

This Old House

THE TOH TOP 100

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NEW HOME
PRODUCTS
2012**

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*Just in
time for the
holidays!*

5 DIY decorations

15 cheery paint ideas

12 built-ins for easy entertaining

*Save more
money now!*

15 ways to slash
heating costs

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for less

Clever \$265
bathroom redo

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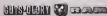


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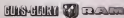
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COZY COLORFUL MAKEOVERS
IN: THE TOH TOP 100 BEST NEW HOME PRODUCTS 2012
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Cover Photograph: KEVIN WESTERMAN
Styling: JACQUELINE KILGUS



Finishing Touches: Costs a table with as much personality as the guests who gather around it. With a wide selection of decorative accents, dinnerware, textiles and more, IFA is just one stop to your shop.

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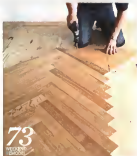
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The Life Improvement Store®



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letter {from This Old House}

A homeowner's work is never done

I think we've come a long way," my wife said to me.

Actually, we'd come about three hours by car, to a weekend cottage in the mountains, but that's not what she meant. What she meant was that we weren't home, that I wasn't in my work clothes with my tools spread out around me, that I hadn't made trips to the home center on both Saturday and Sunday, and that we as a couple had had a breakthrough of sorts.

Let me explain.

You see, earlier in the week the shower went on the fritz. The pressure balance valve, which is meant to prevent scalding, was acting up and shutting down the water flow even when a tank or tankless water heater stood elsewhere in the house. At the time I said to her, "Don't worry—I'll fix it this weekend."

"Right," my wife said, "while you order new screws for the kitchen, check the backplash, fix the ceiling fixture in the baby's room, add a toilet lock to the powder room, anchor the TV to the wall, and plant those potted plants we bought on sale back in July." She actually didn't say those things, but I knew she was thinking them, and she was right, of course. I'd been putting in long hours at work, and projects were piling up at home, and I was exhausted. "Can we just take a break," she asked, "and call a plumber?"

For reasons I still don't understand (temporary insanity, perhaps?), I agreed, and I've got to tell you, compared with the satisfaction of finishing a project myself, calling someone in to do it for you made right up there. Did it cost us more? Of course, but it also let us—me, really—recognize that everyone needs a break from the DIY grind.

That's what she meant by "come a long way," which she'd said standing at the little cottage's sink, rinsing out wineglasses as I worked back into the room after sending the flier, just as I was about to respond, she let out a scream. I turned to face her, and as I did, a long arc of water shot out the end of what had been a pull-out faucet and hit me right between the eyes. She looked at me, looked at the detached end of the faucet in her hand, and fell into laughter as she saw the water running down my face.

"What do we do now?" she said, as she threw a towel over my head. I offered, "Take the water off!" She did, and I, soaking wet, headed off to the basement to see if I could find any tools. And on the way, I realized that a house will always have more break-downs than you will have breakthroughs—all the more reason to get away the toolbelt and, at least metaphysically, put your feet up. There's no chance that they'll stop there for too long.



Check out the 2012 TOH Top 100!

Once again, TOH editors have hunted high and low to find the best new products for hanging up your home—100 of them! Starting on page 82, we've got must-have innovations for your workshop, clever why-does-it-think-of-that helpers for around the house, and terrific-looking furnishings to make your place comfier, cozier, and a lot more stylish. Consider them inspiration for next year's project calendar or for your holiday gift list—and wish list.

Sam Quicaine
SCOTT GOSSELINK, EDITOR
scott@thisoldhouse.com

digital



Holiday Cheer Sweepstakes

Order daily for a chance to win the \$50,000 grand prize plus fantastic weekly prizes—including a dishwasher and a \$500 wayfarer cart hopping spree. Go to thisoldhouse.com/sweeps for more information.



Bonus content

See more products that help you to create a festive farmhouse dining room like the one on page 48—plus other exclusives—only in the digital edition of *This Old House* magazine. Tap your copy. thisoldhouse.com/tablet

thisoldhouse.com/novdec2012



Easy upgrades for a handsome holiday home

- + Spruce up your fireplace
- + Paint before guests arrive
- + Pick the perfect Christmas tree

How to install a dishwasher

TOD plumbing and heating expert Richard Trethewey shows how to upgrade your hardest-working appliance in time for holiday entertaining.



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readermail

Every day, your letters remind us that TOH is all in the family. Whether loading the car for a camping trip, creating a memento of a loved one, or taking a project to the county fair, your ideas and ours work together. And even foster a bit of friendly rivalry, as editor Scott Omselianuk found out recently. Read on and see.

Start without swatches

September 2012 was another good year. I have an additional outdoor pipe installation (Home Solutions, page 28). When we go camping, I have a lead roll on the roof rack of our SUV. To prevent some from rubbing and moving up the rack, I cut pipe insulation to length. When I need to load something up top, I grab the tube and slide them on. When done, they go back on a shelf. They also help keep the load from slipping on rime.

Thanks again for a great magazine. I have used many ideas from it to make this house a home. My biggest problem comes when my wife

picks it up and gets even more ideas! —DANIEL WITTE, HENRIETTA, N.Y.

A handle on the past

Your August 2012 Salvage Style column (page 63) on how to make a spigot-handle tool rack reminded me of my father-in-law, who grew up during the Depression. He told me that as a child, he would often carry a spigot handle in his pocket so as to "bottle" a drink of water, since, at the time, many people rationed the handles to prevent vagabonds from helping themselves. He kept some of the handles, which passed down to me. After reading your article, I

think I'll use them to make a rack of my own so that I can be reminded of his every time I go into the garage. Thanks for the inspiration!

—RICH BOND, BALTIMORE

DIY showdown?

Dear Scott,
And you call yourself a handyman! I own and live in a 1971 32-by-60-foot mobile home. Right now I am in the middle of tearing off the aluminum siding to add insulation and to cover it with panel siding, rebuilding the back and front porches, changing out the front and rear doors, and adding security screens doors. And I just finished installing new kitchen cabinets and laminate flooring in the kitchen and dining area, building a counter, and installing a bathroom sink. I am doing this on my income of \$1,325 a month. Oh, did I mention I am 72 and on Social Security? It is slow going, but, the Lord willing, I will finish.

Regards, and luck up the path.

—PETER GUTMAN, ELY, MINN.

Scott replies: Peter, keep only in my 40s might be in my 40s because you're 72, but you've got more another 25 years to get up to speed, and—who knows?—you might have a real contest on your hands!

how to reach us

The editors: E-mail TOH Letters@thefineprint.com or write to The Old House magazine, 135 West 58th Street, New York, NY 10019. Include your full name, address, and phone number. Put a check letter in the mail for clarity and length.

3 reader projects of the month



TOH at 4-H

MARCOUS SCHROEDER, AGE 12, GREENBROOK, N.Y.
HAILEY GUSTRIAT, AGE 13, GREENWOOD, IND.

Here are two young readers who built TOH inspired projects to take to their 4-H fairs last summer. "The planter bench plans were easy to follow and ideal for this novice woodworker," says Marcus's mom, Joyce. "Thanks for the blue ribbon information!" And Hailey's mother Beth says, "We love that she did well [Grand Champion in Arts and Crafts], but I'm also grateful to TOH because this taught her patience—going 240 turns takes a while—and perseverance."

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checklist { November/December 2012 }

EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME RIGHT NOW

□ Tune up your garbage disposer

It'll get a workout with this season's feasts, and gunk buildup can slow down the mechanics and even lead to clogs. To dislodge food scraps pour in a few ice cubes and run the water before flipping the on switch. Follow with 1 cup of vinegar to neutralize odor-causing bacteria and a splash of lemon juice to freshen the drain naturally.



□ Keep garlands looking fresh

If you're decking the halls with natural boughs, follow these tips to keep them in good shape. Pick species that can withstand warm indoor air. Those that are used as Christmas trees, such as pine, spruce and balsam and Douglas firs, are a good bet. Before hanging, soak greenery in water overnight, then pat dry and spray with an antitranspirant, available at garden centers, to hold in moisture. Mount greenery away from direct heat or light and mist with water daily.

□ Deep-clean whole-house humidifiers

Parents' roomed stoves can fall through time and fluid-water buildup, which blocks moisture from escaping. Before firing up the heat, wash filters in hot water for 10 minutes to clean it. If it won't come off, replace the filter. Minuteman Air Service has a filter for the rest of the season by washing water chambers regularly with 1 gallon of water mixed with 1 tablespoon of bleach.

TOH TIP

□ Make sure fire extinguishers are charged

Do this check now before jumping into holiday cooking. See that the pressure gauge indicates a full tank. If the unit has a pressure-check port, push it; it will pop back out if the unit is charged. Reusable models can get a pressure boost from a gas, ask your local fire department. Replace disposable ones.

□ Mulch around perennials

At first, it might seem like a lot of work, but mulching around perennials is a simple way to protect them from the cold. Mulch will help the ground stay warm, which will help the plants survive the winter. The best mulch is the one that is closest to the plants. If you are moving them, use a tarp or plastic to protect them. If you are not moving them, use a tarp or plastic to protect them. If you are not moving them, use a tarp or plastic to protect them.



□ What's on your checklist?

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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).

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IMPORTANT FACTS



(LEER-e-kah)

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- LYRICA may cause serious, even life-threatening, allergic reactions. Stop taking LYRICA and tell 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 (raised bumps) or blisters.

Like other antiepileptic drugs, LYRICA may cause suicidal thoughts or actions in a very small number of people. About 1 in 500.

- 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 drowsiness. 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 healing of shingles.
- Chronic nervous pain that's together with other serious medicines.
- Fibromyalgia (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 behavior.
- Have or had kidney problems or dehydration.
- Have heart problems, including heart failure.
- Have a bleeding problem or a low blood platelet count.
- Have shared prescription medicines, street drugs or alcohol in the past.

Have ever had swelling of your face, mouth, tongue, lips, gums, neck, or throat (angioedema).

Plan to father a child. It is not known if problems seen in animal studies can happen in humans.

Are pregnant, plan to become pregnant or not breastfeeding. 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. Include over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

LYRICA and other medicines may affect each other causing side effects. Especially tell your doctor if you take:

- Antagonists containing enzyme (ACE) inhibitors. You may have a higher chance for swelling and hives.

BEFORE STARTING LYRICA, continued

- Acetaminophen (painkiller), Aspirin (painkiller) and NSAIDs (painkillers) for the stomach. You may have a higher chance of weight gain or swelling of your hands or feet.
- Many other medicines (such as sedatives, tranquilizers or medicines for anxiety) such as benzodiazepines. You may have a higher chance for dizziness and sleepiness.
- Any medicines that make you drowsy.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF LYRICA

- LYRICA may cause serious side effects, including:
- Low "white blood cell" counts (leukopenia).
- Muscle problems: pain, weakness or numbness along with feeling sick and fever.
- Eye/mouth problems including blurry vision.
- Weight gain. Weight gain may affect control of diabetes and not be serious for people with heart problems.
- Fatigue "tired".

If you have any of these symptoms, tell your doctor right away.

The most common side effects of LYRICA are:

- Dizziness.
- Blurred vision.
- Feeling of numbness and tingling.
- Weight gain.
- Dry mouth.
- Sleepiness.

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

HOW TO TAKE LYRICA

- 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.
- Drink 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, trouble sleeping, increased sweating, or you may feel restless if you stop taking LYRICA suddenly.
- Start any new medicines without first talking to your doctor.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist. This is only a brief summary of important information.
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home solutions

Edited by Amy Roberts

inside

30 USES

HOLIDAY PROJECTS

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Make a tree from trim

Show off your Yuletide cheer and your DIY know-how by assembling this main tree from strips of salvaged molding. It's as simple to make as it is budget-friendly. Mitre the ends of the molding at opposing angles, screw the "branches" to an upright piece from behind, and attach the newly sprouted "tree" to a Chair-la brown-style half-lapped base. If you can't find molding that's vintage and worn, fake the look with a couple of coats of paint and some sandpaper. No need to fuss over getting it perfect—a little roughness is part of the charm.



