

This Old House

18
remodeling
secrets
only the pros
know
p. 78

Same house, more space

and lots less clutter!

- > store-it-all built-ins
- > family-friendly basement redo
- > tidy attic retreat

**32 fresh
wallpaper
ideas**
p. 90

more value inside!

Room-expanding
paint colors

Space-saving furniture

Budget kitchen
makeover

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2012
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25

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The Life Improvement Store™

SAME HOUSE, MORE SPACE

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Cover photography: KIM GILBERT
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HOME SOLUTIONS

Artfully frame your reflection with a sunburst mirror design you can make with shims and a round beveled mirror.



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checklist { January/February 2012 }

EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME RIGHT NOW

Enter our contest!

Close your eyes. Deep breaths. Now picture yourself in a brand-new GMC truck—part of the grand prize in our fifth-annual Reader Remodel Contest. Even if you don't win the truck, you just might win cash or get your project in the pages of our July 2012 issue, to be awarded by 6 million fellow readers. Get a leg up with these tips on submitting photos every bit as good as your remodel!

1. Shoot in natural light without the flash. For exterior shots, keep the sun behind you.
2. Clear away any clutter.
3. If using a digital camera, select the highest image quality.
4. Avoid tilting your camera.
5. Turn off the time stamp. To enter, go to thehouse.com/yourTOH.

What's on your checklist?

"I'm going to be my own boss by tapping out the large pine and laminating these with white latex paint." —Claire DeLoach, New York City

E-mail us your ideas at contest@thehouse.com.



The new Lady of Spades rose—based on the classic 'Double Delicate'—is a beautiful addition to your garden.

Romance your garden

Instead of store-bought long stems this Valentine's Day, treat your loved one to a garden that promises roses year after year. Order fragrant bare-root bloomers now, before their often limited stock sells out. Most retailers will wait to deliver the flowers until your region's climate is right for planting, so you don't have to worry about staving them until spring.

TOH TIP

Wrap your water heater

If you notice your heater is warm to the touch, it needs more insulation. For a quick fix, carefully wrap the tank with a blanket that has an insulating value of at least R-4. Or visit a home center for about \$25. You'll reduce the tank's heat loss \$5 to \$5 percent—which can lower your bill by nearly 10 percent.

Stay ahead of ice dams

Those icicles dripping from your roofline? They may look lovely, but they can rip off gutters and pry up shingles, and sometimes signal a potentially serious problem: ice dams. To keep ahead of water damage, snap photos where you see frosty buildup. Use the pictures to help target an interior inspection, during which you should check for leaks that can cause soggy insulation, mold, and mildew.



Ready backup lighting

Don't wait till the first blacked-out power outage of winter to realize all the flashlights in your house need. Replace old batteries now, and raise the flashlight bulbs with you the next time you visit a hardware store to check up on replacements. While you're at it, pack some 200-hour LED glow sticks (a pack, red or orange, too). Then store the lights by your bed, on the kitchen, and near your house's entry so that you can easily find them in the dark.



Very high triglycerides is a medical term for something serious: TOO MUCH FAT IN YOUR BLOOD.

Ask your doctor about the FDA-approved medication made from omega-3 fish oil: LOVAZA

If you have high cholesterol, diabetes or are overweight, you may also be at risk for very high triglycerides (≥500 mg/dL), which is a serious medical condition. There's only one FDA-approved medication for treating very high triglycerides that's made from omega-3 fish oil: LOVAZA, along with diet, has been clinically proven to lower very high triglycerides in adults. Included results are very LOVAZA has not been shown to prevent heart attacks or strokes. LOVAZA is only available by prescription. You can't get it at a health food store. So if you think you might have very high triglycerides, talk to your doctor about getting tested and ask about LOVAZA.

LOVAZA is used along with a low-fat and low-cholesterol diet to lower very high triglycerides (trig) in your blood. Before taking LOVAZA, talk to your healthcare provider about how you can lower high blood fats by losing weight, if you are overweight, increasing physical exercise, lowering alcohol use, treating diseases such as diabetes and low thyroid (hypothyroidism), and adjusting the dose or changing other medicines that raise triglyceride levels such as certain blood pressure medicines and estrogens.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION FOR LOVAZA

Tell your doctor if you are allergic to fish or shellfish as LOVAZA may not be right for you. Talk to your doctor about any medical conditions you have and any medications you are taking, especially those that may increase your risk of bleeding. In some patients, LDL (bad) cholesterol may increase. Your healthcare provider should do blood tests before and during treatment with LOVAZA to check your cholesterol and triglyceride levels. If you have liver disease, you may require additional monitoring. Possible side effects include burping, upset stomach, and change in sense of taste. How supplied: 1-gram capsules.

Please see important Patient Information on the next page. You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

For more information, visit LOVAZA.com or call 1-877-666-LOVAZA



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letter {from This Old House}

New and old and new

"That's the paper my dad used to edit," my colleague Amy Hughes told me as I wandered into his office. Her space looked more like a secondhand shop than a place to edit stories. And though I wanted to have the theme in *Southern Living*, the choice made sense: Amy wrote our *Salvage Style* column—and just collected her best work in a new TDM book, *Salvage-Style Projects*. The waxy-glass windows, the cast-iron sink. In action, the black and white on her desk, they all have a reason for being there.

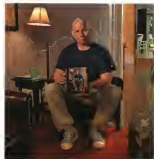
When Amy was referring to, though, was something of more recent vintage than 19th-century house porn per se, it was just an antique. Hanging from the handle of an old patchback was a crumpled newspaper delivery bag with the very faded logo of *The Home News*. The type had once been a bright, optimistic blue. Now tattered and worn, it looked shadowy, like the color of a memory.

It had been many years since I last saw a carrier bag, and it made me a bit uneasy that one once thing I own the past—my past—had become irrelevant, a curiosity. I mean, I'm not even that old!

It started me thinking about what the idea my childhood would mean to be for a museum: the rotary-dial phone, the hi-fi cabinet, the paperboy's early-evening counterpart, the milk man, who used to leave glass bottles with paper caps that on really cold days would be pushed off their mouths by a column of frozen milk. That's a few I but you can think of many more yourself.

In fact, I'd love to include your thoughts in our upcoming reader-created issue. You can e-mail us your own nominations for museum pieces, then turn to page 25 and see all the other ways you could be on the issue—and even win cash.

Meanwhile, we can all agree that change happens. Some of it is inevitable, like the decline of the great American newspaper, state of a progressive. At TDM, we've always believed that it's important to be along the line of the old and make it work with the new. That's what Amy does in her *Salvage Style* column. That's what all of you do, living in old houses but giving them the comforts of 21st-century life. And we're now doing that same thing with *This Old House* itself. Beginning with this issue, we've made your many old TDM available for download on the Nook and Galaxy tablets, and you'll soon be able to get it on the iPad and the Kindle Fire. It's free to subscribers, but others can get it too. You'll find the details in the backhouse newsletter. Check it out, and let me know what you think.



The editor of *This Old House*
Amy Hughes

Sally Krawcheck
SALLY KRAWCHECK, EDITOR
www.thisoldhouse.com

Who Can Resist?



**SPOT
RESIST**



Fashion Meets Function

Fashion and function sounds too good to be true. But that's what you'll get with the new Banbury bath suite from Moen. Beautiful, traditional styling at the sink and in the shower, now available in Moen's new Spot Resist® Brushed Nickel finish. Spot Resist® does just what it says: resists fingerprints and water spots, to maintain the brilliance of your faucet or showerhead so you'll spend more time enjoying your home—and less time cleaning it. Now that's hard for anyone to resist.

Shower Versatility

The decorative Banbury shower faucet features Moen's PosiTemp® pressure balancing valve that helps maintain water pressure and temperature for a safe and comfortable shower experience.

Style With Smarts

The Banbury bathroom faucet features a classic style with lever handles and a high-arc spout that make everyday tasks easy. And the Banbury faucet has been certified to meet WaterSense® criteria*, providing you with the sensational water experience you expect from Moen, while reducing water usage by up to 32 percent.

Banbury bath products feature Moen's limited lifetime warranty to ensure superior quality, and are available at an affordable price at your local Home Depot. So don't resist—indulge in the fashionable—and functional—Banbury suite of products, and transform your bathroom into an easy-to-clean oasis.

*To meet WaterSense criteria, the fixture must be the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) certified, an environmentally responsible and efficient product. The typical 1.5 gpm (gallons per minute) flow rate is limited to 1.2 gpm (gallons per minute) at 20 psi.

The Banbury faucet and tub/shower with new Spot Resist® Brushed Nickel finish, exclusively at The Home Depot.®
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home solutions

Edited by Jessica Dedeck-Pedro

inside

10 USES: VODKA

HEATING HELPER

WAYS TO SAVE



A new way to see shims

A handyman's secret weapon for setting door jams, aligning molding, and temporarily fixing wobbly furniture, humble wood shims go from mailbox staple to style booster in this sunburst mirror frame. Making your own is simple and, at only about \$35 for materials, far less expensive than any off-the-shelf version. All you need are shims in two lengths—for the 26-inch looker shown here, we used 234 shims in 8- and 12-inch lengths (\$1.48 for 14 and \$3.87 for 42, respectively, lower cost)—and a plain, round beveled mirror (\$6 for a 12-inch mirror, shop hobby lobby.com). To learn how to put them together, turn the page.



PHOTO: SHIMMER LYNNE HARRIS/ISTOCK

A new way to see shims (CONTINUED)

1. Glue wedge sections. Arrange three shims of the same length so that the middle one is 200 to 250 in. beyond the tips of the others by the width of a shim. Adhere with wood glue (if desired, use hot glue as well for an instant bond). You'll need an equal number of long and short sections, about 42 of each.



2. Build the frame. Glue the three-piece sections together, tapered ends pointing in. Alternate between short and long, gluing them so that the widest shim in a short section lies an inch or so lower than the shorter shims in a long section. Make sure the edges lie flush on one side to create a flat surface for the mirror.



3. Coat the wood. Once the glue has dried, sand the surface (if desired) then brush the entire frame with a protective coat of polyurethane, which will bring out the wood's natural golden tones. For a different look, consider spray painting or staining the shims just prior to the wood trim.



4. Attach the mirror. With the better side of the frame facing up, affix the glass, using an adhesive made for mirrors. For added strength, back the frame with a thin square of plywood adhered with wood glue. Let dry, then attach picture-hanging wires to the back.



High-tech heat control

Programmable touch-screen thermostats may be nothing new, but one that automatically follows your schedule is. Enter your preferred heat settings into the Nest Learning Thermostat, in about a week, it will program itself to match them. Thanks to motion sensors, the easy-to-install fixture even knows when you're not home and will lower the heat to save energy. It also boasts Wi-Fi capabilities, so you can control it remotely, making changing your home's temp as easy as tapping a few buttons on your smartphone. \$249; nest.com —SAL VOLOSA

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F150 shown with 3.5L V6 engine. Actual highway mileage may vary. ©2011 Ford Motor Company.



Buy now for big deals

When it comes to scoring to-do and to-be goods on the cheap, half the battle is knowing when the serious sale takes place. We tapped Gene Butler of the National Retail Federation for tips on what deals you should spend on now to save in the long run. —CHRISTIE BURRILL

Furniture

New styles of sofas, dining sets, and more debut in February, often at promotional prices. The real deals

though, are the "as-is" floor samples. Their relatives mark down before and to make room for fresh stock.

Electronics

Stores routinely run Super Bowl TV specials a week or so before the game.

Big appliances

During cold winter months, demand for summer essentials—so look for slashed prices on last season's air conditioners, fans, and outdoor grills.

Linen

Expect savings of 20 to 50 percent on new linens and linens and linens during department stores' January "white sales."

Tools

Once the holidays and construction season work, so do home repairs. Look for discounts on tools in February before the rain. People should be thinking about it.

Spring painting projects are popular, so expect to see temporary drop prices on paint and primers with the start of the season. Use before the end of the year to get the best price.

Carpeting

Sales typically slow down around the end of the year, which leads to price cuts, but expect some discounts to last through mid-March.



Hand repair

Moisturizers aren't all frost scents and frosty packaging. Some go beyond the cosmetic and actually treat skin. Living here in winter air is too much for me in the workshop. Here our picks. —JILLIAN BARTH

Badger Balm

After clients ask how often I use balm, I tell them: "I use it every day." The balm is made with organic, natural ingredients, which helps moisturize and soothe the skin. It's a great product to have in your toolbox. —JILLIAN BARTH

O'Keefe's Working Hands

The O'Keefe's Working Hands cream is a great product to have in your toolbox. It's a great product to have in your toolbox. —JILLIAN BARTH

Lyrica

Lyrica is a great product to have in your toolbox. It's a great product to have in your toolbox. —JILLIAN BARTH



DIABETES DAMAGES NERVES
but you can do something about that shooting, burning, pins-and-needles pain.



Get specific treatment

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LYRICA CAN HELP
Lyrica is believed to work on these damaged nerves.

Lyrica is FDA approved to treat Diabetic Nerve Pain (or painful Diabetic Neuropathy). This pain can worsen over time. Lyrica can provide effective pain relief so patients feel better.* In some patients, Lyrica can provide significant pain relief in as early as the first week of treatment. And, you should know, Lyrica is not a narcotic.

Start the Lyrica conversation with your doctor today.

*Individual results may vary. †Those who have had a drug or alcohol problem may be more likely to misuse Lyrica.

