so evident. How can homeowners tell if they have potential plumbing problems? The following are some sights and sounds that indicate it is time to call in a plumber.

- **Banging or clanking:** Plumbers refer to these noises as water hammer. This is when a rush of water forces through the pipe and bumps into a closed valve, producing a metallic noise. Something is in the pipe that is restricting water flow. Over time, the flow of water meeting an obstacle could loosen pipe joints as the water tries to find an easier workarround.

- **Pipe discoloration:** If there is any sign of discoloration on pipes, particularly rust, it could be a symptom of a dripping sink or drain line that is slowly leaking. A slow leak can eventually turn into a big mess if left unattended.

- **Sewer smells:** Pipes need traps and vents. Traps are designed to prevent sewer gas from entering the home, while vents

channel sewer odor up to the roof. If there are sewer smells, it could mean a trap has dried out or a vent line is cracked.

- **Low water pressure:** If you turn on the faucet and the water pressure is poor, it could be the result of a clog or a leak somewhere in the system. Pipes that are improperly sized for a home also can affect pressure.

- **Sluggish drains:** Clearing drains is perhaps the only plumbing problem that homeowners should address themselves. More often than not, drains that fail to drain quickly have a blockage such as hair or other debris. If attempts to clear the drain do not work, it is best to bring in a professional plumber.

- **Shaking sounds:** Water can cause occasional noises, but if the sounds are frequent, the pipes are not secured firmly enough. A plumber will need to tighten the mounting straps or even completely replace them.

Plumbing issues are nothing to take lightly, as small problems can quickly escalate and cause thousands of dollars in damage. SH242649



A well-manicured lawn appeals to homeowners when they look out their windows. But such a view also can look nice when homeowners peruse their bank statements after selling a property. Landscape maintenance, with an estimated cost recovery of 104 percent, and an overall landscape upgrade (100 percent) also yield great returns for homeowners.



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# A rundown on roofing projects

No two home renovation projects are the same. Some projects are highly detailed undertakings that take months if not years from start to finish, while others can be tackled by skilled do-it-yourselfers over the course of a single weekend. Though each project is different, categorizing renovations as needs or wants can help homeowners determine when the time is right to go forward.

Roof replacement projects typically fall into the “need” category. A decaying roof can jeopardize the safety and security of a home and lead to additional issues, like water damage. It’s unwise to delay roof replacement projects when signs of a decaying roof start to appear. Homeowners who are starting to see such indicators can look to this rundown of roof replacement projects as they begin the process of replacing their roof.

## COST

Roof replacement costs vary considerably depending on a host of variables.

Materials, location and the cost of labor, dimensions of the roof, and even choice of contractor all affect the cost of the project. The home renovation experts at Angi indicate the average roof replacement project costs \$9,500. Asphalt is among the more affordable roofing materials, costing an average of \$1 to \$1.20 per square foot, according to Nerdwallet. Slate roofs will be more expensive, costing anywhere from \$10 to \$30 per square foot.

## LIFE EXPECTANCY

Homeowners may blanch at the cost of a roof replacement project, particularly if they choose a more expensive material. However, it’s important to keep life expectancy in mind when receiving roof estimates. Many homeowners never replace a roof twice, making this a potentially costly but ultimately one-time expense. Though slate roofs are expensive, homeowners may find it reassuring that estimates from various roofing resources in-

dicating slate roofs come with a life expectancy ranging from 50 to 200 years. By contrast, Nerdwallet estimates an asphalt roof lasts around 10 to 20 years, while others suggest such roofs can last as long as 30 years.

## MATERIALS

Choice of materials is arguably the most significant decision homeowners will make when replacing a roof. The experts at This Old House report that materials typically account for 55 to 65 percent of the overall cost of a roof replacement project. Decisions regarding roof materials will be affected by budget, local climate (certain materials are better suited to particular climates than others), aesthetic appeal, and required maintenance. It’s also important that homeowners consider the material warranty of each roofing product. Some



materials offer longer warranties than others, which can provide a measure of security to homeowners investing so much in the project.