Photo: iStockphoto.com/301 THESLOWHOUSE.COM 33

Wine bottles

It's the season when recycling bins runneth over. Lighten the load with these attractive and useful projects and pointers.

1 Keep plants hydrated.

To make an slow drip irrigator, drill a 1/8-inch hole through a cork and stopper or a water-filled bottle. Press the whole thing neck-first into well-hydrated soil.

2 Store chemicals.

Decant a solvent, such as paint thinner, into a screw-top bottle so that pouring will be much easier. Label the bottle and tighten the cap.



4

4 Make a festive light display.

Feed a 50-light string (get the kind with just one plug) into a hole drilled in a bottle's side. We used a 1/4-inch file bit, then enlarged and smoothed the hole with a coarse grinding stone.



5 Prop books.

Fill a bottle that has special meaning with sand for a keepsake that doubles as a bookend.

6 Have stone-patio repairs at the ready.

Use wine bottles to store stone dust and dispense the dust to fill the joints between the flagstones or tiles of a terrace or walkway.

7 Block candles from drafts.

Fashion hurricanes to place over tea lights by carefully removing bottle bottoms. Visit thisoldhouse.com/novdec2012 to learn how.

8 Space open wall shelves.

To float shelves about a foot apart, use wine bottles as spacers. Put up one shelf, then place



two bottles of the same type near its ends. Rest the next plank atop them and mark its location. Remove the bottles and continue installation.

9 Edge garden beds or paths.

Stockpile empties until spring. Excavate an 8-inch-deep trench and bury bottles neck first, leaving exposed bottoms to glint in the sun.

10 Get the kinks out of wallpaper.

A bottle makes a sturdy spool on which to reverse-roll wallpaper or shelf paper to smooth it flat before applying it. —A.R.

more 10 uses
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bottles at thisoldhouse.com/bottle10

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SAMSUNG



Dress up a plain table

Give an unadorned outdoor patio table a permanent facelift by bedecking it with weatherproof vinyl. For this look, we chose a rich, uphanging garland with a beaded metal finish (about \$1.20 for 25, hardware.com). Use a pencil to measure and mark the spots where you'll be installing the ends, or better yet, make a line if the table's finish is too dark to show the graphics. Keep about 1/4 inch between a nail and the table's edge with a rubber mallet. If using tape, remove it after your first tap, before it's glued in. Take a test drive in a hidden area. If you can't get a nail to go in straight because the wood is too hard, drill pilot holes about half as deep as the length of the nail. —MICHAEL BAKER



Boost curb appeal in under 15 minutes

If your entryway needs a some sprucing, try adding a new door knocker. Choose a style like the one at left, which is anchored through the door using sturdy threaded rods. Not only will it have a stylish grip, this surface-screwed style, but hidden screws will also give it a more polished look than exposed screws do. Measure rods and screws to avoid ordering a too-big model. The knocker shouldn't rub against the door panel. For best effect, mount it about 1/2 inch high. —M.B.

Weather-proof your outdoor decorations

Buying items rated for exterior use is just the first step. Here's how to help them to withstand all that Mother Nature dishes out. —GILLIAN KAPLAN



Wind: Protect light strands from fraying gusts by securing them with plastic cap ties (about \$5 for 100) or reusable light clips (about \$10 for 50) spaced every 12 inches. For a ground display, pick wire-frame sculpture over decorative painted wood so that windproof through drive their stakes the entire length—don't let the bunches into the ground.



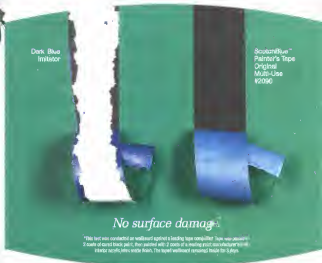
Shove and snags: Moisture and electricity don't mix. A ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) prevents shorts—and shocks—and most city regulations require their use with outdoor lighting. Portable units cost under \$30. Cover the male and female ends of light strands with electrical tape to encase them in plastic freezer bags to help keep water out.



Ice: If ice or snow-covered decorations freeze over, it could be a light cord for your display. To allow moisture to evaporate before it turns to ice, position the connections between light strands in a way that lets an air breeze around them. For lights hung on trees, use electrical tape to secure connections to the trunk a few feet above the ground to keep them out of snowfall that might gnaw them.



Don't be fooled by imitators.



No surface damage

*This test was conducted on wallpaper against a leading tape competitor. Tape was applied in 3 coats of cured black paint, then peeled with 3 coats of a leading paint manufacturer's primer. Imitator peeled, left waste stain. The taped wallpaper remained intact for 3 days.



Don't be fooled by dark blue imitators. There is a reason ScotchBlue™ Painter's Tape Original Multi-Use is the #1 selling painter's tape. It is versatile, reliable and removes cleanly without damaging walls when used as directed.

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Smart care for high-maintenance surfaces

Keeping your counters, floors, and appliances as beautiful as they were on day one is no small challenge—just ask anyone who's ever spilled red wine on a shiny marble countertop. Try these tips for common mishaps. —NANCY RILES

Type	Problem	Try this	Skip that
 Hardwood	Dirt can dull this flooring's surface and make it difficult to refinish.	Keep things grit-free by sweeping frequently. For regular cleanings, wrap a damp rag around a push broom and glide away grime. On tough messes, try a wood-safe cleanser. Use a 50:50 mix of the 30-minute, biodegradable, Apply a coat of polyurethane as soon as the floor shows wear.	Dish cleanser or vinegar-based polishes and conditioners, which can leave a push broom that prevents polyurethane from adhering to the wood.
 Stainless steel	Aggressive cleaning, especially of fingerprints, can leave scratches.	Remove fingerprints without scrubbing by rubbing in the direction of the grain with a soft cloth dampened with undiluted white vinegar, buffed with dry cloth. A specialty cleanser, such as Fuller Brush Company's spray gel (47 for 22 ounces, Fuller.com), zaps smudges and helps keep new smudges from showing.	Avoid abrasives like bleach, as they can cause corrosion. Also steer clear of harsh cleansers, which have a recipe for scratches.
 Marble	This valued stone is easily scuffed, scratched, and stained if not properly treated.	Apply a stone- or water-based sealer every six months to protect frequently used countertops. Use a mild detergent for general cleaning. Then target deeper stains with hydrogen peroxide (just in a 10-minute test). Try ultraviolet light seal to buff away small scuffs or scratches.	Never use anything acidic (even seemingly harmless vinegar) to clean marble. It can dissolve and scratch the stone's top layer.
 Concrete	If it's well-maintained, the porous material is prone to staining and chipping.	Use concrete sealers monthly to protect against stains, and use a food-safe sealer. Use Cheng's (327 for 500 milliliters, chengseal.com) once a year. To erase discoloration, sand with a fine-grit diamond polishing block (about \$10 at specialty hardware stores) then seal.	Power-wash without a sealer. They can weaken if sealers penetrate. And don't let dirt get down in cracks; the heat can cause delving.
 Ceramic	Though hard and durable, it can become stained, hyal in particular.	Clean grout with warm water or diluted dish soap, and dry immediately to prevent water marks. If it soaps to, try a mastic degreaser, like the diluted Simple Green (37 for 22 ounces, simplegreen.com), or a poultice made of the cleanser and cornstarch. Clean grout with water-based sealer.	As with marble, order cleaners that may damage or do harm to them.

Get help with home to-dos



At this time of year, your roster of chores can seem longer than Santa's gift list. Save the fun stuff for yourself, and get those snowplowing or carpentering jobs out of the way. These websites find someone else to do it for you. —A.H.

for general chores
taskrabbit.com
Need a hand shoveling the walk, assembling furniture, or installing a closet organizer? Post the task and the most you pay. Taskers willing to do your bidding make offers as you; it gets the best price.

for pro assistance
naweb.com
Get in touch with skilled tradespeople for tasks such as getting a toilet to stop running or fixing a dryer, with a cost on the line. You can browse a directory of local pros or create a request for them to respond to.

to banter your time
community time banks.org
This network lets you swap services with a neighbor. "Bank hours" with a local group by doing work that others ask for. Then cash in the time you've accrued when you need help.



Don't be fooled by imitators.



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Could you be allergic to Christmas?

Sneezing and congestion might not be the signs of a seasonal cold, but rather a reaction to holiday decorations. And—surprise!—not just humans. The only culprit: trees and other trimmings can also trigger a reaction. Here are ways to avoid the sniffles. —G.S.

IRRITANT Mold spores on the trunks of real trees.

REMEDY Fill a spray bottle with a solution of 1 part bleach to 20 parts water. Before bringing a live tree inside, spray the trunk and use a rag to wipe it down, focusing on the base. (This reduces potentially mold-causing sap too.) Let the tree dry then take it indoors.

IRRITANT Conifers that pollinate in winter (yep, you know?).

REMEDY Wearing a dust mask, use a hot blower to give the evergreen a defolting. Under the tree outside, avoid it at night. Target all visible pollen, which appears as a yellow fuzz on the trunk and branches. Once fully dusted, the tree is ready to be set up.

IRRITANT That fresh pine scent.

REMEDY Eliminate this trigger for the fragrance-sensitive by using only artificial groenery. Choose decorations that are scented discreetly while you resist it, avoid items covered in snow like stockings, which can become airborne and bring on asthma and allergy symptoms.

IRRITANT Dust that pollinates in winter (yep, you know?).

REMEDY Dusted evergreen from your closet before displaying them. Wipe it to get to put decor away store them in airtight bags, where they'll stay dust-free for next year.

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ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT BREATHING BETTER.

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Please see important Patient Information on reverse side.



A photograph of a red lamp. The lamp has a conical, tapered shade and a rounded, bulbous base. The entire lamp is a uniform red color. It is positioned on a white surface against a white background.

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before+after:
kitchen

Period flair, plus
a layout that works

Redoing a bad remodel creates a more functional space with a handsome look that fits a 1960s feel. **By STEVE WILLIAMS • Photographs by KURT SCOTT MORTON**

Often the best way to deal with a botched kitchen renovation is to take cues from the rest of the house. For the most part, Dawn Marshall and husband Steve Lucca's Victorian cottage, in Hillburn, New York, had aged well, retaining much of its original woodwork, including the floors, the casings, and the staircase. But the kitchen was another story.

Updated in the 1950s, the cook space was cut in two and awkwardly placed sink, resulting in a choppy, impractical layout. "I really wanted to improve the work area," says Rose Marie Carr of Karchner by Rose, "and to make the kitchen look like it belonged to the rest of the house." And Dawn wanted a green renovation. When the crew went to rip up the pane floors, she shrieked off the linoleum floor—teasing it is hot water to avoid potential asbestos fibers—to save the original boards. "It took me about two weeks," she says.

Construction lasted 10 long months, but the work was worth it: a well-laid-out space with warm hickory cabinets, a white-on-white tile-and-board backsplash, and an antique sideboard repurposed as an island. "I didn't cook much before," Dawson says. "I'm sure that the kitchen is finished. Have to."

before A 1990s renovation left this 2006 house with an inefficient kitchen that turned a corner after Hickory cabinets with built-up crown molding and spindled and glued beadboard backdrop help create a period look.
Renee Fortman

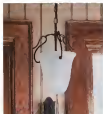


100

before • after: kitchen

• A washbasin-style sink cabinet, stained black and with visible dovetail joints, highlights the copper sink and brass finished bridge faucet. The original window casings got a coat of English Pine stain. Painted La Touche Oak Copper Oak Doors.

• Period-appropriate pendants were discovered online by the homeowner, who was determined to avoid recessed cans lighting. Photo.



before

The space was cut too tight for a search for a passageway and didn't have a wall engaged work area.



after

Most of the arch wall came down to open up the 123 square-foot kitchen. This allowed for a more workable layout with an island for added prep space.