Prescription Lyrica is not for everyone. Tell your doctor right away about any serious allergic reaction that causes swelling of the face, throat, lips, gums, tongue, throat or neck or any trouble breathing or that affects your skin. Lyrica may cause sudden thoughts or actions it is a very small number of people. Call your doctor right away if you have new or worsening depression, suicidal thoughts or actions, or unusual changes in mood or behavior. Lyrica may cause swelling of your hands, legs and feet. Some of the most common side effects of Lyrica are dizziness and sleepiness. Do not drive or work with machines until you know how Lyrica affects you. Other common side effects are blurry vision, weight gain, trouble concentrating, dry mouth, and feeling "high." Also, tell your doctor right away about muscle pain along with feeling sick and lightheaded, or any changes in your eyesight including blurry vision or any side vision if you have diabetes. You may have a higher chance of swelling, dizziness or gaining weight if you are also taking certain diabetes or high blood pressure medicines. Do not drink alcohol while taking Lyrica. You may have more dizziness and sleepiness if you take Lyrica with alcohol, narcotic pain medicines, or medicines for anxiety if you have had a drug or alcohol problem, you may be more likely to misuse Lyrica. Tell your doctor if you are planning to have a child. Talk with your doctor before you stop taking Lyrica or any other prescription medication.

Please see Important Risk Information for Lyrica on the following page.

To learn more visit www.lyrica.com or call toll-free 1-888-9-LYRICA (1-888-959-7422).

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA.

Visit www.FDA.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

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IMPORTANT FACTS

LYRICA

(LEER + kah)

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION ABOUT LYRICA

LYRICA may cause serious and life-threatening allergic reactions. Stop taking LYRICA and call your doctor right away if you have any signs of a serious allergic reaction:

- Swelling of your face, mouth, lips, gums, tongue, throat or neck
- Have any trouble breathing
- Rash, hives (swollen bumps) or blisters

Like other antiepileptic drugs, LYRICA may cause suicidal thoughts or actions in a very small number of people, about 1 in 50. Call your doctor right away if you have any symptoms, especially if they are new, worse or worry you, including:

- New or worsening depression
- Suicidal thoughts or actions
- Unusual changes in mood or behavior

Do not stop LYRICA without first talking with your doctor. LYRICA may cause swelling of your hands, legs and feet. This swelling can be a serious problem with people with heart problems.

LYRICA may cause dizziness or sleepiness. Do not drive a car, work with machines, or do other dangerous things until you know how LYRICA affects you. Ask your doctor when it is okay to do these things.

ABOUT LYRICA

LYRICA is a prescription medicine used in adults 18 years and older to treat:

- Pain from damaged nerves that happens with diabetes or that follows burning of shingles.
 - Painful conditions when taken together with other nerve medicines.
 - Phantom limb pain (pain all over your body).
- Who should NOT take LYRICA:
- Anyone who is allergic to anything in LYRICA.

BEFORE STARTING LYRICA

Tell your doctor about all your medical conditions, including if you:

- Have had depression, mood problems or suicidal thoughts or actions
- Have or had kidney problems or dialysis
- Have heart problems, including heart failure
- Have a bleeding problem or are now taking blood-thinning drugs
- Have blood pressure medicines, or if drugs are checked as part
- Have ever had swelling of your face, mouth, tongue, lips, gums, neck, or throat (angioedema)
- Use or have used alcohol
- Use or have used any other medicines

It is not known if LYRICA will harm your unborn baby. You and your doctor should decide whether you should take LYRICA or breast-feed, but not both.

Tell your doctor about all your medicines. LYRICA may interact with other medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. LYRICA and other medicines may affect each other causing side effects. Especially tell your doctor if you take:

- Aspirin or other blood-thinning drugs (ACE inhibitors). You may have a higher chance for bleeding and bruising.

BEFORE STARTING LYRICA, continued

- Any other medicines you are taking, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.
- Any alcohol you are drinking.
- Any surgery you are having or planning to have.
- Any other medicines you are taking, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.
- Any alcohol you are drinking.
- Any surgery you are having or planning to have.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF LYRICA

LYRICA may cause some side effects, including:

- Low "Important Safety Information About LYRICA"
- Muscle problems, pain, weakness or weakness along with feeling sick and fever
- Eyepain problems including blurry vision
- Weight gain. Weight gain may affect control of diabetes and can be serious for people with heart problems
- Feeling "tired"

If you have any of these symptoms, tell your doctor right away. The most common side effects of LYRICA are:

- Dizziness
- Trouble concentrating
- Swelling of hands and feet
- Weight gain
- Dry mouth
- Sleepiness

If you have diabetes, you should pay extra attention to your skin while taking LYRICA and tell your doctor of any sores or skin problems.

HOW TO TAKE LYRICA

Do:

- Take LYRICA exactly as your doctor tells you. Your doctor will tell you how much to take and when to take it.
- Take LYRICA at the same time each day.
- Take LYRICA with or without food.
- Don't:

- Drive a car or use machines if you feel dizzy or sleepy while taking LYRICA.
- Take alcohol or use other medicines that make you sleepy while taking LYRICA.
- Change the dose or stop LYRICA suddenly. You may have headaches, nausea, dizziness, or trouble sleeping if you stop taking LYRICA suddenly.
- Stop any other medicines without first talking to your doctor.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist. This is only a brief summary of important information.
- Go to www.lyrica.com or call 1-866-426-7422 (1-866-4LYRICA).

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helpful answers

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thisoldhouse.com

Count the Ways You Could Appear in the July Reader-Created Issue!

1. Submit your remodeled house, room, or yard to our Reader Remodel Contest for a chance to win cash and a GMC Sierra—and have your home photographed and written up for the magazine.

2. Tell us how you saved money at home and earn a spot in the Cheesecake Hall of Fame.

3. Teach us a new home-related DIY tip or trick and be featured in our special tips roundup.

4. Show us something you built yourself and see the step-by-step mapped out in our Weekend Remodel column.

5. Think of 10 clever uses for a household item and find your ingenuity on display in the House Solutions section.



6. Upload pictures of a space you've transformed with just paint and see it featured in our Paint Ideas column.

7. Let us know about a Home Center Project you'd like to build with Tom Silva and end up working with the man himself.

8. Give us a look at how you've repurposed salvaged architectural details in your home and discover them on display in Salvage Style.

9. Suggest a topic for our Shopping or Price Whine columns and see your ideas in print.

10. Tell us about a derelict house you know that needs saving and find it on the back page of the magazine.

10 chances to appear in the July issue!

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Two cooks, one small space

Every square inch counts in this compact, light-filled family kitchen

By DEBORAH DALLINGER • Photographs by LAURA MOSS

When quarters are tight, layout is critical. Consider this hardworking kitchen, configured by designer Heidi Piron for serious cooks Lisa and Peter Tulloch. Owners of a 70-year-old Colonial Revival in Summit, New Jersey, they had two kids, one dog, and lots of steam when they asked Piron to improve the workings of their 110-square-foot kitchen. She did so without changing its footprint, and left the sink under the window so Lisa could keep an eye on the kids. Three walls were interrupted by doors, one of which opened smack in between the range and peninsula. "My first goal was to move it because it was causing traffic jams in the cooking zone," says Piron. She also converted an end-of-the-way broom closet into a message center that doubles as a storage pocket for serving sets. To make the room even larger, she suggested glass subway tile and other light-reflecting finishes, like pale granite and red oak. Floating the cabinets fit together precisely, with a pullout for spices and oils, squared in near the range. "It's a seamless cabinet, which often a bit more space made than one with an inset door," Piron notes. Says Lisa, "As the space was quite limited, every inch was thoughtfully measured."



DEFECT A door swing between the range and peninsula created traffic jams. **SOLUTION** Moving the door allowed for an efficient 12-shape-work zone. **QUICK TIP** Floating granite counters and white cabinets add polish as well as performance.



(before)

before+after:
kitchen

↑ The snack bar forms an L and creates a prep space. The recessed cabinets on either side find work through the upper cabinets to the outside. Range and microwave siting.

↓ White Roman granite, finished with an open edge, tops counters and the snack bar peninsula, which has an open design to hold on outlet for small appliances. Countertops: Atlas Marble & Granite



before

With three doorways leading to outside, the 100-square-foot kitchen felt busy and cramped.



after

Making one doorway and converting a broom closet to a message center opening area allow for more storage and prep space and smoother traffic flow in the same-size kitchen.

1. Kept the sink and dishwasher where they were.

2. Added pantry cabinets and drawers for clutter and balance within reach of the dishwasher.

3. Turned the broom closet into a message center and serving area situated with upper cabinets and deep drawers.



4. Moved the door that opens to the garage to create a better spot for the new peninsula range plus prep and storage space.

5. Replaced the peninsula with one that is narrower and integrated with the rest of the countertops.

6. Slaved up a cabinet to provide space for a larger fridge situated closer to prep and cooking space.

ILLUSTRATION: JENNIFER L. HARRIS



pro advice

HEIDI FISK, KITCHEN DESIGNER
SLAMIT IS

"To keep the backsplash from looking cluttered, opt for one or two outlet strips under upper cabinets."



before + after kitchen

↑ The message center has a charging station with an outlet strip hidden under the upper cabinet. Stirling the backsplash fits to emphasize the area for new identity while tying it to the rest of the kitchen. Tile: Waterside Art & Design



inside the box

Find out what kitchen storage solutions at Remodelaholic.com/Jan2012

↑ Open shelves keep glasses within easy reach. Their rounded shape and bar-pipe molding create a modern twist on a formal. Finished with Tumblers, Merlot, and Ruby. Specialty: 603 Interiors



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↑ A corner Lazy Susan turns two corner spaces into accessible storage for bowls, pots and utensils. The custom piece is the wall counter with the stainless steel appliances and granite pail. Cabinets: Photo Country Kitchen. Tap Knobs

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before+after:
man cave

Masculine makeover

An eerie, partially below-grade storage space becomes a fun and functional getaway for a hardworking dad. by KIMMY HANCOCK • Photography by JOE SCIMONE

Even the most die-hard family guy needs some alone time. Take Kirkor Boris. The Los Angeles-based writer longed for a quiet corner where he could craft his TV scripts while still being close to his wife and young daughter. "I wanted some bells and whistles, too," admits Kirkor, who hoped a big flat-screen TV, a leather recliner, and shelves for his sports memorabilia and collectibles would make the room just as much man cave as office.

Unfortunately, the only spot available was a dreary storage area off the garage. The space, which had once held a gas furnace, was small, with uneven floors and large concrete floor joists designed to anchor the house in an earthquake or landslide.

Designer Kyle Schaefer set about giving the dank room a library look with dark mahogany millwork and built-in shelving. General contractor Mark Allen laid a floating wood floor over the uneven concrete and clad the footings in drywall. Now the formerly cold, dark space is a treasure-gem for the man of the house. "I've been thinking about this space for seven years," says Kirkor. "It turned out awesome."

TO LIVE: The concrete footings gave the dreary, unfinished storage space a hunter look. **2010:** The designer cleverly incorporated the footings as the basis for styling the bookcases and a crosscutting oak desk. **Chair and Bar:** Chair: Design Within Reach



(before)

1 A varied color palette of warm and cool neutrals helps highlight the architecture of the room. Golden yellow paint evokes the easy reading nook, while pale gray grounds the base. Floating light. Photo: Justin Nordberg

4 A new window, twice as tall as the original, was installed for more light and air. In the corner, a gas heater was boxed out with drywall and a new doorcut through the exterior panel.



↑
Merging
cabinet ideas up
the drywalled
floor joists helps
integrate them
into the design.

before

The 14-by-28-foot storage space was used for little more than storing dirty paint cans and building materials.



after

The empty space now serves as study, office, and entertainment center.

1 Zoned the space with a half bath to make room's only open area and bookshelves along the periphery. Concealed a gas heater (now accessed from outside).

2 Finished the bookshelves by boxing them out with drywall and building bookcase setup.



3 Mounted a TV and two small fridges inside the wall that leads to the mechanical room.

4 Floated a desk in the center of the room and added a recliner for TV viewing.

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4. **Collectibles:** gathered over time make the space unique. Says Kierke: "A man's home should be personal. I suggest a Star Wars collection from your childhood that your wife doesn't want in the basement."



→ A small half bath is concealed behind a space-saving pocket door and looks surprisingly roomy, thanks to a tiny well-mount sink and yes, a toilet. "Hey," says Butler, "it's a man cave. Why not?"
Hand turners: *Aynur Hane, United Artists, The House Doctor*



homeowner tip

'Put electric outlets everywhere—the walls, the floor—everywhere! Then, when you find a really cool lamp made out of a beer bottle, you'll be able to put it exactly where you want.'



**MORE
THAN
CURVES**
See a photo
gallery of
muscular
men at
Bodybuilding.com
from
August 2012

✦ **A recliner** tucked into a corner provides a comfy spot for TV-viewing. The bookcase racks are painted a pale color to keep the dark endtable from looking oppressive. *Shooting: Hilary Roth*



► **The library** gets plenty of soft, warm light from sconces installed on the posts dividing the bookcases. Sconces: Ercowood/Kentway



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- JAVN may cause a sudden drop in blood pressure upon standing, especially when starting treatment, which may cause you to feel, or feel dizzy or lightheaded. Avoid driving or operating hazardous equipment when starting or as symptoms persist. (3000)

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* Only your healthcare provider can tell if your symptoms are due to GERD or a more serious condition like peptic ulcer. See your doctor for regular exams.

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Please see the next page for further information about IAC/20.



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before+after:
attic

Tapping existing potential

Three built-ins and a minimalist design plus a plumbing and a window treatment makeover turn a cluttered bedroom, bath, and office into a cheerful bedroom, bath, and office. By JILLIAN BOUTER • Photography: STEPHANIE DUNN



A small-space remodel can be as exciting as a jigsaw puzzle. That's what Marlene and Dan Hasey found while renovating the three-room upstairs space in their Carlin, Oregon, cottage. Former owners had turned the tucked-under-the-roof space over to their cats, leaving the rooms, along with the rest of the house, in sore need of a redo. Holding to a \$14,000 budget, the couple hired a plumber and an electrician to work with Marlene, an experienced carpenter. He demolished one wall and took others down to the studs to create a drop-down master suite, office, and reading nook with closets, cubbies, and open shelves cut into the knee walls. Old peel-and-stick tile and wallpaper came in favor of cherry-back vinyl planks. The team added a marble-lined bath with two sinks and placed a shower area under the highest point of one gable to create a luxurious sense of space. Rather than build a narrow set of stairs, Marlene built two decks, a platform bed—with storage cubbies along the base—and wall-hung nightstands on-site. He wedged the mattress and box spring in through the new office window. After 10 months, all the pieces fit snugly in 360 functional square feet. "Everything is where we need it," Marlene says. "It's warm and comfortable, and makes you realize you can do a lot with the space you have."