A roof replacement project is not a renovation that can be delayed when signs the roof is fading start to appear. Homeowners are urged to consider a wide range of variables before committing to a project. SH262597

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# Things to know when replacing windows

Windows are durable, but they do not last forever. The experts at This Old House say the life span of home windows is between 15 and 50 years, with most reaching the upper limits of their life expectancy at around 20 years.

factors.

• Know the window types. Double hung windows are classic and have operable upper and lower sashes. Lowering the upper sash allows warm air near the ceiling to escape and cooler air can

replaced. Typically, rotten framing, wet or weeping windows or significant drafts require replacement.

• Identify the differences between replacement windows and construction windows. Traditional replacement windows are sometimes called pocket windows, says Consumer Reports. They fit inside an existing window frame. Construction windows require the removal of the entire old window, including the frame, sill and trim. The latter cost more to install.

• Familiarize yourself with window frame materials. Various window frame materials are available for purchase, and variables such as heat transfer, maintenance and durability differ with each product. Vinyl is a common material that's low-maintenance and affordable. Aluminum and aluminum clad windows can be economical options, and they are corrosion-resistant and require little maintenance. Wood also is popular for the interior parts of

a window, and offer a traditional look. Wood is available on new construction windows. Fiberglass windows also are available in new construction windows. They won't crack, warp, rust, corrode, or peel, and the frames will not expand and contract as much as other materials.

• Keep costs in mind. According to Fixr, an online marketplace for local remodeling services, the average national price for a professional to replace a window is around \$800. For a one-story house, a window replacement project of multiple windows may cost around \$8,000.

When selecting replacement windows, look for The National Fenestration Rating Council label to get a snapshot of the window's energy performance to compare with others. The Energy Star logo indicates that the window meets Energy Star standards. SH262607



Once they reach this age, the seals begin to weaken or fail, and windows become susceptible to drafts and water seepage.

Replacing windows can be a good investment. Such a project is one of the more effective ways to elevate a home's curb appeal and value. New windows are energy efficient and make homes more secure. They also tend to look better than old, fading windows. When pondering a window replacement project, it's important to consider these

to flow in through the bottom. Single hung windows only have an operable lower sash. Sliding windows have one or more panels that move horizontally, and picture windows are fixed models designed to offer wide, unobstructed views and lots of light.

• Repair or replace windows. Existing windows might just need to be repaired, saving homeowners thousands of dollars. It's best to consult with a professional to see if certain components can be repaired rather than

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# Cost-effective curb appeal boosters

One shouldn't judge a book by its cover. However, that often is hard to do, particularly when it comes to homes. Curb appeal bears significant influence regarding how a property is perceived. A property that is neat and aesthetically appealing probably will be preferable to one that looks like the homeowners did not maintain it.

Boosting curb appeal is a common focus of sellers before listing a property. But what can those who don't have big budgets for major overhauls do to improve their curb appeal? Plenty of projects can offer maximum output with minimal investment.

### REFRESH THE FRONT DOOR

Painting the front door can add brightness and improve the look of a home's entryway. Most exterior paint costs between \$30 and \$40 per gallon, so this is undeniably a budget-friendly improvement. If money allows, replacing the door altogether will generate bang for your buck. Improve or add landscaping elements

Landscaping should be designed to highlight the home's best features. It should look symmetrical and feel manicured. If it's not possible to plant new flowers or bushes, simply cleaning up debris and weeds, and trimming existing greenery can make it feel neater and more polished.

### CLEAN UP

Power-washing the siding, cement walkways and garage door can create instant impact. It's amazing how much dirt and mildew can reduce the luster of a home. Cleaning off years of grime can be a fast and inexpensive refresh.

### RESEAL THE DRIVEWAY

Make sure the driveway is clean and tidy. If it has cracks or discoloration, filling in cracks and applying a new coat of sealer will make a big difference. Homeowners can hire someone to reseal the driveway or do the work on their own.

### ADD MORE LIGHTING

Updating front porch lights and accent lights around the property will cast a more positive glow on a home, both literally and figuratively.

### ADD A SEATING AREA

If space by the front door allows, add a bench or some chairs to create a welcoming seating area. A potted plant or two nearby will help the area seem intentional.



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