1. Removed the soffits, accessible the 12-foot ceiling.

2. Opened up the room by demolishing an arched passageway that divided the space in two.



3. Taking the swinging door to the dining room, which had been placed in the basement.

4. Put in a range to utilize the cooktop and the wall oven shifted the fridge to this wall for a more specified.

5. Added an island for a central work surface and to replace lost cabinet space.

6. Replaced all the windows but kept the existing casings and reused all the hardware.

Photo: © 2013 Whirlpool



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the key details

Backery cabinets

were stained and distressed to look well worn. All glass and etching work are done VOG and formaldehyde-free. Old-school distressed beaded front finish is up the back of the cabinets. Christine Cabinetry



An antique sideboard, inherited from the homeowner's father, is used as an island to provide additional workspace. The back of the brick chimney, discovered under wallpaper, was painted and left exposed for a rustic touch.



A floor patch marks where the butler's pantry wall once stood (the space was added during prep). The floor in the butler's pantry is made of solid white pine. The rest are North Carolina pine. Stone and Vine wood & crafts is a Timber/Day/Nature/Wood. Demand and Art. Day/Painting/Clear/Seal



more wood cabinets
First 10 of our editors' favorite kitchens at brookhouse.com/2012



homeowner tip

DAVIDE WOODHILL, HOUSTON, TX

"Research green options ahead of time, if that's important to you. There are lots of great products out there, but not all contractors are familiar with the choices."

The vintage kitchen table was refinished with a pine-plank top. New wood windows are stained to match the original casings. Windows: Woodright by Andersen

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Reinvent a room with ceiling color

Follow our tips for tapping the hidden-in-place sight potential
of that fifth wall by DEBORAH LOWE

White and off-white have been the default choices for ceilings for so long that most homeowners never give them a second thought. That's starting to change. To paraphrase a number of color experts, when you view a ceiling as a personality Black canvas, you overlook an opportunity. Whether potent or subtle, a dash of color can alter the geometry of a room, changing the feeling of the space as it ticks the eyes.

Colorful ceilings aren't new, points out Nan Kimbrell, an architectural color specialist in San Francisco. "In Victorian homes, ceilings often varied from room to room," she says. Back then, colorful ceilings played off the saturated patterns of oriental carpets and exotic wood furniture. Today, they work equally well in everything from traditional interiors to very, close-lined spaces. Read on for six ways to let color on top bring out the best in any room.

Create an accent wall

If the ceiling is the fifth wall, why not allow it to serve as the room's most dramatic accent? Deep shades like Behr's Delicious Berry shown here, add warmth and drama—and, as Behr color director Erika Woodruff notes, "a splash of color can make small rooms seem larger."



paint
ideas



Make a room more polished

One of the fastest, easiest ways to give a space a sophisticated look is to unite the ceiling and walls with a single color set off by crisp white trim. If the color on the wall seems too subdued, then look at it as the paint's up-and-goupone or two colors to find a lighter one for the ceiling," says Dee Schaffer, a color expert at PPG Pittsburgh Paints. "It will still provide a more finished look than the usual flat white." This bedroom gets its polish from PPG Pittsburgh Paints' Evening Glow.



↑
The color of the sharp edges of a wall is just off the same color as the ceiling.

Enliven bland neutrals

A plain white room becomes something else again when capped by a subtly unexpected shade. In this small kitchen, Wallpaper's vivid Sunny Green offsets the busy effect while injecting a needed dose of energy. The result is an atmosphere that is friendlier and more welcoming.



Lower the ceiling

Color on a keep-a-high ceiling's room from feeling a roomed. Barbara Richardson, a color expert who works with Glidden, favors shades that create an enveloping feel. Here, Glidden's Golden Bronze is balanced by pale neutrals and ample light. Dark accents pull the room together and also help keep it grounded.



↑
A flat pendant in a muted shade further helps to draw the eye upward.

Highlight a special ceiling

Coffering, board-and-batten, and exposed beams naturally call attention to the ceiling, so why not reinforce the effect with a dose of color? Paint just the flat or recessed areas to create contrast that showcases the trim treatment. Or cover the whole ceiling in a uniform shade lively enough to command your attention, such as Olympic's Salem Blue, shown here. Clean white walls and punches of complementary orange add to the room's dynamic feel.

Make a space more intimate

When the ceiling and walls are painted one color, with no contrasting molding, the result is soft and seamless. Architectural color experts recommend trying out a warm shade, like the one shown here—Sherwin-Williams's Rose Red—in a dining room, where the ceiling naturally feels high because everyone is seated around the table. We're seeing more people continuing color up the walls and onto the ceiling," says Jackie Jordan, a color expert at Sherwin-Williams. "It doesn't make the room seem small, only closer!"



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Source: Kidde, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

A Behind the Scenes Look:

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Festive farmhouse dining room

Vintage farmhouse sets the stage for a homely holiday spread. Here's how to re-create this welcoming feel in your space using thrifty finds. **by CARRIE BARTLE Photography MICHELLE WOOD**

Time-worn finishes, natural textures, and muted colors in the dining area of Mick and Cody Wrenn's 1890s farm house recall a simpler way of life—when furniture was made by hand and holiday traditions came from the land.

In preparation for a family gathering, the couple set their picturesque place table, shown here, with black-painted runners, stoneware plates, a tiered pewter server loaded with fruit, and wicker wine goblets. For the centerpiece, a whole glazed poultry, rather than a formal roast, adds fresh-cut evergreen branches.

The cheery treatment extends to the windows, where frozen hay-bale wreaths hang from green burlap ribbons. The effort is an evening doing work that's ready for a harvest feast. Read on to learn how to bring this festive farmhouse feel to your home.

woven basket
Stone tables, lamps, and chairs in a general basket. This one's deep reds echo the Wrenns' early 1990s hoop collecting basket. \$65, villalife.com

black-paint runner
Liven up the table top with natural bell runner decorated with self-colored bells. \$70, villalife.com



throw pillows

Add comfy pillows with a handmade quality. These have embroidery and cut-out stripes resembling those on grain sacks. Pearl cover: \$22; sea-foam: \$40; navy: \$38. northcountrycrafts.com



get this look for less



brass pendant
A perky drop fixture with a clear glass globe adds a soft glow for dining. \$28, including a 60-watt Edison-style bulb. lowe.com



hay wreath

Hang a ring of hay, lavender, seasonal greenery that can also favor skewers. Wreath: \$36; shop mickandcody.com; Ribbon, \$4 for 10 yards. onlineforbaskets.net



pewter server

And polished bright in a looking table's eye with a handsome tiered dish. \$55, sawtoothfarmhouse.com



spindle chair
Similar to the Wrenns' antique half-spindle Windsor, this new perch comes unfinished. Top it off with warm water, lemon-lime stain. Chair: \$41, gardenofeden.com



bound-tooth rug

This flat-weave rug is a traditional red and white pattern. It's reversible—ideal for under the dining table. \$69, bonniecoasters.com

table centerpiece

Want more? See the TCM table edition for a bonus farmhouse accents. It's free for subscribers! Learn more at thisoldhouse.com/tablet



A bathroom refresher for \$265

Cottage-style wainscoting, custom mirror frames, and bargain-priced fixtures turn a builder's basic bath into something special. BY SARAH JACOB

Before: Violet walls were the only uplifting note in this plain space. After: Pious painting and framed mirrors add neighborhood architectural interest, while a new window treatment lends a cozy feeling.

the project tally

Mimicked board-and-batten walls with pre-painted MDF	\$80
Framed mirrors with beveled MDF and crown molding	\$0
Coated in primed and painted the tub and 30-in. vinyl floor to paint for the walls	\$70
Painted the tub front with a sheet of pre-painted pine board-and-batten PVC cap that coated in primed and painted	\$30
Added height to the window sill (painted and spire molding above the head casing) to a distance made existing fabric and beveled base	\$10
Crown-molded mirrors with stylish glass structure	\$50
Fifty-sixty glass with pulls and wood plaques	\$25
total	\$265



Neatly painted walls can breathe new life into a room. In Diane and Ed Heider's 1994 home, in Los Angeles, the purple people hair-n-grow-daughter had chosen for their childhood bath isn't aged well, so when the girls moved out, Diane knew it was time for a change. Major changes were beyond the budget for the bath, now used only by teenage girls, so Diane focused on adding custom cosmetic touches. First, she created a board-and-batten look by making up medium-density fiberboard (MDF) strips spaced 10 inches apart, then used French strips of the same material to replace the room's wavy boards. When she couldn't find mirrors with the look she wanted, Diane framed the existing ones with MDF and crown molding. She coated all the seams where the board's meet the walls, re-painted everything with a formula made to resist moisture, then finished it all in a color she painted the rest of the walls to match the tan sublimation paint. Contrasting the painted look, she covered the tub front with pine board-and-batten capped with wainscoting. To give the illusion of a larger, more dramatic window, she added plywood and locy crown molding above the head casing and finished the effect with a valance made of rigid foam insulation, beading, and fabric. The final flourish? An elegant nickel light fixture and, on the vanity, simple drawer pulls and decorative wood plaques. "It's definitely more grown-up now," Diane says of the space. "Friends who have seen it are just floored." ■

If you have an irregular heartbeat called atrial fibrillation, or AFib, not caused by a heart valve problem, PRADAXA can reduce your risk of stroke.

• In a clinical trial, PRADAXA reduced stroke risk 35% more than warfarin. Risk reduction was greatest when compared to patients on warfarin whose blood test showed lower levels of control.

• Unlike warfarin, no regular blood tests.

Ask your doctor about

Pradaxa
dabigatran etexilate
CAPSULES 150mg

WHAT IS PRADAXA?

Pradaxa® (dabigatran etexilate immediate-release capsules) is a prescription blood-thinning medicine used to reduce the risk of stroke and blood clots in people with atrial fibrillation not caused by a heart valve problem.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION ABOUT PRADAXA

PRADAXA can cause bleeding which can be serious and sometimes lead to death. Don't take PRADAXA if you currently have abnormal bleeding or if you have ever had an allergic reaction to it.

Your risk of bleeding with PRADAXA may be higher if you are 75 years old or older, have kidney problems, have stomach or intestine bleeding that is recent or keeps coming back or you have a stomach ulcer, take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding, like aspirin products, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and blood thinners, have kidney problems and take donepezil (Amphetamine) or beta-blockers (atenolol).

Call your doctor or seek immediate medical care if you have any of the following signs or symptoms of bleeding: any unexpected, severe, or uncontrollable bleeding; any bleeding that lasts a long time, unusual or unexpected bruising, coughing up or vomiting blood, or vomit that looks like coffee grounds, pink or brown urine, red or black stool, black like tar, unexpected pain, swelling, or joint pain, headaches and feeling dizzy or weak.

"With my Afib, I'm glad my daughter had me talk to my doctor again about reducing my stroke risk."



It is important to tell your doctor about all medicines, vitamins and supplements you take. Some of your other medicines may affect the way PRADAXA works.

Take PRADAXA exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Don't stop taking PRADAXA without talking to your doctor as your risk of stroke may increase.

Tell your doctor if you are planning to have any surgery or medical or dental procedure, because you may have to stop taking PRADAXA for a short time.

PRADAXA can cause indigestion, stomach upset or burning, and stomach pain.

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 on how to take your medication, see the Medication Guide on next page.

Pradaxa
dabigatran etexilate
capsules

For more information on how to take your medication, call 1-877-PRADAXA or visit pradaxa.com



For handy look and tips for programs call 1-877-PRADAXA or visit pradaxa.com





Read this Medication Guide before you start taking PRADAXA and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This Medication Guide does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your medical condition or your treatment.

What is the most important information I should know about PRADAXA?

- PRADAXA can cause bleeding which can be serious, and sometimes lead to death. This is because PRADAXA is a blood thinner medicine that lowers the chance of blood clots forming in your body.
- You may have a higher risk of bleeding if you take PRADAXA and:

- are over 75 years old
- have kidney problems
- have stomach or intestinal bleeding that is recent or keeps coming back, or you have a stomach ulcer

- take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding, including:

- aspirin or aspirin containing products
- long-term (chronic) use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
- certain sodium (Coumadin®) medicines
- a medicine that contains heparin
- clopidogrel (Plavix®)
- prasugrel (Effient®)

- have certain kidney problems and also take the medicines diltiazem (Diltal®) or levetiracetam tablets (Keppra®).