(before)

Before: The top floor had great headroom under its three gables, but the three-room space lacked style—and pushing-offer. New windows reveal the cozier and built-in furniture. Marlene and Dan Hasey—made use of every square foot.

before + after

• The Craftsman-style glass-paned door, salvaged from the entry's 1930s house, channels light through the space. Light before: Mosaic Lighting and Mosaic Home; Details and Additions: E.B. Bradley Co.



• A reading nook on the stair landing serves as a buffer between the master suite and the attic. Chair: Macy's; Pillows: Pottery Barn



before + after

Removing our wall helped turn two small rooms into a bedroom; a third room became a new bath. A reading nook, knee-wall storage, and built-in furniture bring extra function out of the space and give it a finished look.

1. Rebuilt the knee walls with 3-foot-high doors to create storage space where the slope of the roof is too low for standing.

2. Added built-in desks with file cabinets under eaves.



— Virginia Griffin

3. Placed the shower enclosure window under one gable's high point, adding light and a sense of spaciousness.

4. Built in a bed with storage compartments underneath and a pair of built-in hanging nightstands.



• Built-in flat-panel cabinets and open shelves keep media equipment under the sloped ceiling. Staircase: Zoo Lighting; TV: Pottery Barn; Bed: E.B. Bradley Co.

• Curvy console sinks give the bath an open look. The freestanding shower is placed to create space for plumbing. Sink: Pottery Barn; Shower: Pottery Barn; Bed: E.B. Bradley Co.



homeowner tip

MATTHEW RAMEY, CARLTON, ORIG.

"We hung nightstands on the wall with brackets and used composite sinks in the bath to keep floors as open as possible. When square footage is at a premium and ceilings are low, open space below eye level helps make rooms feel larger."

• A new 9H-door-tall window added light to the office and a way for the north and box springs to sleep. Window: J&J Sun Vinyl Co.; Plants: TerraMaster; Art: in Shadow Cherry



A farmhouse kitchen for \$564

A little paint and some vintage-style details spruce up a dreary, cramped space

by DANIELLE HUNDELL

Opening up a room doesn't always require knocking down walls. Jillian Woods, owner of a 1970s ranch house in Crowley, Texas, figured that out when faced with her kitchen's dark rust walls and builder-grade cabinets. The appliances and counter were in good shape, and a layout change was beyond the budget, so she focused on simple cosmetic reveals that would add up to the illusion of a light, airy space. Two weeks after moving in, she brightened the walls with sky-blue paint and a backsplash covered in white beadboard-patterned wallpaper. Then Jillian turned her attention to the cabinets. After removing doors from some of the upper boxes to lighten their look, she and her husband, Don, installed a header capped with molding to add more height. A two-tone paint job—white on the uppers and gray-green on the base units—gave the cabinets a style boost. To put the finishing "old house" touches on the spot, she lightly distressed the cabinet's edges and wheeled out her dining table's legs. Now the room has a relaxing, more spacious feel. Says Jillian, "The new kitchen even makes cooking less of a chore."



200 square feet of paint

10 cabinet doors removed

Gray-green lower cabinets add interest to an otherwise white kitchen

before: Rust-colored walls and hard wood cabinetry weighed down the small room
after: Bright and cheery, the kitchen now has light-reflecting features and open shelving



1. before



▼ The table, brought from their last home, got a farmhouse makeover. Jillian stripped off its black paint and refinished it with Dura-seal to make it look like vintage barn wood.

► The dining chair, found by flea-market enthusiasts stocked with servingware, has a distressed, lived-in look. A large white mirror reflects light from a fisherman's-style pendant.



10 cabinet doors removed

► The appliances stayed in the same configuration, and all the cabinets were freshened up with paint.



the project tally:

Tuck the doors off the upper cabinets, giving them less visual weight.	\$0
Painted the cabinets, table, and walls.	\$208
Painted custom look cabinetry with a header made of stock parts.	\$20
Distressed upper cabinetry with beadboard and wire-red brass brackets.	\$78
Used beadboard wallpaper as a low-cost backsplash.	\$20
Furnished an eating nook with a pair of vintage cupboards and a mirror.	\$380
Replaced dining table with string chair pendant.	\$60

Total **\$564**

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Space-saving tables

These clever furniture pieces pack big functionality into small packages

By DANIELLE AUKNOLL • Photographs by WENDELL T. MERRILL

shopping



Here at *This Old House*, we've got a new spot for folding, expandable, and multifunctional furniture—even better if it's got built-in storage. Why live with a bulky desk when you can free up floor space with one that folds out from a wall cabinet lined with cubbies and a corkboard? Or settle for any old nook when there's a storage cube chair, with the flip of its lid, turns into a cocktail table? If you're short on square footage—or even if you're not—consider these seven tables that change shape, tuck away, offer hidden storage, or do some combination of all three.

Desk
—FOLDING
—CUBBIES
—CORKBOARD
—STORAGE
—STYLISH
—EASY TO USE
—EASY TO STORE
—EASY TO MOVE
—EASY TO CLEAN
—EASY TO ASSEMBLE
—EASY TO DISASSEMBLE
—EASY TO REPAIR
—EASY TO MAINTAIN
—EASY TO USE
—EASY TO STORE
—EASY TO MOVE
—EASY TO CLEAN
—EASY TO ASSEMBLE
—EASY TO DISASSEMBLE
—EASY TO REPAIR
—EASY TO MAINTAIN



drop-leaf dinette

SOCKET SOCIAL
Size: 36" W x 34" D x 29" H (extended)
Made of: Painted poplar and wood
Try it: To handle four or six, this fold-down dining table expands more than double. Set it with red designs on its \$545. socketocial.com



trunked-leg nesting table set

WORKSOLUTIONS
Size: 22" W x 34" D x 31" H (large) 34" W x 32" D x 30" H (small)
Made of: Solid Mahogany and rubberwood
Try it: Alongside an armchair is a sofa and pullout the shorter pieces for extra when entertaining. \$64. worksolutions.com



sliding-shelf side table

BALLAD DESIGN
Size: 22" W x 30" D x 26" H
Made of: Solid birch with a white finish
Try it: Paired with a comfy reading chair, its narrow built-in magazine rack holds books while a hidden pull-out shelf brings a mug of coffee handy. \$225. ballad-design.com



lift-top coffee table

2 CALIF. INC.
Size: 52" W x 28" D x 26" H (extended)
Made of: MDF with a veneer
Try it: For snacking or sitting—its hand-painted Teal-A-Bell mechanism raises the table 10 inches to perfect no-sag height. Includes as a desk too. Store supplies in the drawers to get items in the zone. \$499. 2calif.com



pull-out laptop station

NEA
Size: 50" W x 36" D x 30" H
Made of: Solid birch, cherry, maple, poplar, and rubberwood
Try it: To keep a laptop under lock and key, the drawers then pull out the work surface to a perfect homework station. \$449. nea.com



tray-table ottoman

SAFARI
Size: 38" W x 38" D x 17" H
Made of: Birch upholstered in a tan
Try it: To store books, games, or anything else. Then flip the lid on the cube to take it from floor to coffee table. Just place the tray on the inside edge. \$229. wayfair.com



Space-saving storage

When floor space is at a premium, seek out storage solutions that make the most of every square foot and help keep clutter under control.



wine-rack table This dark stained side table from Wisconsin Wood has an oval top for holding glasses, and an integrated 8 bottle rack below to keep visual clutter at bay. \$43. stockandstacks.com



bench with built-in drawers No room for both an entry table and a place to perch? Try Wilson Home's storage bench with a top of drawers under its seat. Stash coats and other accessories out of sight, and have a spot to sit when putting on shoes. \$369. wayfair.com



step/bookend Books, magazines, freshly laundered socks—use this rattan container to corral items at the bottom of the staircase hall to long on the next floor. \$45. ballad-design.com

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paint ideas

No-fail colors for small spaces

Transform hemmed-in rooms with 10 hues handpicked by our color pros. Their range may surprise you. *By JILL COHEN*

Little spaces have the potential to carry a lot of weight. Toymen, hallways, and mudrooms can establish a mood. Tiny traches, bedrooms, and even bathrooms serve as centers.

Conventional wisdom holds that pale colors expand a space visually by making the walls recede, and it's true. But white can feel bland, and pastels can lack oomph. There's also a huge range of pale shades, both in terms of color intensity and temperatures. Before picking a paint for a snug space, ask yourself what effect you're after. Do you want the room to feel light and airy (try a cool color) or warm and cozy (root toward richer and warmer)?

Or maybe you're craving a little drama. "A small space can be a wonderful jewel box," says Scott Matthews, senior interior designer at Benjamin Moore. A bright or deep color in a diminutive space offers a chance to enjoy a hue that might seem over the top in, say, the living room. Soaring colors also can give a small room a distinct identity, helpful if the space has no strong architectural elements.

There are also ways to trick the eye by covering every surface with a single color—or just the opposite, by treating one or more walls differently. Read on for our experts' favorite small-space enhancers, shades and strategies.

Brush take: A saturated green, PittsburghPaints' Oil makes up small walls recede and expands the space in part by leading the eye to the greenery outside.





For a light and airy feel, go cool

Blues and greens, and grays, browns, and lavenders with blue or green undertones, can make walls recede and a small space seem larger. Examples include grayed-down Atmosphere Blue from Restoration Hardware, which is among architectural color consultant Bonnie Miller's top picks because of the way it establishes a bright mood.

Pittsburgh Paints' Dill would also do well in a foyer or mudroom as a transition from the outside, or in a windowed room where yellowish-green can make a space feel as if it extends outdoors. "It looks great with white trim, and it works well with any amount of natural or artificial light," says Dee Schlatter, who tracks research on color and design for PPG Pittsburgh Paints. "Unlike some neutrals, it's saturated enough to mix like other colors when the light changes."

Castleton Mist, a yellow-green in Benjamin Moore's Historic collection, is a favorite of San Francisco interior designer Arthur McLaughlin, who also signs prepaper for sale. "This play on calico green has some energy to it," he says. "It can lift the mood, which is what you want in a small space that might otherwise be overlooked."



hot idea: dramatic pink. Interior Graylines thins out the walls and the back of cabinets rather than the stuff stored inside.

For a cozy glow, choose a warm hue

To emphasize the intimate feeling of a foyer, alcove, or den, consider warm colors—yellows, reds, oranges, and reddish-pinks and browns—which colorists describe as making walls advance. Pairing the ceiling with a muted hue will make the space even more enveloping. Slender Williams's June Day is a great choice for an entry or home office, because this sunny yellow is "optimistic, welcoming, and cheerful"—in other words, a friendly greeting for visitors or a cue to reward for paying bills. It's also yellow that underscores the natural warmth of wood floors and furniture. Olympic Paints' Indiana Clay is another logical candidate for small spaces. "This is a fresh, clean orange that gives a burst of color, whether in a wall or at the back of a bookcase or cabinet," says Misty Walker, color and design stylist at Olympic Paints. Veering more to red, Pittsburgh Paints' Orange Vermilion would also be a great choice in a foyer or mudroom, where "big colors" can not only ease the temperature but also draw the eye away from clutter, says Schlatter.



To add volume, make it seamless

Paint walls and ceilings the same color. It allows you to go to travel around the room without stopping and makes a small space seem bigger," says color consultant Dory Horn. Think about properties, too. "Anytime a room is higher than it is wide, a good option is painting the ceiling the same color as the walls," says Walker. "It makes the room feel better proportioned, yet cozy." Even with a white ceiling, you can create a continuous flow by painting baseboards and trim the same color as the walls. Behr's Calm Air is a warm neutral shade that can enhance the effect; plus, it creates a nice transition from outdoor spaces to interiors, says Erika Wolfelt, an expert in color and design at Behr. Similarly, "True Paints of Europe's AR13 is a creamy off-white that can soften the lines in a room while picking up the qualities of hues in adjoining spaces," says Miller.



hot idea: off-white. Opt for a paint with a slight sheen, such as Behr's Calm Air, to make the room feel seamless.



To widen a narrow room, break it up

To make a skinny space, such as a converted sunporch, appear squarer, Schlatter suggests painting one side a different color from the other. Cool colors, especially, can make opposing walls feel as if they were moving apart. For tight passageways, she offers another trick: "Paint the wall at the end of a hall an entirely different color. It creates a destination and eases the tunnel effect."

For a small entryway, consider a single curved shade, like Behr's Waterscape, "which makes a transition area more interesting because it's bold and unexpected," says Wolfelt.

A bright, rich blue that looks great with both dark wood and white-painted walls is Pittsburgh Paints' Blue Tang, says Schlatter—it would make a great choice for a snug TV room, powder room, or bedroom.

If you're worried that such a strong color won't blend in with the other parts of the house, rely on the paint collections that manufacturers assemble. These color groupings will help you create a cohesive palette based on the first color you choose. "The great thing about a small space is that it's such a doable project," says Mother. "It's a nice way to start."



British Colonial powder room

Bamboo and dark-wood pieces combine to give this classic both a taste of the exotic. Here's how to put together a similar space in your house

BY JESSICA DOBELL-PECKE Photograph by JONATHAN WALLEN

The average half bath may measure only about 20 square feet, but you can still give it a well-furnished look. Consider the space shown here: In a small nook, a cane chair, a wall-hung pedestal sink, and a large mirror could just as easily adorn a living room or den. "Though it serves its purpose, the room goes beyond utilitarian, it feels warm and elegant," says color expert Eve Ashcraft, author of *The Right Color (Arrested)*. "Working with architect and interior designer Gil Schultz, Ashcraft devised a rich palette of golden walls and creamy wainscoting to play up the bath's furnishings, which blend bamboo work with traditional antiques, including a mahogany table vanity and ceramic bust. Nickel and brass fixtures add a 19th-century glow."