Tell your doctor if you take any of these medicines. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

If your medicine is one listed above:

- PRADAXA can increase your risk of bleeding because it increases the ability of your blood to thin while you take PRADAXA.
- you may bruise more easily
- it may take longer for any bleeding to stop

Call your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of bleeding:

- unexpected bleeding or bleeding that lasts a long time, such as:
 - unusual bleeding from the gums
 - nose bleeds that happen often
 - increased bleeding or oozing
- Bleeding that is heavier than normal
- bleeding that is severe or you cannot stop
- pink or brown urine
- red or black stools (looks like tar)

PRADAXA (pre-DAK) (apixiban) (capsules)

- bruises that happen without a known cause or get larger
- cough up blood or blood clots
- vomit blood or your vomit looks like "coffee grounds"
- unexpected pain, swelling, or pain on headlines, feeling dizzy or weak

Take PRADAXA exactly as prescribed. Do not stop taking PRADAXA without first talking to the doctor who prescribes it for you. Stopping PRADAXA may increase your risk of a stroke.

PRADAXA may need to be stopped, if possible, for one or more days before any surgery, or medical or dental procedure. If you need to stop taking PRADAXA for any reason, talk to the doctor who prescribed PRADAXA for you to find out when you should stop taking it. Your doctor will tell you when to start taking PRADAXA again after your surgery or procedure.

See "What are the possible side effects of PRADAXA?" for more information about side effects.

What is PRADAXA?

PRADAXA is a prescription medicine used to reduce the risk of stroke and blood clots in people who have a medical condition called atrial fibrillation. Atrial fibrillation, part of the heart does not beat the way it should. This can lead to blood clots forming, and increase your risk of a stroke. PRADAXA is a blood thinner medicine that lowers the chance of blood clots forming in your body.

It is not known if PRADAXA is safe and works in children.

Who should not take PRADAXA?

Do not take PRADAXA if you:

- currently have certain types of abnormal bleeding. Talk to your doctor before taking PRADAXA if you currently have unusual bleeding
- have had a serious allergic reaction to PRADAXA. Ask your doctor if you are not sure

What should I tell my doctor before taking PRADAXA?

Before you take PRADAXA, tell your doctor if you:

- have kidney problems
- have ever had bleeding problems
- have ever had stomach ulcers
- have any other medical condition
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if PRADAXA will harm your unborn baby
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if PRADAXA goes into your breast milk.

Tell all of your doctors and dentists that you are taking PRADAXA.

They should talk to the doctor who prescribed PRADAXA for you, before you have any surgery, or medical or dental procedure.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Some of your other medicines may affect the way PRADAXA works. Certain medicines may increase your risk of bleeding. See "What is the most important information I should know about PRADAXA?"

Especially tell your doctor if you take:

- rifampin (Rifadin, Rimactane, Rimedex)

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of them and show it to your doctor and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

How should I take PRADAXA?

- Take PRADAXA exactly as prescribed by your doctor.
- Do not take PRADAXA more often than your doctor tells you to.
- You can take PRADAXA with or without food.
- PRADAXA comes in a bottle or in a blister package.
- Only open 1 bottle of PRADAXA at a time. Finish your opened bottle of PRADAXA before opening a new bottle.
- After opening a bottle of PRADAXA, use within 4 months. See "How should I store PRADAXA?"
- When it is time for you to take a dose of PRADAXA, only remove your prescribed dose of PRADAXA from your open bottle or blister package.

Slightly close your bottle of PRADAXA right away after you take your dose.

Swallow PRADAXA capsules whole. Do not break, chew, or crush the pellets from the capsule.

If you miss a dose of PRADAXA, take it as soon as you remember. If your next dose is less than 8 hours away, skip the missed dose. Do not take two doses of PRADAXA at the same time.

Your doctor will decide how long you should take PRADAXA. Do not stop taking PRADAXA without first talking with your doctor.

Stopping PRADAXA may increase your risk of a stroke.

Do not run out of PRADAXA. Refill your prescription before you run out. If you plan to have surgery, or a medical or a dental procedure,

tell your doctor and dentist that you are taking PRADAXA. You may have to stop taking PRADAXA for a short time. See "What is the most important information I should know about PRADAXA?"

If you take too much PRADAXA, go to the nearest hospital emergency room or call your doctor.

Call your healthcare provider right away if you feel or experience anything, especially if you hit your head. Your healthcare provider may need to check you.

What are the possible side effects of PRADAXA?

PRADAXA can cause serious side effects. See "What is the most important information I should know about PRADAXA?"

- Allergic Reactions. In some people, PRADAXA can cause symptoms of an allergic reaction, including hives, rash, and itching. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you get any of the following symptoms of a serious allergic reaction with PRADAXA:
 - chest pain or chest tightness
 - swelling of your face or tongue
 - trouble breathing or wheezing
 - feeling dizzy or faint

Common side effects of PRADAXA include:

- indigestion, upset stomach, or burning
- stomach pain

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all of the possible side effects of PRADAXA. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

How should I store PRADAXA?

- Store PRADAXA at room temperature between 59°F to 86°F (15°C to 30°C). After opening the bottle, use PRADAXA within 4 months. Safely throw away any unused PRADAXA after 4 months.
- Keep PRADAXA in the original bottle or blister package to keep it dry (protect the capsules from moisture). Do not put PRADAXA in pill boxes or pill organizers.
- Tightly close your bottle of PRADAXA right away after you take your dose.

Keep PRADAXA and all medicines out of the reach of children.

General information about PRADAXA

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Medication Guide. Do not use PRADAXA for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give your PRADAXA to other people, even if they have the same symptoms. It may harm them.

This Medication Guide summarizes the most important information about PRADAXA. If you would like more information, talk with your doctor. You can ask your pharmacist or doctor for information about PRADAXA that is written for health professionals.

For more information, go to www.PRADAXA.com or call 1-800-542-6257 or (TTY) 1-800-459-8686.

What are the ingredients in PRADAXA?

Active ingredient: apixiban (capsules)

Inactive ingredients: saccharin, dextrose, hydroxypropylcellulose, talc, and tartaric acid. The capsule shell is composed of gelatin, FD&C Blue No. 2 (USP), polyethylene glycol (FD&C Yellow No. 6), hypromellose, potassium chloride, titanium dioxide, and black edible ink.

The Medication Guide has been approved by the FDA, Food and Drug Administration.

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The information contained in this Medication Guide is not intended to take the place of medical advice from your doctor. Please consult your doctor for more information about PRADAXA. © 2011 Bristol-Myers Squibb.

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Visit MyBonaHome.com to learn more from the experts.

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salvage
style

Columns with character

Reclaimed posts with fluted channels or curvy turnings can prop up a porch ceiling, flank a door, or find new ideas decorative interior accents. *By ALLEY & HUGHES Photography by Michael Smith*

Columns are a bedrock of traditional architecture. Used by the ancient Greeks and Romans as graceful supports for porches and porticos, they help define the style of a place. The run of three parts—a capital, a shaft, and a base—columns can be fancy, with a fluted body and scrolled volutes at top, or simple and smooth, with a stacked-rag crown.

The earliest columns were carved from stone to match the great temples and monuments they adorned, but most American ones from the past century or so are made of wood, just like our more humble homes.

Because columns were typically used in multiples, you can often find matching ones at salvage yards today. That allows repurposers like us to reuse a series as porch supports, but it also expands our options for creative projects. A row of columns in a great room, for instance, allows you to do five different activity zones without



Reclaimed porch columns and small interior posts. See Bona at Florida Woodwork Architectural Antiques in Deland, Florida.

make a compatible project
See the options here



Photo by Michael Smith



shop report: First subage wood columns at fairs and markets and antique shops. Small ones, such as the pair above, start at \$130 each. Subage columns in good shape can top \$1,200.

among walls or blocking views.

If you find only one column, don't fret. You can slice it in half lengthwise (this is easy because most were built in sections and are hollow inside) so that it does the work of two. Secured to the wall on opposite sides of a doorway with the curved sides facing out, the halves transform into elegant grilles. You could also wrap the pieces around an existing wood support post to turn an existing column into a focal point.

For my reuse project, I kept a single column whole, fitted with shapely brass hooks and standing about 6 feet tall on a new plinth base, it's the perfect coat tree. I love how the fluted shaft and the egg-and-dart molding in the capital add a touch of familiarity to what's otherwise casual entropy. To learn how to make your own coat tree out of a salvaged column, keep reading.

STEP-BY-STEP

Turn a column into a coat tree

I scored this fluted column at an antique shop for just \$60—a bargain, considering its stellar condition and detailed design. To repurpose it as a coat tree, all I had to do was add some hooks and build a new plinth base to replace the missing original. But rather than make a base from scratch, I assembled one by stacking three prebored wood beams beneath a round plaque that I secured to the bottom of the column's shaft. For \$39 in supplies from a local hardware store, where antique notes in a range of styles and finishes start at \$3 each, I preserved the column's aged finish and guard against lead in the old paint. I finished the surface with two coats of clear polyurethane in a matter of hours before starting the job.

COST: About \$130 for the column, base and hooks.
TIME: 2 hours, not including dry time for a polyurethane sealer.
DIY-FRIENDLY: Easy using prebored beams to make the plinth base.



see how it's done

Watch how to build this DIY coat tree project at theoilfinestore.com/episode302.

1 Cover the hollow end of the column shaft with a round wood plaque. Drill pilot holes for the fasteners, being sure to bore deep enough to penetrate the column's solid sides. Secure the plaque with 2-inch wood screws.



5 Secure the second box with glue and screws, and repeat the process with the third box (shown) to complete the base. Let it for about 30 minutes while the glue dries.

2 Center the widest of the three boxes (8, 10, and 12 inches square) just 1/2 inch from the base so the plaque with the horn's open side facing down. Hold it in place with painter's tape and fasten with 2½-inch wood screws as needed for pilot holes.



6 Determine the locations for the top row of three coat hooks by wrapping tape around the column to find its diameter. Remove the tape, divide its length by 3, and mark the spacing. Then put the tape back on the column and use the marks as a guide.

3 Lay the second box open-side down, and use a combination square and a pencil to mark the outline of the already attached box. Because each box is larger than the preceding one by 2 inches, add the difference and set the square at 1 inch.



4 Flip the box open-side up, and mark where to drill holes for the fasteners. Use a level to ensure the box will be positioned in the center of the flange of the box above. In my case, the spacer was 1/2-inch thick.



7 Drill pilot holes for the screws that connect the hooks, and use a screwdriver to turn them in by hand so as not to tear the soft wood. Repeat the measuring and installation process with the second row of hooks, but be sure to offset them from the row above.

8 Finish by painting the base. I used watered-down chalk paint in an eggshell blue color to reach tones of old chipped paint on the column shaft. Once the paint has dried, sand your new tree in the entryway and start piling it with coats. ■

Read this before you insulate your attic

Yes, it's a messy job. But when the dust (and fiberglass) settles, you'll enjoy a hotter bank account and more comfortable indoor temps year-round.

By MICHAEL GOODMAN | Illustrated by BOB LARSEN

There's no getting around it: If your house is in a cold climate, keeping it warm in winter is expensive. The Department of Energy predicts that prices for natural gas and heating oil will rise again this winter compared with last—and that's after a year in which heating-oil prices rose sharply in most parts of the country.

Plus, you can dial down the thermostat and get used to wearing heavy sweaters indoors in no time. But if you've got an unheated attic, giving it proper insulation is one of the simplest ways to keep a lid on your heating bill this season. "It's a DIY project you can tackle in a weekend, and the savings you'll get add up every year," says TOW general contractor Tom Silva. The Department of Energy estimates that a properly insulated attic can shave 10 to 30 percent off your heating bill. And it works the opposite way for warm climates: In summer, it helps stabilize your house's indoor temps to keep cooling costs in check.

In a perfect world, you'd have an energy auditor to tell you exactly how much protection you're getting from the few inches of attic insulation you may already have and to pinpoint things like air leaks that you can seal to make sure your insulation will do its job well. But if you can't afford to shell out a few hundred bucks for this service, never fear: We've rounded up all the most important know-how about attic-insulation products, prep work, and installation right here. Keep reading for the details.



STOP USING YOUR ATTIC FOR STORAGE

NOTE: Because the compact and cheap way to insulate an attic is to build materials in the floor, that's the best it's covered in plywood, you can't shift enough insulation beneath it to do the job efficiently—not even in warm climates. When it's cold, the flooring will cover new insulation sitting at the side. So the best bet here goes is to have to find spot elsewhere for storing those off-season clothes and that holiday decor.

CHOOSE YOUR INSULATION TYPE AND MATERIAL

The DIYer's dilemma: You're looking at two choices: loose fill or batts (the common term for blanket insulation). Both can be added to unheated attics; layered over existing material. Once you've decided which type is best for you, consider the material, options and prices to come in on the right product. Always check labels for specifics on whatever you buy.



LOOSE FILL

Insulation fibers are packaged in bags and blown in place to the desired depth and density using special machinery or an over-the-roof blower. You can pour the fill in place and spread it manually, but the process is inefficient, takes a while and the results aren't too nearly as good.

IT TAKES BEST FOR

- Attics with no joists or rafter/battling joists.
- Attics with lots of obstructions and permission to work around.
- Attics where there is existing insulation to be topped, since it fills gaps and voids.
- Low clearance attics with limited headroom for maneuvering during installation.
- DIYers who want to get the job done quickly and are comfortable working with power equipment.

MATERIAL OPTIONS

FIBERGLASS | \$6 | R-VALUE PER INCH: 2.5-2.9

Made of recycled glass or sand that is melted and spun into fibers. Bottom line: It's a lightweight material that can be blown in place. It's the most common material, so you can get a lot of options for the price.

CELLULOSE | \$11 | R-VALUE PER INCH: 3.2-3.8

Made of 100 percent recycled paper, cellulose is treated for insect and fire resistance. Bottom line: The most common choice, it's made of recycled paper, so it's a good choice for the environment.

MINERAL WOOL | \$15 | R-VALUE PER INCH: 3.0-3.3

Made of 100 percent recycled slag from steel furnaces. Bottom line: Offers better fire resistance, but costs more than other materials.



BATTS

This flexible insulation material is most often packaged in rolls that come in various thicknesses and standard widths, usually 16 inches and 24 inches, to fit between joists or studs in a house's framing. They come with or without a paper or foil facing that acts as a vapor barrier. You add extra or more layers to achieve the desired level of insulation.

THEY WORK BEST FOR

- Attics with standard joist spacing, especially those without insulation.
- Attics with few obstructions or parallel lines to work around.
- Attics with sufficient headroom for maneuvering during installation.
- DIYers who prefer to cut the material to fit around obstructions.

MATERIAL OPTIONS

FIBERGLASS | \$6 | R-VALUE PER INCH: 2.5-2.9

Made of recycled glass or sand that is melted and spun into fibers. Bottom line: Commonly used and easy to install. But fiberglass insulation is not as effective as blowing in the material or other materials.

CELLULOSE | \$11 | R-VALUE PER INCH: 3.2-3.8

Made of 100 percent recycled paper, cellulose is treated for insect and fire resistance. Bottom line: What's in the material is good, but the product is made of a limited number of manufacturers.

MINERAL WOOL | \$15 | R-VALUE PER INCH: 3.0-3.3

Made of 100 percent recycled slag from steel furnaces. Bottom line: It's usually fire resistant, but the product is more expensive than others.

OPTION | \$15 | R-VALUE PER INCH: 3.2-3.8

Made of 100 percent recycled denim cloth. Bottom line: Blocks air flow and sound transmission, but the material is more expensive than others.

SIZE UP YOUR EXISTING INSULATION (AND GET RID OF THE BAD STUFF)

Grab a tape measure and a flashlight to see what kind of insulation you already have in the attic and how deep it is. Then use the chart on the right to figure out if it's enough. Pull up and dispose of any material that is compressed, water stained or moldy—or a nuisance. Owners of houses built before 1990 have a note: If what you see is lightweight, grating, looks like insulation with shiny fibers, it could be vermiculite. Vermiculite was once used as a heat shield, and necessary, unless you're sure it's not. If it is, it's not safe.

DETERMINED: R-VALUES PER INCH FOR COMMON INSULATION



SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Imagine you with less chronic osteoarthritis pain.

Cymbalta can help.

Cymbalta is a once-daily, non-narcotic pain reliever. And it's not addictive.

When taken once a day, every day, Cymbalta is proven to significantly reduce chronic osteoarthritis pain.

You may have to rethink the way you treat your pain. You might be used to taking pain medications only after you feel your chronic osteoarthritis back pain getting worse. Managing this pain with Cymbalta is a little different. It's important to take Cymbalta every day, as prescribed by your doctor, to manage your pain over time.

Did you know that your body has a natural pain-suppressing system that can help regulate the amount of pain you feel? Although the exact way that Cymbalta works to reduce chronic osteoarthritis pain is unknown, it is believed that Cymbalta helps lessen pain by enhancing the body's natural pain-suppressing system by increasing the activity of serotonin and norepinephrine in the brain and spinal cord.

Visit cymbalta.com or call 1-877-CYMBALTA (1-877-296-2256) to learn more. Ask your doctor about Cymbalta and a free trial offer.

Cymbalta is a prescription medication approved for the management of chronic musculoskeletal pain in people with chronic osteoarthritis pain or chronic low back pain.

Important Safety Information About Cymbalta The most important information you should know about Cymbalta:

Antidepressants can increase suicidal thoughts and behaviors in children, teens, and young adults. Suicide is a known risk of depression and some other psychiatric disorders. Call your doctor right away if you have new or worsening depression symptoms, unusual changes in behavior, or thoughts of suicide. Be especially observant within the first few months of treatment or after a change in dose. Approved only for adults 18 and over.

Cymbalta® (duloxetine HCl) is not for everyone. Do not take Cymbalta if you:

- have recently taken a type of antidepressant called a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI) or Miltarin® (thioridazine)
- have uncontrolled narrow-angle glaucoma (increased eye pressure)

Before taking Cymbalta, talk with your healthcare provider:

- about all your medical conditions, including kidney or liver problems, glaucoma, diabetes, seizures, or if you have bipolar disorder. Cymbalta may worsen a type of glaucoma or diabetes.
- about all your prescription and nonprescription medicines. A potentially life-threatening condition has been reported when Cymbalta was taken with certain drugs for migraine, mood, or psychiatric disorders.
- if you are taking NSAID pain relievers, aspirin, or blood thinners. Use with Cymbalta may increase bleeding risk.
- about your alcohol use.

Important Safety Information (continued)

- about your blood pressure. Cymbalta can increase your blood pressure. Your healthcare provider should check your blood pressure prior to and while taking Cymbalta.
- if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant during therapy or are breastfeeding.

While taking Cymbalta, talk to your healthcare provider right away:

- if you have dizziness, light upper belly pain, dark urine, yellow sootiness, or unexplained bruise symptoms, which may be signs of liver problems. Severe liver problems, sometimes fatal, have been reported.
- if you have high fever, confusion and stiff muscles, which may be symptoms of a potentially life-threatening condition.
- if you have skin blisters, sores, or peeling skin, fever, mouth sores, or any other allergic reaction. These may be serious, possibly life-threatening skin reactions.
- if you experience dizziness or fainting upon standing. This tends to occur in the first week or when increasing the dose, but may occur at any time during treatment.
- before you stop Cymbalta or change your dose.
- if you experience headache, weakness, confusion, problems concentrating, memory problems, or feel anything, which may be signs of low sodium levels.
- if you develop problems with urine flow.

Most common side effects of Cymbalta (this is not a complete list):

- nausea, dry mouth, dizziness, fatigue, constipation, diarrhea, decreased appetite, and increased sweating.

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.

Other safety information about Cymbalta:

- Cymbalta may cause drowsiness and dizziness. Until you know how Cymbalta affects you, you should not drive a car or operate hazardous machinery.
- People age 65 and older who took Cymbalta reported more falls, some resulting in serious injuries.

How to take Cymbalta:

Take Cymbalta exactly as directed by your healthcare provider. Cymbalta should be taken by mouth. Do not open, crush, or chew tablets. If you are swallowing whole, Cymbalta can be taken with or without food.

Cymbalta is available by prescription only.

DO NOT USE Cymbalta.

See next page for additional information about Cymbalta, including boxed warning about antidepressants and risk of suicide.



Cymbalta®
duloxetine HCl
30mg 30mg 60mg
DELAYED
RELEASE
CAPSULES



For more information, visit cymbalta.com or call 1-877-CYMBALTA (1-877-296-2256).

Lilly

Information For Patients About Cymbalta

Please read this information carefully before you or your family member start taking Cymbalta (duloxetine), and each time you get a prescription is refilled, in case anything has changed or new information is available. This information is not meant to take the place of discussions with your healthcare provider. Talk with your healthcare provider or pharmacist if there is something you do not understand or if you want to learn more about Cymbalta. Always follow your healthcare provider's instructions for taking Cymbalta.

What is the most important information I should know about Cymbalta?

Warning: In clinical studies, antidepressants increased the risk of suicidal thoughts and behavior in children, adolescents, and young adults with depression and other psychiatric disorders. Anyone considering the use of Cymbalta or any other antidepressant must balance this risk with the potential benefits. Often, these studies did not show an increase in the risk of suicidal thinking or behavior with antidepressants in adults older than 24, there is a reduction in risk with antidepressants in adults 65 and older. Suicide is a known risk or symptom and some other psychiatric disorders. All patients starting antidepressant therapy should be monitored appropriately and closely. Families and caregivers should discuss with the healthcare provider right away any observations of worsening depression symptoms, suicidal thinking and behavior, or unusual changes in behavior. Cymbalta is not approved for use in patients under age 18.

Patients on antidepressants and their families or caregivers should watch for new or worsening depression symptoms, unusual changes in behavior and thoughts of suicide, as well as for any anxiety, panic attacks, difficulty sleeping, irritability, hostility, aggressiveness, impulsivity, restlessness, or violence. Immediately call your healthcare provider right away if you have thoughts of suicide or if any of these symptoms is severe or occurs suddenly. Be especially observant while on the first few months of treatment or whenever there is a change in dose.

What is Cymbalta?

Cymbalta is a prescription medicine approved to treat multiple conditions: the treatment of major depressive disorder (MDD), as well as depression, generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), management of fibromyalgia (FM), the management of diabetic peripheral neuropathic pain also called diabetic nerve pain (DNP), and the management of chronic musculoskeletal pain due to chronic osteoarthritis (see and chronic back pain).

Who should NOT take Cymbalta?

You should not take Cymbalta if:
• You are taking a type of antidepressant known as a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI), such as Nardil® (phenelzamine sulfate), Parnate® (tranylcypromine sulfate), or Elavil® (doxepin hydrochloride) agent. Using an MAOI with many prescription medicines, including Cymbalta, can cause serious or even life-threatening reactions. You must wait at least 14 days after you have stopped taking an MAOI before you take Cymbalta.

You need to wait at least 1 week after you stop taking Cymbalta before you take an MAOI.

- You have uncontrolled narrow-angle glaucoma (increased eye pressure)
- You are taking an antipsychotic medicine (such as Mellaril®) (medication)

What should I talk to my healthcare provider about before taking Cymbalta?

- About any medicine (including you may have) including history or liver problems (glaucoma, diabetes, seizures, or if you have certain disease. Cymbalta may worsen a type of glaucoma or the control of blood sugar in some patients with diabetes
- If you are taking or plan to take any prescription or nonprescription medicines, as Cymbalta may interact with some of these products
- If you take medicines known as agents commonly prescribed to migraine or headaches to treat or prevent headaches. A potentially life-threatening condition may occur if taken with Cymbalta
- If you take NSAID pain relievers, aspirin or blood thinners. Use with Cymbalta may increase risk of bleeding
- About your alcohol use
- About your blood pressure. Cymbalta can lower your blood pressure. Your healthcare provider should check your blood pressure prior to and while taking Cymbalta
- If you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breastfeeding. If you take a voluntary birth control method, your healthcare provider should check your blood pressure prior to and while taking Cymbalta
- If you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breastfeeding. If you take a voluntary birth control method, your healthcare provider should check your blood pressure prior to and while taking Cymbalta
- If you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breastfeeding. If you take a voluntary birth control method, your healthcare provider should check your blood pressure prior to and while taking Cymbalta

What should I talk to my healthcare provider about while taking Cymbalta?