Read on for ways to incorporate similar pieces in a bath of your own, wherever you see it.



wood-framed mirror
Somebody's shiny back. Here's a extra large looker. Inset: a vintage sign. \$260. www.bonanza.com



polished towel bar
At 32 inches long, this brass rail—designed to resemble turned wood—brings the light out for a single-hand towel. \$45. www.etsy.com

horn vessel
Give toiletries a really stylish spot by wall-hanging with these horn or ceramic vessels. Cup, \$22; jar, \$25. www.japaneseshop.com



cane chair
Built from rattan, this is a classic and built-in shape. This occasional seat can also be used as a display surface. \$209. www.bonanza.com



table vanity
Reinforce this writing desk with a wooden pedestal, a mirror, and an ornate metal handle. Create an antique-inspired vanity that's also functional. \$662. www.etsy.com



get this look
for less



handsome score
This piece has a bamboo frame, brass vanity, and a carved shade of the fixture. Inset: a vintage sign. \$190. www.bonanza.com



open shelving
A mahogany of British Colonial design. Bamboo puts out to clear one bottle. Inset: a vintage sign. \$120. www.bonanza.com



wall paint
Warm clay complements dark wood. Inset: a vintage sign. \$12. www.bonanza.com

antique look bust
Add a classical note to your bath with a ceramic or stone sculpture. Inset: a vintage sign. \$12. www.bonanza.com



hooked rug

It may look like a vintage rug, but this is a modern one. Inset: a vintage sign. \$12. www.bonanza.com



The truth about efficient lighting

At the TOH TV project house, experts helped the homeowners navigate new bulb and fixture options. What they learned can help you, too. By KATHY HANCOCK • Photographs by KYLEE • ILLUSTRATION



ABOVE: TOH general contractor Tim Silva places a wall sconce above the fireplace in the new family room. "We're using CFLs in these fixtures," says homeowner Joe Tilius. RIGHT: New bulbs that meet the stricter energy standards have been introduced in the past couple of years. Including the SuperSaver halogen bulb (left) from Sylvania and the Ambient LED (right) from Philips.

Like all remodelers, Joe and Becky Tilius, owners of the current *This Old House* TV project, wanted their house's new lighting to complement its style. "We also needed to cut energy use," says Becky, not just to save money but also to meet a state code requiring 10 percent of lighting in any remodel (and new construction) to be energy efficient. It's a common challenge, as some 38 states have adopted or are adopting similar codes.

The Tilvies soon found that shopping for energy-efficient lighting is a baroque research project these days. As incandescent bulbs disappear from store shelves, the bulbs that are replacing them have changed dramatically in the past few years. To get a better grasp on their options, the Tilvies turned to lighting designer Susan Arnold of Wilton Lighting in Allston, Massachusetts. We spoke to her, and a few other experts, to examine the pros, cons, myths, and confusion surrounding this latest generation of lighting. Here's an overview to keep reading. Joe and Becky's choices may slash their lighting energy bill by as much as 60 percent.

1 You don't need to stockpile incandescents.

The 2007 federal energy bill didn't outlaw incandescent technology right after its energy efficiency standards for certain basic, least incandescent—namely the Edison-style bulbs we're all familiar with and that use 40 or more watts of energy—were introduced to meet the new

standards. The phase-out will be gradual: only 300 watt-bulbs will vanish first, starting in January 1, 2012. Next up will be 75-watt bulbs in 2013, then 60- and 40-watt bulbs in 2014. And despite the phase-out, all types of incandescents will continue to be available. Utility bulbs for things such as appliance wiring (even in the bill). The same goes for low-wattage decorative bulbs like the exposed filament bulbs that have become popular recently, so feel free to follow in fixtures that use them. While the Tilvies are largely eschewing incandescents, they've contracted for exposed filament bulbs in a few lights, such as wall fixtures on the upper columns between the family room and kitchen, to bring a period look to the new space.

2 You can keep your old light fixtures. While

hundreds of fixtures are being an Energy Star rating you won't save more by using a retrofit fixture versus simply screwing energy-saving bulbs of equivalent wattage into your existing lights. "It's a bit about the bulb's fixture use," says New York-based light fixture designer and architect David Bergman. Energy Star fixtures are designed to accept only efficient bulbs, not incandescents, so that's potentially how the game.

3 CFLs can look great with traditional fixtures. If

you've been avoiding CFLs because the spiral-shaped bulbs look weird, say a fixture you're in luck. Most

manufacturers have figured out how to hide the spiral glass housings that are shaped like the bulbs we use today (for the classic Edison shape and size, look for the term A19 on the package). CFLs last 8,000 to 12,000 hours—a lot longer than the 750 to 1,000 hours you get from an incandescent—and use only a fraction of the energy. At \$3 to \$20, you'll pay slightly more for them but will quickly reap the benefits with lower energy bills. The availability of compact and specialty-size CFLs was welcome news to the Tilvies, who will use candle-style bulbs in a chandelier with glass and brass shades that all hang in their new family room.

In terms of looks, the only thing that's still a sticking point with CFLs is the ballast, the device that houses the bulb's circuitry. If it's usually inconspicuous plastic right above the screw-in base. "Some consumers think ballasts look bulky or distracting," says Arnold. Manufacturers are working to make them more discreet, for now opt for fixtures with shades that conceal them like the Tilvies' new chandelier.

4 Your fixture may be shortening the life of your CFLs. Some

most of us know these bulbs will burn out quickly if they're turned on and off too frequently or placed in enclosed fixtures that don't let heat escape. But the same thing can happen if the bulb is installed

upside down with the ballast above the bulb. One theory is that excess heat from the bulb rises, potentially damaging the ballast components.

"That's why many've ceased CFLs using this means of design," says the ballast oriented horizontally, not vertically," says Bergman, referring to U-shaped CFLs with prongs instead of screw-in bases. To avoid this potential pitfall, the Tilvies chose fixtures with bulbs that are horizontal or upright.

5 LED light bulbs are now widely available—and

they look great. Light-emitting diodes—technically, semiconductors that glow when an electric current runs through them—may already be a sale in your house at the numbers in your digital meter clock and the light source behind your flat-screen TV. You might even have LED track lights for bright direct under-cabinet lighting. But today, manufacturers are turning out over head lights that use LEDs, along with multiple versions of LEDs that are housed in bulbs, the shaped coverings and suitable for lamps and everyday fixtures. They last a whopping 25,000 to 50,000 hours and use even less energy than CFLs, so experts think they'll make major inroads into the replacement bulb market.

The Tilvies are installing these low-profile, surface-mount LED panel fixtures from Philips on their kitchen ceiling, which is less than 7 feet high.



TOH TV



For the new family room, the Tilvies picked a chandelier to use. They lighting, with shades that conceal candle-style CFLs from below.





The Tilties will save an exposed filament incandescent bulb in the vintage look fixture from Tilties lighting.

6 The best place to use energy LEDs is stringing them. The extra-long life of LED bulbs was a big draw for the Tilties, but at \$25 or more per bulb, the couple couldn't afford to use them

everywhere. Instead, they targeted the fixtures they leave on for hours at a time. Like a lamp in their front foyer. In this kitchen, where exposed wood beams and an under-T light ceiling height left no room for recessed ones, they're putting in low-profile, surface-mount LED light panels made by Philips.

7 Yes, CFLs and LEDs are dimmable—but there's a catch. If a recessed bulb is dimmable, it will say so on the packaging. CFLs can be dimmed to 25 to 20 percent of full brightness. LEDs are a bit better: adjustable to 10 to 50 percent. Both are a far cry from the barely there 1 percent that incandescent can achieve. If you're determined to get that glow from your efficient bulbs, switch out old dimmers for newer ones that are specifically rated to work with the circuitry of these bulbs, ensuring their brightness to a twinkly 1 percent. The Tilties are installing LED-compatible dimmers for their overhead kitchen lights. "We're glad to have the flexibility to turn these fixtures way down," says Beady.

8 Now, easy-to-read labels will make picking the right bulb a snap. Starting in 2012, information labels similar to the one shown (above right) will be required on all bulb packaging to help consumers make informed choices.

700 to 280 lumens (the higher the lumens count, the brighter the bulb). Light appearance (or color temperature) measures in kelvin, indicates how warm or yellowish the light is. Look for a number around 2,700 kelvin: roughly equal to that of an incandescent. (As a comparison, candlelight measures around 1,700 kelvin, and daylight, 5,000 kelvin.) A third figure, set on the label but often listed on the bulb maker's website, is the color-rendering index (CRI). It ranges from 0 to 100 (we) measures how well a light illuminates colors. While incandescents rank close to a perfect 100, any bulb with a CRI of 80 to 90 suits all but the most discerning eyes and will let you see colors accurately.

9 If you love incandescents, you still have options— for now. Halogen bulbs, which have been on the market for years, are incandescents with a pressurized capsule containing a tungsten filament and a small quantity of halogen gas. The technology allows the filament to emit more light per



As of January 1, 2012, a modified version of this label will be required on all bulb packaging to help consumers make informed choices.

well burned, resulting in about 25 percent less energy use during the bulb's life. Today you can find some halogen bulbs that work with your existing fixtures; the packaging might read "incandescent that uses halogen technology." One example is Philips's EcoParade bulb, which uses only 72 watts of energy to burn just as bright as a 100-watt incandescent.

And if you're still not wild about your options for efficient bulbs, you can probably wait things out a bit while your incandescents sit in a box. "The technology is only getting better. Manufacturers are working hard on improvements," says Arnold.



Whether Joe and Beady choose incandescents, halogens, or energy-saving lighting, the new label will be a handy tool.

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Build a bar

How best to finish a space for entertaining? Grab some stock lumber and specialty molding, and cozy on up to this project. **By JENNIFER STANGOR** Photos by Joe D'AMICO

Cost: \$425 (not including tool rent)

Time: Two to four days

Difficulty: Difficult Handling heavy stock lumber and making miter cuts may break up the novice



If the notion of building a bar seems a bit mad, keep memories of bonneting Dads (as some make-shift can stand back at college, traffic, but that experience won't help you much here. This is a real piece of furniture, so you can sit from the trained guests, sturdy ash barrel molding, and a ladder-mounted bar rail. Follow along as The Old House senior technical editor Mark Powers and colleague Douglas Adams build this handsome no-room exception. And if you want to break out the taps when it's finished, well, that's exactly your call.

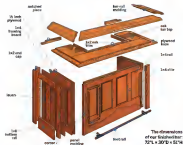
There's nothing a ProjectGuru editor can't do. Mark Powers is a professional woodworker, and Douglas Adams is a professional photographer. They're both in the business of making things look good. For more on this project, visit www.fox.com.

Day-to-day timeline

POOP DAY Build, style, and assemble the bee's side panels (Steps 1-3)

SATURDAY Finish the objectives and circuit slides, and take the last lap (Steps 4-6)

ALTERNATE Install the bar rail welding end optional foot rail (Steps 6-7)



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for her
starring
role



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2. Trim the panels

A. Place the corner stiles. Using a miter saw cut the 1x4 stiles and rails to length. For the front corner stiles, shift a 1x4 to overhang the panel edge by 1/4 inch, using a block to set the space as shown. Mark the inside edge of the stile with the pencil. Do the same at the back edges of the side panels.
B. Attach the stiles and rails to the front panel. Lay the top and bottom rail on the front panel between the marked lines, and position three equally spaced stiles between them. Glue and nail the stiles and rails in place with 24-inch nails. Set the corner stiles aside until the panels are assembled.
C. Miter and insert the molding. Lay pieces of molding one by one inside the recessed panel, use a block by the stile and rail, and mark their length. Using a miter saw, cut the ends at a 45-degree angle. Then nail each one in place with 24-inch nails. Hold off on the pieces a long side the corner rail for now.



2



3

3. Assemble the panels

A. Attach the shelf cleats. On the interior side of each panel, mark two horizontal lines 14 inches and 24 inches from the bottom. Cut 1x4 cleats to length, leaving room for the side panels and their cleats to butt against the front panel. Install the cleats along the lines by counter-sinking pilot holes every 8 to 12 inches and driving 1 1/2-inch screws in place.
B. Assemble the walls. Apply glue to the front edge of a side panel. Set it upright, butt it into the front panel, and close up the pieces together. Mark a line along the front panel to help you center your screws into the edge of the side panel's framing. Use pilot holes and drive 3-inch screws into it at 16-inch working your way from one wall to the other so that you can get the corner as you go. To help you have a partner.



Tip Use a tight fit, make one side of a long piece of panel molding. Hold it in place, and use the panel's corner to mark a precise cutline for the opposite rail.

4. Install the shelves and the corner styles

A. Make the shelves. Using a table saw, cut the two shelves to length. For the bottom shelf, cut a 1x2 to length and glue and nail underneath the front lip. Set the shelves in place and fit through them and into the cleats, which will keep the panels square.

B. Attach the corner styles and cleat the sides. Now apply glue to the two front corner styles and set them in place. Snug against the rails and overhang the edges by 1/4 inch. Rip flush with the width of the side corner styles, since they butt up against the overhanging front pieces. Apply glue to the back and nail them in place.

Overhang the sides at the back of the side panels. Finish and glue and nail them in place. Hold the top and bottom rails between the side styles to square them. Cut, glue, and nail them in place. Attach a corner stile on each side and trim it—as well as the unfinished corner stiles—as in Step 20. Butts it to 2 against the overhanging stiles to finish the side panels.



5

5. Assemble the bar top

A. Size the bar-top base. To determine the width of the three plywood base-layer pieces, hold a section of bar molding against the long edge of your plywood and snug the 1x12 subcut top into the notch. Mark the plywood along the back edge of the board, as shown. Rip two lengths of plywood to this width.