- Call your healthcare provider right away if:
• If you have serious side effects, such as pain, dark urine, yellowing of the skin or eyes, or unexplained bruising or bleeding. These may be signs of liver problems. Severe liver problems sometimes last, have been reported
- If you have high fever, confusion and stiff muscles, which may be signs of a potentially life-threatening condition
- If you have low blood pressure, dizziness or feeling lightheaded, fainting, or any other allergic reaction. These may be signs of a potentially life-threatening condition
- If you experience dizziness or lightheadedness when standing. This tends to occur in the first week or when increasing the dose, but may occur at any time. Stand up slowly, especially when used in combination with certain other drugs
- Before stopping Cymbalta or changing your dose. Stopping Cymbalta may result in symptoms including dizziness, headache, or headache
- (See a separate leaflet) Your healthcare provider may wish to decrease the dose slowly
- If you experience headache, weakness, confusion, problems concentrating, memory problems, or feel jittery, which may be signs of low blood levels
- If you develop problems with urine flow

What should I avoid while taking Cymbalta?

- Cymbalta may cause dizziness and drowsiness. Until your healthcare provider tells you otherwise, do not drive or operate hazardous machinery

What are the most common side effects of Cymbalta?
• In clinical studies (as approved indication), the most common side effect was nausea
• Other common side effects included dry mouth, dizziness, fatigue, constipation, diarrhea, decreased appetite, and increased sweating

This is not a complete list of side effects.

See boxed warning, "Who should NOT take Cymbalta?" and "What should I talk to my healthcare provider about while taking Cymbalta?" For prescribing information, or more information, talk to your healthcare provider. If you have questions or develop any side effects, 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.

What else should I know if I'm on Cymbalta?

- People age 65 and older who took Cymbalta reported more falls, some resulting in serious injuries
- What should I do if I think I have taken an overdose of Cymbalta?
If you have taken more Cymbalta than prescribed for you, contact your healthcare provider, a hospital emergency room, or the nearest poison control center immediately

How should I take Cymbalta?

- Take Cymbalta exactly as directed by your healthcare provider
- Take Cymbalta by mouth. Do not open, break, or chew capsules, swallow it whole
- Cymbalta can be taken with or without food
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. However, if it is time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and take only your regularly scheduled dose. Do not take more than the only amount of Cymbalta prescribed for you
- Talk with your healthcare provider before stopping Cymbalta or changing your dose

Signs of a change about Cymbalta

- Signs Cymbalta is near temperature and out of reach of children
- Medicines are sometimes given out for purposes other than the ones listed. This medication has been prescribed for your condition or condition. Do not use it for another condition or give this drug to anyone else
- If you have any questions or concerns, want to report any problems with the use of Cymbalta, or want more information, contact your healthcare provider or pharmacist

Additional information can be found at www.cymbalta.com

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This Old House blueprint



CPACE300 Three-Tool Combo Kit

The Skentry-Beckwith CSPACE300 includes the tools you need to tackle just about any fine woodworking project. The 25-in. 16-gauge finish nailer, 3-in. 18-gauge Brad nailer, 1 1/2-in. 18-gauge oil-free stapler and 2.0 HP (peak) 6-gallon oil-free compressor will help you achieve the professional results you want. Beadfast.com

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Quikrete® Mason Mix

QUIKRETE® Mason Mix is a construction-grade masonry mix designed for laying brick, concrete blocks and precast blocks. Mason Mix can be used for structural and non-structural applications for many types of projects. How to project videos check out quikrete.com. Follow us on Facebook.



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Cats everywhere are having a hard time smelling their litter boxes.

freshstep.com

weekend
remodel

How to install a herringbone floor

Use prefinished engineered flooring to create a chevron showstopper

By CODY CALABARO • Photography by VICKIE L. YOUNG

If you have a wood floor that contains a built-in focal point, try adding a section of classic herringbone parquet. Just know that the proper installation isn't a breeze. "This is the pattern that even the pros mess up," says Charles Peterson, author of *Wood Flooring: A Complete Guide to Layout, Installation & Finishing*. Verring off course by even a fraction of an inch will send the whole pattern into helter-skelter. But don't worry—Peterson's method will keep you on track. Merely, he used prefinished planks for our project, so no sanding or staining. Follow along on the next page with the man who wrote the book on the subject.



For complete
instructions, turn
the page

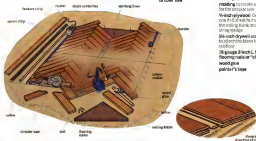
Why? Durable Engineered Oak Composite flooring planks with real pine Quarter-Sawn Flooring. www.sawdust.com

Cost: \$40-50 per square foot
Time: Two full days
Skill: Crafty hand. The pattern is complex but requires precision and patience.

tools
measuring tape
chalk line
brannet
square
straightedge
drilling square

other saw
rubber mallet
router with 3/4-inch flooring bit to groove the ends of the herringbone slats
router square
drill/driver
flooring nailer
circular saw

materials
engineered tongue-and-groove strip flooring. Have your supplier determine how much you need, but figure on 15 percent waste.
flange and splice strips to frame the herringbone field flooring system
nailing to create a guide for the circular saw
1/4-inch plywood. Get one 4-foot-wide to make the nailing block and a straightedge
3/4-inch drywall screws to attach the block to the subfloor
1/2-gauge 2-inch-L, head flooring nails or "cleats" wood glue
painter's tape



1. Determine the layout

A. Mark the centerline. Snap a chalk line down the center of the room, along its length. Then use a brannet to mark a perpendicular line. With the brannet's point on one end of the centerline, draw a reference arc across from the other end, and draw intersecting arcs as shown. Use a straightedge to connect the points where the arcs intersect. Now you can measure off these perpendicular lines to create the rectangular field the herringbone will occupy.

B. Set the slat length. Herringbone slats must be cut to a length that is an exact multiple of their width. But unless you're math genius, first lay out pieces at one end, and approximate length will fit within your field. You want to find what full length will fit at each end. Use a rubber square to place the first piece at a 45-degree angle to the centerline, then plugging out to the side, over-lapping pieces at 90 degrees to adjust for length. Once you're in the ballpark, set the exact length to make that measurement. We chose a length of 27 inches to work with our 3-inch-wide flooring.

2. Prep the slats

A. Make a test panel. Once you have your slat length, measure and mark one strip with the tongue and groove, and cut it with a rubber saw. Use a rubber mallet to dry fit the number of strips that equal the length of the test slab—minus our case. But the tongue of the test slab sits the panel's end groove to make sure the slat's end is perfectly flush with the panel's edge. As shown, if they aren't, saw another piece and test it again.

B. Cut the slats. When you're satisfied with the slat length, set up a router block and cut the remaining slats, making sure to keep all the tongue ends.

C. Add grooves to the flat ends. Herringbone slats need grooves in both ends to properly interlock. Use the groove of a slat to set the depth of the flooring router bit. Clamp one end to a workbench and rout the cut end. Fill a tongue into the new groove to check your work. It's okay, rout the rest of the slats.



Tip Sweep out any sawdust at the stop block after every cut, otherwise the buildup will throw off all your efforts to make slats of a perfectly equal length.

3. Establish the working lines

A. Set the working distance. You need to draw parallel working lines on either side of the centerline to align the corners of each slat as you place it. Use a rubber square to mark a 45-degree angle from one corner at each end, as shown, for your first working line. To get the distance to the second working line, draw a line from the opposite corner to intersect the first line. Now make nine more lines, nine from the intersection of the T, perpendicular to the edge of the slat. From that point on the edge, draw a line parallel with the top of the T to represent the centerline.

B. Mark the floor. Place the slat so that the first line you drew covers the centerline, as shown. Make a mark at each corner of the slat at several intervals along the centerline. Use a straightedge to connect the marks and form two working lines.



4. Lay the first chevron

A. Install the nailing blocks. Using a circular saw cut the factory joint at a angle of 30 degrees to the subfloor. Lay the nailing block on the subfloor. Mark the center of the block and lay it against one of the working lines. Position the block so that it fits on the top border of your field and screw it to the subfloor. Rotate a groove along the block's two forward edges. The area occupied by the block will be filled in with the nailing blocks during Step 5C.

B. Establish the pattern. Align the first slot with the side of the block covering the center line for the rip cut. Lay the second slot along the other side of the block, overlapping the end of the first, as shown, with its corners aligned with the working lines and the tongue facing out.

C. Nail the slats in place. Position a flooring nailer against the tongue edge of the first slot. Strike the nailer with a mallet to drive every 5 inches along the slot. Check the alignment of the second slot. Then nail it in place.



5. Fill in the field

A. Finish the course and reverse the block. Install the third slot overlapping the end of the second slot. Lay the fourth slot overlapping the end of the third slot, and so on. Continue the pattern until the joint of the chevron reaches the border. (Show the block, reverse it, and place it against the tongue of the first slot.) Finish with the end. Screw it to the subfloor, as shown.

B. Begin the second course. Butt the next slot against the block tongue out. Check for a tight joint, and nail it in place. Continue until the chevron reaches the opposite border. Keep adding slats until they reach the side borders.

C. Backfill the empty triangles. You can trowl into the groove of a slot, so you have to reverse the nailer direction to cover the areas left by the block. To do that, you need a flooring spire which allows you to butt two grooves together. Run a bead of wood glue in the groove of an installed slot, as shown. Insert the spire and nail it down like you would any other slot. Now work off that "tongue" in edgework until the border of your field is covered.



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6. Finish the edges

A. Mark the overlap for removal. Where the slats overlap the field's borders, you'll have to get a straight line. Use painter's tape to mark a guideline, as shown. The tape will guard against splintering, too, as you cut.

B. Cut off the excess. Some extra of molding or other material as a narrow length of plywood, place the fence of a circular saw against the strip, and the plywood is create a long cutting guide for the saw. Line up the guide over the tape and, using spacers, screw to the outdoor sheetrock extends just the installed flooring. Set the circular saw on the guide and adjust the depth of the blade to a hair more than the thickness of the slats. Then the slats along the border, as shown. Do the same thing on the other three sides of the field.

C. Add grooves to the edges. Use the router to cut a groove around the perimeter so that you can add an apron of long flooring strips to frame the herringbone.



6



see how
it's done

To watch a video of this
project, visit thisoldhouse.com/weekend2012



7



7. Add the apron

A. Attach a herringbone strip. Run a bead of wood glue in the groove along one side of the herringbone field and insert a long spline. Then tap the spline in place. Repeat for the other three sides. Now install a decorative wood piece to define the edge of the field, as used in the photo.

B. Nail the border pieces. For the next layer in the apron, measure and cut a spline to ensure a close fit. Use the nailer to install each strip so the field overlaps the end of the next. Log cabin style in a frame around the field. Continue nailing border pieces until your apron is complete. ■

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—Norm Abram

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THE TOH TOP 100 BEST NEW HOME PRODUCTS 2012

Every year, as we start thinking about the Top 100, the same thing happens: panic. How will we ever unearth so many worthy products? We have high standards, after all. (But judging from the items that follow, we needn't have worried. There's the ice tray that won't split (page 82), the drain plug that sheds clogs (page 84), and the wood decking that resists rot (page 93). Then there's carpet that stands up to an elephant and all that a six-ton pachyderm can dish out (page 96). In the end, our editors found many more than 100, so we took the 10 that almost made it and decided to share them online. Now we'd like you to chime in. After you're done reading these pages, go to theoldhouse.com/top101, where you'll be taken to Facebook to vote for your favorite. The winner will be TOH's 101st best home product of the year. Still pretty great when you think about the thousands we considered.