B. Install the base. Cut one of the plywood lengths into two pieces for the sides that, when flush at the back, overhang the front by 1/4 inches. Arrange them to overhang the sides by 1/4 inches. Use them to measure to twice their length to get the length of the base piece. Cut to length. Secure the base with 24-inch screws.

C. Set the sub bar top. Measure the inside edge of the plywood side pieces and cut two 1x12 boards to that length. Off them, flush with the inside back corners, and measure outside edge to outside edge to get the length of the front 1x12. It will overlap the seams of the base layer. Cut the front board to length. Set the board in place, and use 24-inch nails to secure them. Finish the inside edges of the bar top with biscuits 1x2 glued on edge.



6

6. Cut and attach the bar molding

A. Make the bar molding. Pick out the saw deck with two steps of saw plywood is fit in the notch of the molding and keep it level. You'll want to cut the molding to width, from the first notch of the molding to its back edge, as shown. Later the end will be length of molding at a 45-degree angle.

B. Dry-fit the bar molding. On the bar top, use a combination square to draw 45-degree lines from the front corners. Take a piece of molding with one step and dry-fit it up to the front edge of the bar line up the molding and with the 45-degree mark. Snug the molding against a material block to make sure you have a tight corner. Then at the other end, carry the 45-degree line from the bar top over the molding, cut out end, and enter the piece to size. Install it by screwing through the plywood under notch with 24-inch screws. Make and cut the rear wing side pieces to suit long to overhang the back of the bar. Finish the back edges of the bar top by cutting a 1x2 to fit the open notches of the molding with a saw.

see how
it's done
Watch this step-by-step video of this project on
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Project 101
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7

7. Attach the foot rail

A. Attach the brackets. On the front wall, install an oil brace over the railing blocks, equidistant from each edge. Place the brackets on the wall and nail the blocks.

B. Install the foot rail. Slide the rail into the oil brace, place a cap on each end and run a set screw through the rail and into each cap. Fill the fastener holes on the bar with wood filler and caulk any openings. Then sand and paint the inside and outside of the walls and shelves. Seal the oak bar top with 230-grit paper, wipe it and the rail with a stain, and finish with a coat of polyurethane.





BUILT-IN *charm*

*When space is short,
it pays to put every
NOOK, CRANNY, and CORNER
to work. For proof,
look inside this 1946 Cape*

by DEBORAH TALOWSKY
photographs by TELA GUYAN
produced by COLETTA MCANULTY
styling by INGRID BUESS

specialized storage

LEFT: Cabinets bridge by a built-in and open shelves create an alcove for the kitchen's least used, so traffic flows around it. The tall unit on the right shows board games. RIGHT: The nook is capped by a cabinet with clear plastic fronts so that the kids can safely see their own places at the table.



worth owning is worth a place of honor, he is a painting, novel, clump of roses, or pair of shoes. Yet so many humans, possessions tend to gather on desks, counters, and closet floors, waiting forever for a spot of their own.

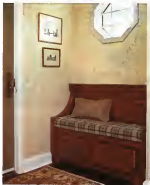
Which helps explain why the home of Ellis and Seth Leven—shared with four school-age girls, one schoolboy, and all their stuff—seems like a series of mini-museums.

"Games go in one cabinet," says Ellis, consulting a mental map of the built-on framing a livestock in her kitchen's sitting area. "Plastic cups and plates for the built-in cabinet at one end of the island, where they can reach there. Pops and pans are in cabinets with pull-outs." Even the porch over the livestock has been elevated, with open shelves devoted to collectables and the kids' artwork. "It makes me crazy," Ellis adds, "not to have places to put things."

The kids can forget dumping their schoolwork on the kitchen table, where it can mingle with coffee cups and yesterday's news. Assignments, premiums or slips, it all goes into shallow bins hung on the back of a cabinet door. As for the recycling, too, for paper, it's banished to a different room—and another cabinet. "When you have a lot of children, you can't have clutter everywhere," Ellis says, subtly overlooking that where clutter and children are concerned, her rule may actually be an exception.

On call is a model. Everywhere you look in the couple's well-proportioned 1946 Cape Cod-style house are storage ideas worth stealing, from drawers tucked under a built-in entry bench to a home-office cabinet that hides a charging station. Even the deck's customary row of wires has its own place, no surprise, where nobody can see it.

Situated on a tree-lined street in Chappaqua, New York, the modest two-bedroom house the Lessers bought in 1996 could have been a way station en route to ever-larger digs. But rather than dithering with the arrival of more kids, the couple decided to stop, adding here and there while maintaining what they had. "Each project was a function of having another child or



a place to perch, a mantel with presence

TOP: The Cape's classic facade was one reason the owners wanted to play AECOT. The built-in bench in the foyer just off the dining room offers storage for holiday linens as well as a spot to remove boots. The cherry table was finished with hand-painted scrolls. **OPPOSITE:** Scores with Habitat also funk the marble-tile display shelf; the overmantel cabinets emerged as if added prominence and a furniture-like look. The entire assembly was made from stock molding profiles and a MDF panel.





a desk that hides wires

ABOVE: Cherry built-ins line the home office along with a shelf/desk combo that conceals cords and outlets out of sight. **RIGHT:** Cabinet doors under the desk bring cords to provide access to the chase as needed.



specific needs," says their architect and interior designer, Carol J. W. Kurth, who organizes walls and niches the way developers look at vacant lots.

To merge old and new portions of the house, Kurth used the same trim colors and profiles throughout and added other traditional details. Saving for symmetry, she designed built-ins that rise to meet the crown molding, "which makes them look more integrated with the room. Moldings do not have to match exactly, but they need to be cohesive to tie it," she says.

By spreading out improvements over 10 years and four children, the couple avoided the time-crunched

decision making that often comes with whole-house remodels, while learning to use existing space efficiently.

During the first phase, Kurth opened up the kitchen and added a nook, alcove off to one side—away from foot traffic—by bridging two sets of cabinets with open shelves. She also added his-and-hers built-ins to the new master suite, framing the passageway from bed to bath.

More recently, Kurth ceded relative chaos in the 130-square-foot home office with wall-to-wall storage solutions, including a cabinet that hides the printer and a charging station. "In this case," Kurth says, "the door and window trim were matched to stained wood. We wanted the trim to be part of the built-ins, and sometimes a change from white to a darker color can have a dramatic effect." Ellis, who likes to hammer down steel the warm furnishings, says, "Now it's my favorite room in the house."

It is also a favorite piece of the built-ins' creator, woodworker Brian Clancy. Equipped with detailed drawings by Kurth and her colleague Tina Schaub, and his collection of vintage and digital-age equipment, Clancy converted cherry planks into desks, cabinets, drawers, and open shelves. He used contrasting woods to give the reddish-brown-backed shelves a bit more depth, and chairs, screws, clamps, and hand planes to distress the wood—a prescriptive measure when kids and pets are involved, Schaub explains.

Openings in the desktop allow wires to be fed into a hidden chase behind the built-ins. "I'm not a wire person," Ellis says—and, really, who is?

With projects like these, Clancy says, "I put all the pieces together to make sure it all fits up as it should. Then I break it all down and assemble it on-site." His customers, "The installation is the tricky part because you're dealing with walls that aren't square." In addition to solving the calamity to follow the wife's miscalculations, he uses big levels on all base units to compensate for uneven floors, then covers them with base and cap molding for a finished appearance.

Here, the designers "used every available inch," Clancy says, right up to the ribbon of space between a set of French doors and the ceiling. "So much symmetry and togetherness," he smiles happily, "is such a small space."

To capstone as a working niche in the new foyer, Kurth asked Clancy to build in a bench made with the same easy-care distressed cherry. A nook along the bottom ensures the bench won't store dust bunnies and lost marbles. Topped with a cushion and glass pillows, it



his-and-hers bookcases

TOP: Separate cabinets and shelves symmetrically frame the passageway to the bath in the master suite. They were modeled after the living room built-ins that came with the house. **RIGHT:**

may look like a place to sit down while removing your boots, but anyone who knows Ellis knows it's an access for two capacious drawers, one just for table linen.

After a partnership of 13 years, the house and its inhabitants continue to make adjustments. Kurth has been making sketches of the oldest daughter's bedroom, which is ripe for an egg-and-spoon battle as well as closet play a part. "It's the kind of house that does not have clutter because it has a lot of places to put things," Kurth says. And just, she points out, "it still feels like a Cape, with a scale that's very comfortable and soothing."

STYLING: LEE
PAUL T. FOR
NORTH CHANCE
91.9.7.135

MORE CLEVER storage

Capitalize on existing space by borrowing ideas from these seven smart built-ins

integral seating and storage >

Columns of open shelves with file-size cabinet bases flank a sofa platform with storage drawers. The waist-height cabinet drawers sit on and take the adjacent end panel and tubular metal were fitted into one side for a sleek, shipshape look. The plywood sides of the open shelves got a classic painted look with a 3 1/2" offset, then end cap moldings for the built-in to the rest of the room.



< snug sleeping alcove

A built-in sofa built-in bed with custom drawers maximizes a narrow space, enhancing hand-painted walls and ceiling. Green molding dresses up the interior space while hiding the front end framing.



> hardworking window seat

Custom size drawers in the sliding hanging files and lift wrap a bench. TIP: To ensure easy access to the items in the back of a deep bookish drawer, put clear wheels in front of the drawers. Or use all full and narrow drawers along the sides.



hideaway desk >

Tucked under a window in a hall off the kitchen, this built-in has flipper doors that slide out and swing round 180°. Sturdy drawers and sturdy partition walls that once telescoped doors can be closed and push in the telescopic wall before a workspace.



hutch-like focal point >

At a hallway's far end, this space was built out with airy open shelves and a cabinet with wood doors, brackets, and furniture-style feet. Giving the cabinet a dark stained-oak top and the open shelves an open-edge and simple bracket emphasizes the vintage look. Furniture feet



< under-the-stairs dresser

Deep drawers tucked under stairs provide storage for pet supplies and other sundries. These can be built just like an old-fashioned piece, with lower than glass-on wood panels and are finished with angled fronts that foot the eye.



enter our contest!

Win a \$100 gift card to the home improvement store of your choice. To enter, visit www.hgtv.com/contest. The contest ends 12/31/11.

< mini mudroom

One formerly empty closet, a compact mudroom was made possible by replacing open shelving with built-in and installing a recessed for a built-in bench. Cladding the built-in with beadboard makes this more durable than drywall and, clad with glassing panel, easier to keep clean of scuff marks.





18 big-impact upgrades, low-cost fixes, and time-saving shortcuts that the pros use—and now you can too

Pros are well versed in the complexities of their fields, of course. But their on-the-job everyday experience has also given them insights into the little tricks that deliver the biggest results: from adding affordable storage in the kitchen to enhancing the efficiency of your radiators. These techniques may be largely subconscious, the contractor, electrician, or architect may not even realize how valuable such gems are to regular DIYers like us, but we did. So read on for some of *This Old House*'s favorite been-there-learned-that bits of wisdom gleaned from some of the nation's top pros, including our own

BY JIM COYNE

STYLING: JESSICA FRIEDMAN; PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMES F. HARRIS



1. Arched passageway

PRO Stewart Davis, principal architect, CO&S, Austin, Tex. **SECRET** Convert a square or rectangular opening into an archway to call more attention to what lies behind. "An arch is a powerful design element because it has a pronounced center that turns whatever it frames into a focal point," says Davis. So whether it's a fireplace in the family room or the family room itself if that's your intent, highlight an arch as the ticket. Thanks to new kits, which include an elliptical template for creating a new header out of drywall, curved moldings for the top and a pair of side jacks, adding an arch is relatively easy and affordable for DIYers.

> **SMALL-SCALE,
BIG-IMPACT
UPGRADES**

2. Kitchen storage on a shoestring

PRO Joanne Hudson, kitchen designer and founder, Joanne Hudson Basics, Philadelphia

SECRET Make open shelving for everyday dishes out of butcher block countertop material. Sturdier than stock shelves sold at the home center, butcher block offers a chunky, rustic and look for a fraction of the price, says Hudson. Use a circular saw to rip a 25-inch-deep slab in half lengthwise, creating two 12½-inch-deep shelves. For a free-floating appearance, support the butcher block shelves on rounded steel rods anchored into your wall studs.

3. Distinctive doors

PRO David Logan, owner, Period Woodworking Co., Winchester, Va.

SECRET Adorn plain blocks to the base of your door casings. These ornamental wood trim blocks, installed where side casings bite into baseboard moldings, are thrifty, yet provide architectural style and give weight to your door openings, says Logan. Regardless of the profile you choose, be sure that the plinth block is about ½ inch wider than the casing and 1 inch taller than your baseboard. It should also stand proud of the baseboard and shoe molding that meet it. For simple DIY plinths made of poplar, use a plane to create a slight taper from the center of the block's face to the door.

4. Stock tile, restyled

PRO Nicholas Yankelovich, tile specialist and owner, Nicholas Tile Co., Conshohocken, Pa.

SECRET Add inexpensive oomph to a tiled bathroom wall or kitchen backsplash by turning simple square tiles into 45-degree angles to make a diamond design. For large areas of tile, such as in a shower enclosure, Yankelovich likes to install a square grid halfway up the wall, cap it with chair rail tile, then lay the same tile on an angle above the chair rail. It's a great way to



Ancher threaded steel rods about 2 1/2 inches into wall studs, and secure them with epoxy. Drill holes in the edge of the butcher block that match the diameter of the rods, and slide the shelves onto the rods.

get the most out of your materials, you get two tile looks for the price of one, he says.