THE TOH
TOP 100
BEST NEW HOME
PRODUCTS
2012



ICON KEY

- memory saver
- easy upgrade
- perfect solution
- eco-friendly
- upgrade
- made in the USA



KITCHEN



Ice and easy

NO SPL! ICE CUBE TRAY, BY DKO
No more crying over spilled water, thanks to this silicone lid that seals in water on the quick release lid. It even works if you fill the tray or store it at an angle. Really. We tried it. \$10, also.com



Painless setup

ALLOW A FAUCET WITH ICICLE HANDLE, BY DELTA
The only cranking you'll do to install this DPK-friendly faucet is to make the water connections. Mounting it to the sink—all that work happens above deck. Need we say more? From \$450, deltaxfaucet.com



Kick the ice bucket

DOOR KICKER, BY DKO KICKLE
This so simple it's ingenious. Freezer-safe sliplock keeps chilled water cool for up to an hour at the table—and honestly, any bottle isn't likely to last much longer than that anyway. Very cool. \$25, kickle.com

Artisanal V8

VERT VRT350, BY GARÇA
Lemoning fruit and veggies usually means sacrificing fiber in the form of discarded pulp. But this unique style extractor gives you the option of more pulp. Its small footprint earns it a reserved seat on the counter. \$380, garcagroup.com



No-rot cabinet

CONQUERO SHIR BASE CABINET, BY KRAFTMAID
Here's an idea we've been waiting for: A seamless synthetic post that right into the structure of this better-than-silver cabinet under sink tests. From \$225, kraftmaid.com



Bean counter

SEMIAN GOLD SURFACING, BY EQUIT
No easy oil-based urethane with powdered glass, and what do you get? A so-so white-meat countertop that's a 25 percent lighter than other solid surfaces like Corian—and better price. From \$15 per square foot, eequit.com



Well toned

SLATE FINISH, BY GE
Ready to retire an item from stainless steel appliances? Want a more grayish look that looks terrific without the surgical steel? It begins, rings, ends, and it partners smartly with wood cabinets—and all your old appliances, so come to appliances



Mock-rock tile

ALTERED PREMIUM GRABBLE VINYL TILE, BY ARMSTRONG
Potted as These 18-inch tiles look vinyl squares, which contain breakable glass. They're a convincingly textured pattern that repeats only every 36 tiles. They can even be grouted. \$4.50 per square foot, armstrong.com

Load it up

FOUR-TIER DISHWASHER, BY ASKO
Three racks and a cutlery tray can be rearranged to swallow pots, pans, baking sheets, skewers and a whopping 12 place settings. And it actually does. \$1,499, askodishwasher.com



Cuts a new profile

GLASS MINI PENDANT, BY VALLÉE
One part vintage pendant, one part cage shop light, this unique fixture is made from hand-forged recycled steel. It's available in this bronze finish as well as a less industrial pearl white. \$249, vallee.com



Smooth moves

WULF-PALMER SOFT CLOSE EUROPEAN HINGES, BY HANSON RESOURCES
If you have Euro-style hinges without the coveted soft close mechanism, these offer a remarkably affordable upgrade. An integrated piston, rather than a damping unit, absorbing bumps from slamming shut. Available for inset or overlay doors. \$3.50 each, build.com

APPS

iGranite

GRANITETRANSFORMATIONS.COM
Test drive a countertop you love. Upload a pic of your kitchen, choose a stone style and color, then swipe on the new material. Free, too. iOS

Paprika

PAPRIKAAPP.COM
Store your favorite recipes from the Web in a single spot accessible by tablet or smartphone. \$4.99 for iOS and Android



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BATH



Snag-free stopper

POP UP CUPBUSH
SHOWER BY PJ
WALKER/SONES

The culprit in the plug is often the connecting rod: the part that rises and lowers the sink's drain stopper and catches hair and other gunk. The rod for this sleek stopper plugs the hole from the side and but doesn't protrude into the drain. How could it work then? Magic! \$15 homedepot.com



What a dish

GRID GRIP-FRESS-SURE CORNER CADDY BY DOD

Suction cups and shower tiles don't mix. This soap dish uses tension and friction with interlocking squishy thickgel pads into the two walls of any corner—grout lines and porous tile left damaged. You'll be amazed! It's gone. \$30 asos.com



A real splash

GOLDEN-TEARFUL JONATHAN KOLER BATHROOM DUNGEON BY KOLHER

Take about a bright idea. The king of cast iron partnered with a pop designer to produce four vivid shades of bathroom. Choose from Provably Yellow, Green, Red, Green, Palermo Blue, and Annapolis Navy to jazz up your room. From \$295 kohler.com

No tools required

CLICK-BULL PLASTIC CONNECTOR BY FUSIONMASTER

Hook-up faucets to the water supply by hand! Lightening the connector's fittings. As with a pin-in, when you hear the click, you know you've got a leak-free seal. Fits most standard valves. \$5-\$8 fusionmaster.com



Pause-worthy

OUTDOOR SHOWERHEAD FRODO BY LEVIGUE

For low-tech, low-flowing days are numbered thanks to this digitally controlled sprayer. A push button controls the flow so that water doesn't wash all soap or shaving cream previously, or go wasted down the drain when you step out of the shower. \$80 leviague.com

Down with waste

CHARTHOUSE TOILET BY KORA

By using targeted nozzles and gently, the toilet focuses water around the bowl so that just 1 gallon is enough. Glaze on the porcelain promotes a fully flush. \$463 korausa.com



Soft touch

ARTS TILES BY PARKER ZINGER

Made from reclaimed Indonesian teak, a wood known as much for its rot resistance as its softness, these tiles add pattern and texture to bathrooms well just not in the shower stall. Then the mesh-mounted pieces with a circular saw are gone, and be sure to use the cream-colored modified standard grout. From \$18 per square foot. walkzinger.com



Fun with fauna

BUGS-CLASSIC COLLECTION TILES BY THE WINCHESTER TILE COMPANY

Under different conditions, a stag beetle or crane fly in a bathroom will frighten, alarm, but these insects in fire-stained relief charm us. Set one or a few hand-painted ceramic pieces in a field of pale tiles for a creatively cost-effective redo with a touch of whimsy. From \$25 per tile. winchestertiles.com

APPS

NKBA Kitchen & Bathroom Planning Guidelines

Before dipping out any features, browse this trade group's design for code references to make sure your mind is up to snuff! \$4.99 for iOS and Android

MagicPlan

SENOH/ADORE

Snag photos of any potential powder room's corners and this app generates a floor plan you can fill with fixtures and finishes. Free for iOS

Curvy Arts and Crafts

INDEPENDENT ARTS & CRAFTS SINGLE RAIL BRACKET BY RECREATION

Reproduced from a 1907 Bauer Gas Fixture Works catalog, this lamp bracket just enough Arts and Crafts—in the shape of a new, its separate from the singular Arts and Crafts pieces. \$295 as shown. recreation.com



Compact soaker

100 TUB BY VICTORIA + ALBERT

It's a classic claw-foot would hog too much space, you'll love this double-ended freestanding soaker. Made from an easy-to-clean limestone-rust composite, it's just 31 1/2 by 55 by 23 1/2 inches, yet it holds 120 gallons. \$4,400 victoriavictoria.com

Done with demo

UNIVERSAL TUB AND SHOWER SET BY PRINTER

This versatile tub/shower replacement fixture fits right at the end of the universal shower valves from Delta, Moen, and Pfister, so you don't have to demo the wall to replace the broken one. From \$79 homedepot.com



It cleans up nice

REVEL, CLEAN & RINSE PLUNGER BY RUBBERMAID

Worse than cleaning steps is the business of cleaning the plunger afterward. Not so with this sleeker. A special polymer coating sheds water instantly, so you don't end up with a sticky puddle on the floor. \$23 rubbermaid.com



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see what Delta can do

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for a little change.

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TOOLS



Brainy extension cord

ROBBERELL POWER CORD SYSTEM BY GREAT STUFF

True, this 12-gauge extension cord costs more than the brute saw it will power, but we couldn't find up the convenience of automatic retraction, a 360-degree swivel, and smart safety features. Like auto-shutoff of the cord is severed or gets too hot. \$279. robberell.com



A bit better

AUTO-STOP SCREWDRIVER ADJUSTER BY RYOBI

The laser bit drives along on the threaded shaft of this bit extender acts as a stop, so you can set how deep you drive your screws—great for hanging drywall or building decks. \$30. ryobitools.com

Let there be light

LIGHTING LOG HOSE PLUMBERS 3200L BY GRIPSTASH

Tucked between this offer a pair is an LED light that projects 10-300 hours of light right where you need it. It is powered by three replaceable watch batteries, soiled up, soiled, soiled, and dust. \$49. gripstash.com



Smooth move

9-INCH CORO-LITE BAMBOO-GRIT SANDER LAUREL BY MAKITA

We hate sanding too, so cheers to the arrival of a cord-free sander with grits. Expect about 20 minutes of run time on a ride from the 15-volt battery. 40 on low. \$279. makitatools.com



Twice as nice

DEWALT ORBITER SCREWDRIVER SET BY KOBALT

This rotating screwdriver tightens during both halves of the rotation. Thanks to a straight barrel guiding inside. The result? It drives or looses screws without the time it takes a typical rotating screwdriver. All while giving manual control. \$20. kobalttools.com

Mix, pour, store

MIXING MATS 44880 BY KOBALT

Replace the before your quart-size paint or finish can with this device, crush the sugar to mix and press the lever to pull for a controlled pour. When you're done? Leave the lid to store it. Next up a primer mix version. \$25. kobalt.com



Cut the rug

MULTI-MIX MULTI-SHAPE MANDREL BY DREMEL

Until now, nobody made an oscillating tool blade that cut like a knife. This one makes meticulously short work of slicing through carpet, vinyl flooring, roofing shingles, foam insulation, or house wrap. Push your gut through the material. \$25. dremel.com



Marathon driver

MILWAUKEE 2659 20V LITHIUM-ION DRIVER BY MILWAUKEE

Grassless motors are the holy grail of cordless tools because they provide longer battery life, greater torque and extended durability over conventional motors. Now you can have one on a tool that doesn't cost \$400 or more. If you need a new 20-volt cordless driver, this is. \$230. milwaukee.com



A smarter workbench

BENCHMARK PORTABLE WORK TABLE TOOL BY HANER TOOLS

Wide, 3-inch-deep channels in the crossbars of this 53-pound aluminum frame workbench make cutting sheet goods like plywood a breeze. You can make rip cuts or crosscuts without worrying about slicing through the tabletop. And it's shockingly strong. \$400. benchmarktable.com



The true tale of the tape

FAST-PAID LIXER LIFE BY LIXER TOOLS

Measuring, taping and cutting once only works if your tape is honest. Put your hook in the slot of this handy checker and pull them push those 1/16ths 6-inch marks this between the laser-etched metal of a window or plate or mirror. 0.030 inch. Close enough for us. \$21. lixertools.com

Pretty slick

SILICONE SLICE BRUSH 45634 BY ROKLER

Place your hand if you clean your brushes. We thought so. Most get tossed after one use. This 7-inch-long up-and-downer was built up after the glue dried because the brushes are made of slick silicone. In fact, cleaning is easier if you're in the glue cure. Then, it's off. \$4.99. rokler.com



APPS

Cut

Calculator 845491575.0006 COM

Enter the lengths of lumber, spurs, goods, crown molding, pipe and other materials for a project, and this app produces a cutting plan that gets the most out of your stock, minimizing waste. Invaluable. \$5.99 for iPad only.

Woodcraft

restraint.com

With a few taps and swipes of your finger, you can design wood furniture from a built-in library of stock lumber pieces or find furniture plans that others have made. \$9.99 for iOS.