5. Weighty windows

PRO Noem Aslam, TOH master carpenter

SECRET Give dimension to flat window casings by wrapping them with backband molding. "It's easy, and it

really enhances the depth and design of your casings," says Noem. A hallmark of vintage millwork, L-shaped backband molding, which cups the outer edge of the casing, also lends historical authenticity to newer homes. Choose your style from the many offerings at online molding retailers, or pick up a sample stock profile at the home center or a local lumberyard to save on shipping costs.

6. A tree for all seasons

PRO Harry Meisner, landscape designer, Young & Nussmeier, Wilton, Conn.

SECRET To give your yard a colorful accent during the winter, and pretty much every other time of the year, plant a Winter King hawthorn. In most regions of the country, the tree has clusters of white flowers in late spring, followed by glossy oval leaves in summer that turn to chartreuse, golden yellow, and burgundy as autumn unfolds. But it's the tree's silvery exfoliating bark and brilliant red berries that make it a standout in winter, when yards are dull. "It's one of the most versatile trees, so you get a lot of bang for your buck," says Meisner. At full maturity, expect the Winter King to grow 20 to 35 feet high and about the same width.

7. Trimmed-out newel

PRO Tom Sève, TOH general contractor

SECRET Embellish a plain, white-painted floor-style newel post by trimming it to square cap with molding in clear-finished cherry or oak. "A little detail, such as base cap or panel molding with a tapered profile, softens the severity of the square edge, and the two-tone effect with the warm wood gives the whole newel a more decorative look," says Sève. Meter the corners, glue their flat backs against the sides of the cap, and tack in place with finishing nails. For even more detail, skew the underside of the newel's 1½-top with panel molding as well. Just flip the molding upside down so that the wider part of the tapered profile butts against the underside of the 1½-top.



To create a newel post, install molding under the corners, secure with finishing nails, and sand or stain to match the casing.

>FREE OR LOW-COST FIX-UPS

8. Refinished locks and lifts

PRO Deon Kerr, window installer, Richmond, Va.

SECRET Strip paint from old window sash locks, lifts, and pulleys, then buff the metal to a sheen. "People are always amazed when they see that they already have such nice hardware," says Kerr. Once you've removed all the parts, soak them for up to two days in equal parts of degreaser, such as Simple Green, and ammonia. The paint should slough right off with little encouragement. Buff the surface using a grinder or drill/river fitted with a soft-bristle brush wheel for brass hardware or a hard-bristle one for other metals, such as cast iron. Finish by spraying the hardware with clear lacquer to prevent tarnishing.

9. Shrub saver

PRO Roger Cook, TOH landscape contractor

SECRET To furl out a top-heavy evergreen shrub, such as a yew or boxwood, stave away the hedge trimmer in favor of hand pruners, says Roger. The temptation is to clear off the top, but this just perpetuates the problem, creating denser foliage on the cut branches, which prevents sunlight from penetrating to the center of the plant. Instead, use a bypass pruner or loppers to surgically remove branches on the top and sides to let in light. Cut back either to the inflection point of two branches, just above a growth node, or to the base of the shrub. Start in late winter or early spring by making four to five softball-sized holes in the short bare top; your shrub may look a bit like Swiss cheese, but by next spring it will fill out more evenly from the base to the top.



10. Customized cans

PRO Stan Pomeranz, lighting designer, Raleigh, N.C.

SECRET Mixie your room and everyone in it look better by retrofitting your existing recessed lights, says Pomeranz. Simply swap the white or black plastic baffle that lines the wall of each can for a metallic finish reflector cone, and the dim floodlight for a 40-watt Philips Halogen bulb. Pomeranz favors the bulb for its energy efficiency and the warm glow it casts, especially when teamed with a reflector cone. The overall effect is soft, ambient light.

11. Front door in focus

PRO John Crosby Freeman, color specialist, Norristown, Pa.

SECRET To boost your home's curb appeal, repaint just the casing that surrounds your front door. Most people use the same color for all their trim, but you can create a gentle transition from the siding to the door by choosing a hue for the casing that's closer to your home's body color. This, in turn, helps draw the eye to the entry once you're home. And as a bonus, it's the perfect casing color for the paint strip from which you originally selected your

home's body color. Simply pick a slightly darker or lighter shade.

12. Easy finish repair

PRO Michael Dreschner, wood-finishing expert, Fayetteville, Wash.

SECRET Head to the medicine cabinet, not the workshop, when a clear finish on a wood surface is chipped. As long as the underlying stain color is intact, you can usually fill the ding with a few drops of clear nail polish, says Dreschner. After the polish dries, sand the repair flat with 600-grit paper. To restore the sheen on satin finishes, rub with 0000 steel wool and paste wax; for gloss, use a soft cloth and oil polish, such as Turtle Wax Polishing Compound and Scratch Remover.

13. Performance-enhanced radiator

PRO Richard Tethewey, TGH plumbing and heating expert

SECRET Hook up a thermostatic valve on a steam or hot water radiator to stop rooms from overheating and wasting energy, says Richard. The device, which allows you to divide a whole-house system into climate-controlled micro-zones, consists of two parts: a

valve that opens and closes to regulate the flow of steam to an individual radiator, and a thermostat with a built-in sensor that controls the valve based on the temperature you set for the room. Installing a thermostatic valve on a one-pipe radiator is an easy DIY job, but call a pro if you have a two-pipe system.

14. Cleaner windows

PRO Brent Weingard, owner, Expert Window Cleaners, New York City

SECRET To remove grime on double-paned windows, cut a metal-frame squeegee so that it fits a pane, says Weingard. Take out the rubber blade, and use a hacksaw to trim the metal channel 1/4 inch narrower than the pane. With a utility knife, cut the blade into the pane's full width. Fit the blade into the channel so that it projects 1/4 inch at each end. As with any window-spritz wipe, use a sponge or a microfiber cloth, then use the squeegee. "Most people skip the sponge part, but that's the only way to really dislodge the dirt," says Weingard.

>TIME- AND MONEY-SAVING SHORTCUTS

15. Plaster look for less

PRO Jesse Fell, former technical director, Northern California Drywall Contractors Assn.

SECRET Skim-coat smooth drywall to give it the depth and appearance of plaster without the expense and labor of the real deal. For painted walls, Fell first preps the surface with a primer/sealer such as Bulls Eye 1-2-3, then rolls on a coat of homemade all-purpose joint compound, just as he would if he were plastering. Taped the right consistency for the compound, stir in water until the slurry is the thickness of soupy pancake batter. While the rolled compound is still wet, Fell uses a wide



17. Firebox face-lift

PRO Mark Schaub, fireplace expert and owner, Chimney Savers, Hillsborough, N.J.

SECRET Don't scrub your soot-stained firebox—refinish it using matte-black heat-resistant spray paint. "For a few bucks and about five minutes of your time, you can change the look of a fireplace," says Schaub, who uses the method on fireboxes lined with light-colored refractory brick, the type you find with most prefab fireplace inserts. Be sure to use paint that's specifically formulated for high-heat applications, such as Krylon Contractor Firebox, which can also be used to remove a rusty or paint-chipped metal fireplace screen.

taping knife to smooth and remove all but a thin layer on the wall. By the next morning, the walls will be ready for a light sanding, primer, and paint. And there won't be a trace of that porous, pearly look on the surface anymore.

16. Low-mess wiring

PRO William Hyman, electrical contractor and old-house wiring specialist, Silver Spring, Md.

SECRET Reduce the amount of wall and ceiling repair that's typically required when adding overhead outlets for new light fixtures by installing crown molding at the same time. Choose your molding profile, preferably one made from hollow foam, this type doesn't require nails for installation and creates a channel in which to hide wiring. Cut any holes you need to fish wire to the new fixture outlet in the space that will be covered by the molding. For instance, if you want to choose a 5-inch or bigger profile, you would cut holes in the wall approximately 3 1/2 inches from the ceiling, then obscure them and the wiring itself with molding, says Hyman.

18. No-sweat paint prep

PRO Roger Simon, housepainter, Fort Washington, Pa.

SECRET Don't use a chemical stripper to remove chipped, alligatored, or otherwise marred paint on porch posts, first-floor door and window casings, and other high-visibility exterior surfaces. Instead, simply skim it with a coat of wood filler, such as Elmer's Interior/Exterior Carpenter's Wood Filler, to obscure defects and create a smooth surface on which to apply glossy paint. Skim it, seal it, scrape, loose paint (be sure to wear a respirator to guard against lead dust), prime, skim with filler, sand, prime again, top with your finish coat of paint. ■



READ THIS BEFORE YOU FINISH YOUR BASEMENT



THE LAYOUT PUZZLE: WHERE TO BEGIN

Put the main working area in a spot that gets the best natural light, to draw people in. Synthetic areas need a window for ingress, so they'll need to be located at all the perimeter. The TV viewing zone can be in a darker spot to reduce glare and create a more theater feel. Up there, avoid floor joists as an area you can access without crossing in front of the TV.



Even if it's currently cold concrete and crammed with boxes of off-season chads, the lowest floor of your home probably has loads of potential. Treat it just as you would any of the rooms aboveground, and it just became the most popular spot in the house—for a lot less cash than adding on. Here's our bottom-line advice for turning this underutilized space into a place you'll be eager to spend time in.

BY JEANNE HUBER • ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARK MATCHO

WHAT TO INSPECT (AND FIX) BEFORE YOU START

- **Test for moisture** by taping 2-foot squares of at least a sheet of plastic to the floor and walls. Wait a couple of weeks. If water spots are forming, it's a sign you'll need to seal the walls and floor. If no signs of water, you can skip your basement remediation budgeting.
- **Use an owl probe** for rot and insect damage. It has a probe, wire and fiber-optic light that glows and won't break windows.
- **Check floor joists** for sagging by standing in the center of the room and lifting with one hand. If the joists are in good shape, you can skip the joist repair. If not, you'll need to hire a professional to fix them.
- **Have a pro check fuel-burning equipment** to make sure it's safe. If it's not, you'll need to hire a professional to fix it.

IF YOU'RE ADDING A BATH

A few sampling guidelines will make it functional and eye-catching.



1. **Go for light-reflecting finishes.** Extra moisture is the last thing a basement needs. Add a humidistat to your bath to prevent moisture backups into below-grade sinks or tubs.
2. **Don't risk an overflow.** Have a plumber install a backflow prevention valve on your most desirable to prevent backups into below-grade sinks or tubs.
3. **Get rid of humidity.** Extra moisture is the last thing a basement needs. Add a humidistat to your bath to prevent moisture backups into below-grade sinks or tubs.
4. **Minimize pipe runs.** Here, the sink tub and toilet should share the same wall, which simplifies plumbing, maintenance and keeps costs down.
5. **Handle wastewater properly.** A full tank-toilet vent is a sewage ejector system with a tank and pump. For small bathrooms, consider a wastewater tank whose compact tank can handle the sink and toilet.



SAVE SPACE FOR PLAY

Game tables set up a lot of square footage. For a small pool table (36 feet by 7 feet), you need a clear space at least 114 feet wide by 144 feet long to play comfortably—if you buy the shortest table that is. A four-quarter 10-foot pool table (48 feet by 9 feet) or a 5 by 9 Ping-Pong table needs even more room. Unless you're positive you'll use it, consider shopping a single activity table.

► An all-purpose versatile can host several people for crafts, puzzles, board games, and much more—and designers say it's often a better draw for crowds than a game table.

► Today's video games involve actual physical activity, not just sitting with a joystick. Check your gaming platform for recommended clearance around and above the console. (No one should break a bone playing a virtual version of a sport.)

► Still, to wall-sport is a good idea to avoid sound as a play area. Opt for synthetic fibers that resist mold and mildew.

MAKE ROOM FOR FOOD



You don't need a full kitchen. But you'll get plenty of mileage from a mini fridge for beverages, a countertop sink, and a microwave for heating leftovers or making popcorn for movie nights. Keep a tray handy for stacking and inspecting dirty dishes upstairs.

FOUR HANDY THINGS TO HAVE AROUND WHEN IT'S DONE

1. **A rechargeable portable light.** Ideal in an early-to-bed spot in case of power outage. One Candelis Glow rechargeable light: \$40 for a set of two, two.com
2. **A cell phone signal booster** so that you can take and make calls belowgrade. We Exceed 3330: \$299 anywhere.com
3. **A wireless network extender** so that you can take your laptop downstairs. Netgear Universal Wi-Fi Range Extender: \$80 bestbuy.com
4. **A wet/dry hand vacuum** in case of small spills or washing machine malfunctions. Hoover Wet/Dry Cordless Hand Vacuum: \$30 walmart.com



ALL ABOUT

Wallpaper

Liven up your walls with patterns, colors, and textures that you'll never get from a paintbrush or roller. The experts at TOH tell you how. **By Laura Fisher Kaiser**

Wallpaper is like a shot of Botox for a tired-looking room. Sure, paint will perk it up, but paper adds more than just color; it gives walls character, dimension, and pattern.

Wallpaper has colored American homes since colonial times, but after its heyday in the early 1900s, it took a hard time overcoming misassociation as something only for clunky-loving grandmas or high-end designers. These days, thanks in part to buying opportunities on the Internet, homeowners are discovering an exciting world of sophisticated patterns, improved materials, and easy installation methods. You can choose from beautiful papers made in the 18th-century manner, as well as 21st-century innovations, which are sheets of fused fibers that are better to hang—and to remove.

In these pages, we guide you through the many types of wallpaper—including peel-and-stick, vinyls, murals, nonwovens, and grasscloth—and the essentials of buying and caring for them. Plus, you'll find useful tips on selecting a pattern, estimating how much to buy, and proper hanging technique. Once you see what paper can do for drab walls, you may reach for the paste rather than a brush the next time you need to freshen up a room.

Wallpaper history

Paper has been a go-to wall covering for more than 500 years.



1400 German cabinetmaker's workshop is hung in Cambridge, England.



1640s Wealthy gut worms and luxury are featured in wallpaper in England.



1700s First American-made wallpaper is produced in New York City.



1840s Machine-printing makes wallpaper more widely available and affordable.



1900s German chemist Ferdinand Sauerbruch invents premium wallpaper paste.



1940s Synthetic vinyl wallpaper hits the market.



1950s Pressure-sensitive adhesive lets you peel and stick paper without water.



1960s Removable peel-and-stick papers debut.



2001 Removable, stripable, nonwovens hit the market.

Striped papers, such as this one, lend up in bedrooms that are well-ventilated. **Shower Glass/Glass** is a glass-enclosed vinyl and fabric backing. \$250 for a 10-square-foot roll. www.wallpaper.com for details.

VITALS

What's it cost? Prefabricated wallpaper is about \$40 to \$250 a roll, depending on the design, material and square footage. Designer papers typically require custom orders, run as high as \$500 a roll.



DIY or hire a pro? Nonwoven and pressure-sensitive wallpaper are homeowner-friendly. Hire a pro if a room's corners have trouble with the paper or if you're high-end. Painting and decorating contractors charge \$30 to \$50 to hang a roll. Removing old paper is usually a separate expense.

Does it hold up? That depends on the paper type and how much sunlight, moisture and wear it gets. Most will last 25 years, but the brand is simple to remove. Papered walls you can update more often.

How to clean? Use warm water and white vinegar to clean wallpaper. Keep wallpaper fresh by vacuuming it.

Wallpaper types

Papers are defined by what they're made of and their surface treatment, both of which affect how they look and wear

NONWOVEN

This stable, porous material, made of synthetic and paper fibers glued and pressed together, can be installed by or removed with vinyl, metallic foil, grasscloth or textured or book-matched papers (shown). Easy to hang and strip (shown). Product No. 605 \$6477 \$145 for a 56-square-foot roll; www.wallcovering.com for dealers

GRASSCLOTH

Strips of real grass, woven into sheets and backed with either paper, fabric, or nonwoven material, have a natural warmth and texture. Best for low-traffic areas (shown). Features in Clear unpaper \$57 for a 72-square-foot roll; www.wallcovering.com for dealers

EMBOSSED

Pattern patterns pressed into vinyl or paper help to mask damage or uneven surfaces and protect walls that get bumped (shown). Features in Teak vinyl non-paper backing. \$75 for a 56-square-foot roll; www.wallcovering.com

VINYL

Durable sheets of rubbery plastic, designed to a fabric paper or nonwoven backing, stand up to scrubbing, scuffs, and splashes. Good for hallways and bedrooms (shown). Features in Copper Bronze, in a fabric backing. \$84 for a 56-square-foot roll; www.wallcovering.com for dealers

METALLIC

Pink and metallic flares, such as Mylar, are essential in either paper or nonwoven backings. Metallics add shine to small spaces, though they tend to highlight wall flaws (shown). Features in White and Silver, embossed like copper. \$240 for a 63-square-foot roll; www.wallcovering.com for dealers

PAPER

The original it can be left as is or coated with a thin vinyl or acrylic film for better stain and moisture resistance. Uncoated papers are delicate and difficult to strip (shown). Features in Green and Sage with vinyl lining. \$138 for a 63-square-foot roll; www.wallcovering.com for dealers

Adhesive options

WHEAT PASTE The traditional choice. You or your pro mix a flour-based powder with water and apply it to the paper's backing. Good for historic uncoated papers and grasscloth.
PREPARED VINYL Seals in bubbles, ready to apply. Close proximity work

with most wallpaper types. Some metallics, vinyls, and vintage papers require a deep-based primer.
PREPASTED No worries about uneven coverage or stained spots; it's factory applied. Activate the glue by soaking the paper briefly in warm

water, and it's ready to trim.
POD-AND-STICK Does everything the dry-grip application or soaking that are avoided with wet-pasted papers. To reproduce in new rooms, these vinyl coverings pull them off the wall like giant decals.

Which paper, where?

Choose a type and pattern to match a room's style and use

1 > kitchens

Why skip the grout, moisture and water-damage issues that stained paper or grasscloth. Here, a solid-neutral tone with a subtle texture makes the white cabinets pop (shown). Granite-look vinyl on paper backing. \$55 for a 63-square-foot roll; www.wallcovering.com for dealers

2 > bathrooms

Added pop for bath privs, such as this bathroom that might double as a large closet. Nonwoven, paired with a shiny metallic adhesive, is the smart choice because they're breathable. Just be sure to always turn the bath fan to blow away steam. Similar to shown. White vinyl on Aquat nonwoven. \$72 for a 56-square-foot roll; www.wallcovering.com for dealers

3 > entry halls

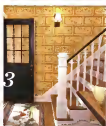
Two good choices for these busy areas are a book-matched vinyl, which shrugs off bumps and scuffs, and nonwovens, which are easily stripped if damaged. The foliated, reproduction wallpaper shown here is as popular as any vinyl. 20th-century motifs because you could not find damaged areas and patch in individual "stones" (shown). Marble-finish uncoated paper. \$465 for a 51-square-foot roll; www.wallcovering.com

4 > dining rooms

Depending on the room's style and durability you want wallpaper as a continuous background, as a contrasting accent or just one wall or above a chair rail as shown here. Because durability is less of a concern here, consider a delicate flaked or broken paper. Similar to shown. Real Marbled Danish nonwoven. \$45 for a 56-square-foot roll; www.wallcovering.com

5 > bedrooms

No worries about water here, so this is a good place for grasscloth and vintage book-matched papers. If you want a serene effect, go with subtle patterns and cool or earthy colors. Similar to shown. Grass wallpaper in Green on a paper backing. \$64 for a 72-square-foot roll; www.wallcovering.com



what do you want to know all about?
We like you the most: greater home options in July's master bedroom tour. Find ideas at www.wallcovering.com

Pick your pattern

Modern or vintage? Damask or stripe? There's a paper to work with your taste and budget

1> Stained birds

Highlight: The rich coffee and gold-bermud print on paper with a glossy coating needs no mention of its top sellers.
Stain: Sanyo in Metallic on Dark Brown.
Price: \$120 for a 60-square-foot roll; thewallpaper.com for dealers.

2> Metallic leaves

Highlight: Traditional means technology with its vintage look-toile printed on a nonwoven sheet.
Stain: Product No. 263 45700.
Price: \$45 for a 56-square-foot roll; thewallpaper.com for dealers.

3> Wild grasses

Highlight: Two metallic black-printed grasses with a paper backing and a water-based ink.
Stain: Grasses in Blue.
Price: \$252 for a 72-square-foot roll; thewallpaper.com for dealers.

4> Ginkgo leaves

Highlight: Metallic ink on paper with a vinyl coating gives these leaf silhouettes a shiny, blunder-entire appearance.
Stain: Leaves.
Price: \$146 for a 64-square-foot roll; thewallpaper.com for dealers.

5> Floral damask

Highlight: Easy-to-apply patterns like this print on paper with an acrylic coating have been in vogue since the 1960s.
Stain: Blue.
Price: \$136 for a 63-square-foot roll; thewallpaper.com for dealers.

6> Tidy stripes

Highlight: This paper with an acrylic coating can be hung horizontally or vertically for a contemporary or traditional look.
Stain: River 1 Stripe.
Price: \$136 for a 63-square-foot roll; thewallpaper.com for dealers.

7> Textured leaf

Highlight: The outlines of real magnolia leaves are laminated onto paper.
Stain: Textured Leaves.
Price: \$160 for a 72-square-foot roll; thewallpaper.com for dealers.

8> Mod branches

Highlight: This temporary repositionable peel-and-stick vinyl is ideal for renters and brand followers.
Stain: Like Spanish Moss.
Price: \$85 for a 56-square-foot roll; tempapertape.com



9> Golden peony

Highlight: This heavy Bondi embossed vinyl with a paper backing, washable and removable.
Stain: Metamora.
Price: \$216 for a 63-square-foot roll; thewallpaper.com for dealers.

10> Silvery chintz

Highlight: This nonwoven has a blue and white floral design printed in metallic ink.
Stain: Metallic Floral Fantasy.
Price: \$45 for a 60-square-foot roll; thewallpaper.com for dealers.

11> Deco glam

Highlight: The bold Art Deco pattern embossed onto vinyl with a paper backing repeats every 12 1/2 inches.
Stain: Glamour in Black & White.
Price: \$75 for a 56-square-foot roll; grahndesign.com

12> Arts and Crafts

Highlight: An early 19th-century silk-screened nonwoven paper, captures the early 1900s Craftsman style.
Stain: Baby's Breasts.
Price: \$77 for a 34-square-foot roll; bradbury.com

13> Colonial vine

Highlight: This early 19th-century silk-screened nonwoven paper, captures the early 1900s Colonial style.
Stain: Concord Grove and Vine.
Price: \$160 for a 63-square-foot roll; edelapphanging.com

14> Lacy lattice

Highlight: Block printing with old-fashioned machinery gives this hand-screened paper its traditional look.
Stain: Toile Treille.
Price: \$245 for a 67-square-foot roll; laurieball.com

PAPERS WITH PEDIGREE

Historic wallpapers aren't found just in museums or old houses. They're still being made today for anyone who wants an authentic piece of the past. These papers, from the likes of Adelphi Paper Hangings, Farrow & Ball and Bradbury & Bradbury Art Wallpapers, are silk-screened or block printed—by hand or via mechanized rollers—to re-create the look and feel of coverings that date as far back as the 1700s. Such accuracy doesn't come cheap: Making these heritage papers is a slow labor-intensive process and hanging them usually requires a skilled professional. But once it's done, it's easy to see why their rich colors and designs have maintained their appeal over the centuries.

Bradbury & Bradbury prints its patterns, such as the Arts and Crafts-style Lacy Lattice and Deco Glamour (see opposite), on silk-screened paper (30" wide), using silk screens and for touch-ups hand painting.



HANG IT RIGHT

THESE ARE THE HALLMARKS
OF A JOB WELL DONE

• **Smooth walls.** Fill nail heads, ridges, and cracks, then sand flush, or hang thick white liner paper. Heavily rough surfaces may need bridging liners. Run both liners on the wall horizontally.

• **Balanced layout.** Make a plan that keeps patterns intact next to doors, windows, and the ceiling. Helixe strip against the wall to determine its best top-to-bottom position. Then mark out on the wall where each strip will fall. Adjust the layout from side to side as needed. At the seams, make sure patterns, particularly those at eye level, are properly aligned.

• **Straight stripes.** Mark the starting line within plumb bob or level, and check the edge of each strip whenever you turn a corner.

• **No bubbles or wrinkles.** Flatten freshly installed paper with a plastic smoothing tool, not a brush.

• **Tight, buried seams.** Edges that overlap leave bumps. To get tight seams, push strips together, then go over them lightly with a smoothing tool, taking care not to squeeze adhesive out of the seam. Liner paper halves seams stay tight and flat.

• **Wrapped outside corners.** To prevent peeling, wrap paper over projections, such as a chime or bumpout, so that seams end at least 6 inches from outside corners.

• **Tidy inside corners.** Cut the wallpaper strips so that about 1/4 inch covers the adjacent wall. Butt the edge of the next strip tight into the corner, so an overlap here is acceptable.



Aligning patterns from strip to strip helps hide seams. Brown Linen's Linen in Black or Ruby Blue, emulsion, \$45 for a 56-square-foot roll; grahambrown.com



Shopping help

Browse patterns on manufacturers' websites, then order samples, rolls, and overstock lots to find the paper's texture and test its color in your home.

Brown Linen's roll directly to the publication. Others refer you to third-party retailers: American Wallpaper (AmericanWallpaper.com), Interior Design Showcase or paint shops, such as Sherwin-Williams.

Big box stores, like Lowes, send The Home Depot, sell wallpaper in stores but put the lion's share of their offerings online. Target sells only vinyls online.

Most sites provide interactive software that allows you to visualize how a paper will look in your walls and to calculate how much you'll need. Wallpaper roll vary in width and length, so you have to find the square footage of each roll in order to compare prices and buy the right amount.

Healthy choices

In response to concerns about indoor air quality, wallpaper companies now offer products and manufacturing methods that are freer of layover large—and the planet. Here are some things to look for:

• **Air-free coatings.** These replace vinyl coatings, which off-gas VOCs and plasticizers and may contain trace amounts of heavy metals, such as lead and cadmium.

• **Water-based inks.** Oil-based ones contain VOCs.

• **Greens and certifications.** This means that a paper or adhesive has been lab tested and shown to have little or no formaldehyde, VOCs, nitrogen particles, heavy metals, or toxic additives. Some walls do meet GreenGuard's stringent standards.

Fresh uses for paper

It's a lively accent on doors, stairs, furniture, and more

• room within a room

An eye-catching practice patch of wall is the design to a portion of a room for a distinct look. Here it's a home office for computing as a bedroom. Similar treatment: Lucerne's Ocean Memories, \$45 for a 56-square-foot roll; grahambrown.com



• easy waistcoat

Paper beneath a chair rail creates low-cost waistcoat. Embossed paper with a high-contrast, 3D effect, such as the image, is ideal to shape. Image in Black and White, embossed paper with a vinyl coating, \$50 for a 56-square-foot roll; grahambrown.com

learn from a pro

See how to hang wallpaper the right way at diywallpaper.com/journal2012



• panel insert

Highlight a recessed door panel with a roll of vinyl strip. Choose a bold pattern for multiple panels. Image: Brown, Family Tree II, Patterned wallpaper, \$120 for a 52-square-foot roll; homeliving.com for dealers

• colorful walk-up

Painted stairs draw attention to this window seat and feature. This stair design is one of many vinyl staircases available from Brown's Paperie. Standard to choose. The Brown's Paperie, uncoated paper, \$245 for a 57-square-foot roll; brownpaperie.com



• bright backdrop

Paper under a glass front cabinet or open shelving adds a backdrop that highlights the contents. Similar to others: Treasures of the Paperie, vinyl with a vinyl coating, \$25 for a 52-square-foot roll; brownpaperie.com for dealers



How much to buy

Determine the square footage of your walls, and subtract any double doors or large window openings. Divide this number by the roll's square footage to get the yield factor. This factor accounts for the waste, which increases as the pattern repeat gets bigger.

$$\left(\frac{\text{TOTAL WALL SURFACE}}{\text{CEILING HEIGHT}} \right) \times \left(\frac{\text{WALL HEIGHT}}{\text{PATTERN REPEAT}} \right) = \left(\frac{\text{WIDEXHEIGHT}}{\text{PATTERN REPEAT}} \right) \times \left(\frac{\text{SQUARE FEET IN ROLL}}{\text{YIELD FACTOR}} \right) = \text{NUMBER OF ROLLS TO ORDER}$$

PATTERN REPEAT	YIELD FACTOR
8-Inches	83
9-Inches	75
10-Inches	67
12-Inches	60

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inside

CABINET REUSE

SPLIT TREE

BLOCKED VENT

MORE



29
tips, tricks, and
answers to
your home
improvement
questions

Q How can I determine the diameter of an installed drainpipe? A tape measure just won't work. —ALUMI WOLKOW, DENVÉR, CO.

A For spot-on accuracy, old-fashioned metalworking calipers, like the ones shown here, are just the ticket. Two types that work: outside calipers (top) and spring-action calipers (right). After measuring the inside diameter of the pipe in question, flip the legs against the pipe's wall. Then use a steel rule to measure the distance between the tips. Done! In the future, these tools are also invaluable to woodworkers, who use them to measure details when working on a lathe. —THE EDITOR

PHOTOGRAPH BY
JOE PICA

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→ Our cast of veteran experts



TOM SILVA
Senior Contributor



NORM ABRAM
House Carpenter



RICHARD TRETHEWEY
Plumbing and Heating Expert



ROGER COOK
Cabinet-Correctionist



KEVIN O'CONNOR
Host

We'd like to remove and reuse some cabinets in our 1958 house, but contractors tell us it would be difficult because of the way the cabinets were built. Can that be true?

—MARK RUSSELL, SANTA ANA, CALIF.

While it's not possible to salvage an entire cabinet, Norm Abram says to consider saving the doors and drawers and installing them into new cabinetry.



Norm Abram replies: Yes, it's true. In older houses like yours, cabinets were often "stick built," constructed in place, one piece at a time, using little more than handshaping and glue. You can usually spot this type of construction by peering inside a cabinet. If there's no back—if you see a wall instead of wood—then you're likely to run into trouble.

Unlike modern, shop-built cabinets, which are made up of individual boxes, one-built cabinets are essentially one complete unit. So before you go through all the trouble of trying to salvage one, make sure you have either a place to put the cabinet or a way to modify it to fit the new location.

Now, you might be lucky and have cabinets that come out in one piece. But more often than not, the only things you'll be able to salvage are the doors, drawer fronts, and drawer boxes. Here's one way to put those pieces to use: Build new cabinets boxes for them to fit into.

Q WIRES AND INSULATION
Is it okay for me to lay insulation on top of the wiring? *Bruce wires do my effort?*

—CONNIEFRISH, PITTSBURGH

PHOTO OF TOM SILVA: GUY LAWRENCE; PHOTO OF NORM ABRAM: GUY LAWRENCE; PHOTO OF RICHARD TRETHEWEY: GUY LAWRENCE; PHOTO OF ROGER COOK: GUY LAWRENCE; PHOTO OF KEVIN O'CONNOR: GUY LAWRENCE

Kevin O'Connor replies: Code books refer to wires by its generic name: Type NM (nonmetallic) cable, which is sheathed in PVC. NM-B is what most houses are wired with these days; the B indicates a heat rating of 194 degrees F.

Greg Gross, a senior technical staff member at the International Code Council, says that laying an insulation over your cables should be okay. "Type NM-B wiring is designed to get buried in walls and covered with insulation."

There's an exception, however: When two or more of these cables are bundled together—in direct contact—the heat buildup generated by an electric current can degrade or melt the insulation and, ultimately, cause a fire. So if you see any bundled cables, Gross says to find out from your local code official whether it's safe to cover them.

Q DEALING WITH TREE DAMAGE

Recently I noticed a squirrel on our maple tree taking the frozen sap that had seeped out of a large crack in the trunk. I don't mind the squirrel, but is my tree okay?

—LEW HOLLINGER, COLLEGE POINT, NY

Roger Cook replies: Your Norway maple does not look good at all. Apart from the crack, I see from the other photos you sent that it has several ring cracks where leaden branches off the trunk. These are prone to rot and are likely to split.

If it were a red maple or sugar maple and you really wanted to save it, a certified arborist could put bolts through the trunk to prevent further splitting and perhaps tie the main branches together with a cable to prevent more splits. But

WHAT IS IT?



A— Dust saw

B— Template for installing stone components

C— Mask for spray painting

D— Grout

PHOTO: ANDREW SEARNS/ISTOCK



Saps rising out of the split in this Norway maple is a sign that the tree is falling and should be taken down. A more substantial tree might be worth saving.

Norway maples are an invasive, aggressively short-lived species, so when one develops these conditions, it isn't worth saving. Cut it down.

Q BLOCKED RIDGE VENTS

Last winter we had so much snow that the ridge vents on my roof had been buried. I'd like to stay off the roof. Is there a way to clear blocked vents from inside the attic?

—JOY THOMAN, WOODBURY, CONN.

Tom Silva replies: Blocked vents in the winter are bad news because they allow heat to build up in the attic, which encourages snow melt and ice dams. It wouldn't worry too much if the vents are blocked for only a few days, but any longer than that isn't good.

Unfortunately, I'm not aware of anything you can do to clear ridge vents from the inside. One guy I know, faced with the same problem as yours, went into his attic and fired up a backpack leaf blower, loosening the snow. Didn't work.

Q COOLAIR FROM HEATING DUCTS

When my furnace starts up, cool air blows out of the vents in the bedrooms—the rooms farthest from the furnace—before warm air shows up. Is there any way to prevent this?

—THOMAS HENRY PUGH, SAUVILLE, MISS.

Richard Trethewey replies: Regrettably, there are not thermos bottles. You can't stop the air that's rising in them from cooling down when the furnace is off. But there are ways to minimize the effect.

First, slow the cooling by insulating the supply ductwork. This is especially important anywhere the

ducts run through unheated spaces, such as attic or crawl space, which can rob air of 10 to 50 percent of its warmth. The Department of Energy recommends wrapping exposed ducts in R-6 insulation, with a vapor barrier on the outside and foil tape over the seams.

Also, have an HVAC contractor take a look at the heating capacity of your system. An efficient furnace will heat quickly, then shut off quickly, lengthening the intervals between heating cycles when air cools and cools off in the ducts.

If your furnace is more than about 12 years old, it probably makes sense to get a new, more efficient one, along with an air handler fitted with a variable speed blower motor. These newer systems, properly sized, heat up slowly and have fans that start at a low speed. They push cool air out of the ducts so slowly that you might not even notice it. Then they ramp up to a higher speed when the ducts are full of warmed air.

If you already have such a system, your contractor can probably make adjustments to reduce that initial slug of chilly air. But if he can't and your furnace is efficient and working fine, ask a local painter a variable-speed motor in your rooming blower. That would give you the benefit of a slow-start fan for much less than the cost of a new heating system.

send your questions to ask oldhouse

go to: askoldhouse.com/asktab
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1. Only do a complete job by sealing and insulating the entire system. Partially sealing one end and leaving the other open will only make the system less efficient. 2. The volume of conditioned air in the system is reduced, so the system will have to work harder to maintain the same temperature.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH



A temporary patch of putty can be fixed with a patch from the same material.

How do you repair vinyl flooring? Ours tore when we moved out an old refrigerator.

—CAROLLENE MURKIN

Tom Silva replies: Short-vinyl flooring is durable but not indestructible. It can tear, as you know, or be sliced open if you drop a knife on it. Fortunately, vinyl repairs are easy enough to make and, if done correctly, nearly invisible. You just need a piece of the same flooring to serve as a patch. If

you're lucky, the installer left some scraps behind. If he didn't, you can "harvest" a replacement piece from beneath an appliance or another out-of-the-way spot.

Most short-vinyl floors these days are glued only at the edges, which makes it easy to cut out the damage and harvest a patch. But if the entire floor is glued down, you'll need a stiff putty knife or an oscillating tool with a scraper blade to lift these pieces.

Your patch may have a new sheen, but that will fade over time to match the surrounding flooring.

STEP-BY-STEP

Patch a vinyl floor

1. Cut out the patch

To do patch 1, it's important to cut the patch "in" or "out" of the damaged area. Whether your patch is coming from a scrap piece or cut from the floor, place a utility knife on the edge of the pattern and lift the blade slightly—about 5 degrees—away from the corner of the patch. Line up the knife square with the edge of the pattern and at a speed, then pull the blade. Repeat on all sides, then pull the patch free.

2. Remove the damage

After the patch is cut, the damaged area will be visible. Use a utility knife and secure the sides with masking tape. Interlocking the same 5-degree bevel, use the patch as a guide in your cut through the masking tape and existing flooring. Lift out the damaged area and separate it from the patch.

3. Glue down the edges

Assuming the flooring is glued only at the perimeter, you'll need a vinyl flooring adhesive to secure the edges of the area to be patched. Lift up the cut edges and use a putty knife to spread a 1-inch-wide band of adhesive under the flooring on one side at a time. Wipe away any excess for the adhesive to become tacky, then press the edges onto the glue with a roller.



4. Butter the patch

Protect the flooring near the patch with newspaper or plastic. Spread the adhesive on the back of the patch using a 1/4-inch V-notch trowel (shown) or a paint roller filled with a 1/4-inch nap roller.

5. Install the patch

Wipe the joint where the patch meets the floor with a dry cloth. Then press the patch firmly onto the floor. Work from the center of the patch to the edges with the roller. Use a damp rag to wipe away any adhesive that seeps out.

6. Seal the joints

Fill the joint where the patch meets the floor with bead of seam sealer, a type of glue. Wipe up the excess with a damp rag, and let the 1/2-inch seam dry for 24 hours before walking on the patch.



Norm's tricks of the trade

Q

In my house there's no casing around the windows; the jambs are just covered with drywall. I'd like to dress up the openings with wood trim. Any advice?

—ED DUNFORD, BRANFORD, CT

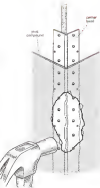


Q Why do you sometimes use a utility knife instead of a pencil when marking a outline?

—COLLETTE LESAUT, WINTERHILL, OHIO

A I reach for a sharp utility knife when my outline will not have to be very precise. Scoring wood with a sharp blade is a lot more accurate than any line I can draw with a pencil.

I find this scoring trick most useful when marking out the shallow recesses for door hinges, latch plates, or strikes. Just set each piece of hardware in place and guide the knife blade around them. Then, with the hardware removed, you simply fit the chisel blade into each cut and tap the blade to the desired depth before chiseling out the mortise. Because the chisel guides the tip of the chisel, the mortise edges stay nice and straight. ■



A The first thing you have to do is remove the metal corner beads that cover the edges where the wall and jamb meet. If you don't, the new jambs and casing won't sit flat.

The trick to removing a corner bead is to give it a few sharp taps with a hammer up and down its length. That usually cracks the joint compound and causes the bead to buckle, and you'll be able to see where to pry it off. If the bead is nailed in place, a mallet, gently pry up one edge, then pull the nails. Crimped corner beads are even easier to remove because there aren't any nails to pull.

One serious caution: If the drywall was installed before 1980, just leave it alone; there's a good chance asbestos is in the joint compound. And even if it is asbestos-free, make sure to wear a good dust mask when doing this work.



WHAT IS IT?

D- PLATEWISE

The Lumberlok grips and isolates the ends of framing lumber and trim, from 2x4s to 4x4s and 2x12s, for safe cut-off of the dirt saw cuts. It's made of powder-coated mild steel and weighs 4.35 pounds. \$30.00/lumberlok.com



Know a Trick That Would Impress Norm?

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save this old house

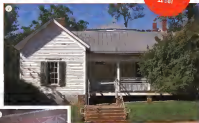
Get a Folk Victorian cottage for free!

Price: Free (must be moved)
Location: Athens, Ga
Contact: Paul Cassidy
706/547-8828

The history: When the University of Georgia purchased a historic c.1900 Greek Revival mansion to use as its Alumni Association headquarters 11 years ago, the property came with four bits of the-century worker cottages, including this 1900 Folk Victorian. The mansion and cottages were once part of a sprawling estate owned by Madison Nicholson and his wife, Lucy Woodal Nicholson. Lucy kept herself on her green thumb—so much so that she became president of the Ladies Gardening Club of Athens. America's first gardening club. UGA is now looking for someone to relocate the cottages so that it can expand its business school.

Why save it? The sunny six rooms, center hall cottage could make an excellent home for anyone who enjoys the simple charms of Folk Victorian architecture. Whoever moves the house will take along its original pine staircase, mantels, floor-to-ceiling windows, doors, and picture-rail moldings.

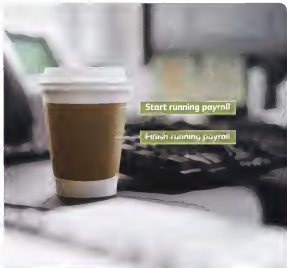
What it needs: Once relocated, it will require all new systems, new bathrooms, and kitchen. But with its pretty colors, very historic, and lovely details, this century-old cottage is definitely a keeper. —BETHY MADON



J The 1,500-square-foot cottage has a sturdy standing-seam metal roof that's less than 15 years old. For the past decade, the house has been used by UGA's Division of Historic Preservation programs to teach about one of the century building's most well-known and best-preserved. The original staircase is framed by star-shaped spindles work. The front porch features decorative and picture-rail molding. Floor-to-ceiling windows along the house's front porch. A multipaned window keeps the rooming sunny and bright.



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