Do the twist

SYNO 4-VOLT RECHARGEABLE SCREWDRIVER RECCORDS BY BLACK & DECKER

Tiny tech comes to tools. A Wi-Fi-like synoptic sensor sends the light-duty driver words no longer. Then your hand right to tighten. Let it loose, too. You inside the tool. The bit spins. The built-in battery holds a charge for 15 months, making it our go-to kitchen driver tool. \$43. blackanddecker.com



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HOME TECH

Hey, it works for the sun
RAYMAJIC RADIANT CEILING ORNAMENT PANELS, BY RAYMAJIC

These foam and aluminum tubing panels radiate silent, even, and drift-free warmth from the ceiling, making retrofitting a breeze—no need to rig up floors. They can be installed for cooling & dry heat. About \$12 per square foot. raymajic.com



Vaporize crud
MULTIVAPOR PRO 35 25 15 10 AMP, BY MAJOR

Germs don't stand a chance against 22-degree Vapor air stream, especially when combined with a novel scrubbing motion that works with gel and steam and disk spins. That's right—the cleaner goes outside. Too. \$240. beehive.com



Smarty-pants dryer
FRONT-LOAD SMART DRYER SYSTEM, BY SAMSUNG

This dryer will outflow 7½ cubic feet of clothing and give your smartphone when your laundry is done, when the duct logs with heat, reducing the risk of fire. \$1,699. samsung.com/us

Power roofing
APOLLO SOLAR ROOFING SYSTEM, BY CRYSTALINE

We're all for solar panels that fit into the roofline less obviously, and these go right over the steel beam angle of shingles. Each panel has 24 polycrystalline cells and generates up to 52 watts per hour and withstands wind and 130 mph wind. About \$200 per panel. crystalline.com



Friendly fire
TRUE SERIES GAS FIREPLACES, BY HEAT & GLASS

Realistic, hovering flames that pump out 65,000 BTUs through the largest glass-viewing area of any gas-burning unit—up to 50 inches across—make it difficult to distinguish this from the most burning real thing. From \$4,560. heatandglass.com

Lock on
VERILOCK SENSOR, BY ANDERSON CORP/NOVA

Whether sensors built into the lock backs communicate with Honeywell home security systems to let you know not only if your windows are shut but also if they're locked or not. The sensors are available on all six Anderson C-series windows. \$300 up. chicago.net/windows-anderson.com



Plug into the future
USB CHARGER WITH DUPLEX TRIPLEX, BY COOPER POWER DEVICES

It won't be long before all receptacles include USB ports for your gadgets. But we're sure to have one with children's shutters on the AC ports in a low-profile body and 1.42 inches deep that makes recharging a cinch. From \$35. cooperpowerdevices.com

Truly alarming
IONIC SMOKE AND FIRE ALARMS, BY UNIVERSAL SECURITY INC/PERFORMANCE

A new microprocessor that identifies the signature of real fires—instead of your faded flames—dramatically cuts down on nuisance alarms. But if it's still sensitive enough to sniff both fast and slow smoldering fires. From \$25. www.fallsmoke.com

APPS

Lightbulb Finder
LIGHTBULB FINDER, BY LUMEN

Laden with helpful photos and specs, this app rates the quality of switching to allow for CFL and LEDs by suggesting ones that will actually work with your fixtures. Free for iOS and Android.

Serial Box
SERIAL BOX, BY LUMEN

Keep track of your house's influences—and keep the lid with you—by storing data and information, such as serial numbers, right on your tablet or smartphone. You'll have it handy if, heaven forbid, you need to share it with the police one time. Free, for iOS.

New bulb, old shape
ADVANCE LIGHTED, BY 3M

Franklin's elegant surface inside that bulb distributes photons evenly from top to bottom without the hard shadows common to most LEDs. But with the same friendly shape of the bulb, we give away. It glows as bright as a 60-watt incandescent and uses only 15 watts of electricity. \$25. 3m.com



Hiding behind tradition
MINIRED CABINET MEDIA SOLUTION, BY POTTERY BARN

What a nice way to get back to real life after prime time. This open-back media cabinet swivels your odds, hides, or blends into a traditional look. Hiding behind and embracing retro wallpaper doors. The cabinet will accommodate a 40-inch TV and stands just 6 inches off the wall. \$499. potterybarn.com



Complete control
REAL SMART KIT, BY LUMEN

Finally, home automation for the rest of us. This affordable system lets the first to work with all the top top companies—Wi-Fi, ZigBee, and Z-Wave—so you can get a wireless lock from one protocol, say, and a thermostat from another. Starts at \$19. lumen.com



Temperature tinkerer
NEXT LEARNING THERMOSTAT, BY NEST

The previous push, the Wi-Fi-enabled thermostat is an active learner. It remembers how you set temps, then automatically adjusts these patterns. And then it gets better, sensing whether you're home and overriding the program when necessary. \$249. nest.com



Open sesame
SUNLITE REMOTE CONTROL SHADES, BY LUMEN

To get around the hassle—and significant expense—of hard-wiring motor and window coverings, these cellular shades run on batteries hidden in the top rail. Choose an infrared remote or a smart remote, or a radio frequency one (perfectly handy to use in the shade). From \$209. lumen.com



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OUTDOOR LIVING



Water bed

AQUACREVER KISSED BED SET BY SARDENER & SUPPLY

The powder-coated aluminum corners in this lets-accept-chock-little-idea idea are just one thing that makes a container raised bed stand out from the crowd. The smartest part: A built-in spigot means you can hook up your soaker hose and control it right from the bed. From \$70, gardeners.com

Foolproof seed

STA GRASS SEED WITH HYPERICIN FUEL TECHNOLOGY BY INFINITY LAWN AND GARDEN

The cheapest, easy way to create a lawn? Plant grass seed with the fertilizer built into the seed itself. \$23 for a 7-pound bag. infinitylawn.com



Gate in a box

GATE KIT BY SMIRNICH

No more fiddling with a chain-link door looking for gaps, or if you have the freedom of the system. The stainless-steel coils, brackets, hinges, and fasteners are all here. Customize the size with stainless steel. \$266, smirnich.com



Fix for funky fuel

ADVANCED FORMULA FUEL TREATMENT & STABILIZER BY BROOKS & STRATTON

Quick is a technical term, and it describes what this gasoline additive does to your lawnmower. It's a technical term, and it describes what this gasoline additive does to your lawnmower. It's a technical term, and it describes what this gasoline additive does to your lawnmower. \$13 for 16 ounces, brooksandstratton.com



Better burble up

48-INCH DRIVE LAWN MOWER WITH HYDRA-MAX BY HUSQVARNA

A brilliantly simple concept: Build a better mower so that you can finish the job sooner. The hydrostatic transmission in this tractor-like mower lets you shift the job to the faster speed for mowers at this price level. Now you can get on with the weekend. \$1,900, husqvarna.com



Safer soaker

SLAM-LIGHT PAPER-STRIP GARDEN HOSE BY WATER RIGHT

What really sets this lead-free, and phthalate-free polymer hose apart is how easy it is to roll around. A 50-foot section weighs only 3 pounds. That's a courtesy the brass fittings. \$60, waterright.com



Blosser leaves for blueberries

BOUNTYFUL BLUE BLOSSOM BY MONSIEUR

Blosser leaves are great—unless better if they look attractive after the frost falls. This new variety of blueberry starts with greenish-white flowers before developing large berries. More than most other varieties, it can hold the fruit for an appealing couple of weeks. \$20 for one plant in a 3-gallon container. monsieur.com

APPS

Essence Builder

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT.COM Choose from various fencing styles and materials to customize a fence to your liking and your yard's dimensions. Even better, this app will calculate picket spacing and generate a shopping list. \$2.99, for iOS

Garden Plan Pro

GARDENPLANNING.COM Using a library of thousands of species, this tool recommends optimal planting times for your location, suggests garden layouts, calculates plant spacing, and much more. \$20 for iPad only



The great cover-up

PEEL STOP TRIPLE-THICK PRIMER BY TRESSER

How thick is 30 mil per coat? Well, it's thick, really. It's a triple-thick primer that lets you leave it to hang out and seal a surface in just one day. It's also a piece of cake to peel off. It dries opaque white like a primer should, and plays nice with both latex and oil paints. \$16 per gallon, tresser.com



Bringing the indoors out

PEEL STOP TRIPLE-THICK PRIMER BY TRESSER

We still can't believe it's polypropylene. This plush rug pile is far friendlier to bare feet than typical outdoor flat weaves, and the anti-static polymers like this Moroccan inspiration make any space spring to life. From \$300, tresser.com

Rubber pavers

ASER VAST PAVERS BY ASER BUILDING PRODUCTS

Made from recycled tires and plastics, these tough, slip-resistant "pavers" snap into place that make quick work of laying patios, driveways, and walkways. Once they're in, you're done—the joints are plenty tight. \$50 per square foot, aser.com



Henhouse for the burbs

PORTABLE SHEDDING DOOR BY HANDBRAFTED DOORS

Up to six hens can roost in the loft at night and head down to the protection of the covered area during the day. Once they're done, the henhouse pulls up and goes, just grab the sturdy handles and find a new spot. \$699, handcrafteddoors.com

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BUILDING PRODUCTS



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Picture the possibilities

DESIGNED EXTERIOR SHUTTERS BY PLYGEM



Mix and match Plygem shutters, shutters, windows, screens, and more on any one of 23 lifestyle home styles online and you'll get a good sense of just how your interior/exterior complements may turn out. Free. plygem.com

Quadromania

GLASS WINDOW BY DESIGNER



What's the point of a window with minor single-pane windows, one that swings out and one that swings in? How about an insulating value of R-24, seven times more than a standard double-pane window? It's like putting up a ball of insulation. Except you can see through it. Price not set. designerquadromania.com



One glue to bind them all

902 GLUE BY LUGATITE



Choose the right adhesive for home repairs just got easier. Thanks to this new nine-part hybrid polyurethane that doesn't bubble, run or drip. Works on wood, metal and some plastics. It dries clear and cures at room temperature. \$6. luciteproducts.com



Durable details

TRAVERTER TRIM BY PORAL



Make things at the edge of your home look even better. Porcelain trim is as light and stiff as wood but won't burn or rot, swell or shrink. PVC won't expand or contract at all. \$1.50 per linear foot for 1-4 in. poraltrim.com



Fab prefab

UNITY HOMES BY BENCHWOOD



You expect factory built homes to be efficient, but the one going beyond the norm without breaking the bank. Cellulose insulated wall and roof panels, such more than a foot thick, board triple-pane windows and an airtight seal, which translates into energy usage that's just one-fourth that of a typical home. Starting at less than \$200,000 for a 1,500-square-foot cottage. unityhomes.com



Liquid jackhammer

ECOCUT BY ECOCUT DISTRIBUTION INTERNATIONAL



Demolishing concrete with a jackhammer may sound fun, but it's actually dirty, deafening, time-consuming, labor to do a few holes. Fill them with the stuff and wait. An expensive chemical reaction that results in 2000 psi of pressure under up to 100 lbs of force for an 11-gallon bucket of mix. ecocut.com



Worry-free wood

WEATHERWOOD BY EASTMAN-CHEMICAL COMPANY



No deck signs, maintenance free, but this level three-pane canvas party house. Aromatic vinyl-based treatment, resins and stabilizers, and renders it invisible to rot or insects. \$3 per foot for 14-ft boards. jerryeastwood.com

APPS

DIY Flooring Designer

MYFLOOR.COM

Buy just enough hardwood, laminate, or other floor tile without going overboard on the average by entering the room's dimensions and layout into this app. \$4.99 for iPad only.

iScan App

ISCANAPP.COM

You know the thing? One remodeler's trash is another's treasure. Using your smartphone's GPS, this app finds nearby recycling locations and pricing for materials you want to get rid of. Free. For iOS and Android.



Lift-proof your roof

STRONG DRIVE STRUCTURAL WOOD SCREWS BY SIMPSON STRONG TIE



This code-approved screw will anchor rafters or trusses to walls. It's a big head designed not to rotate with drywall and shingles. \$44 for a 10-foot-long 10-gauge screw.

We'll take the fake

CANYON RIDGE ULTRA GRAIN-BARBAR DOOR BY CLOSET



Polymer panels on these charming carriage house style steel doors are molded from real canyon boards to mimic natural wood. But they're not, wavy or cracked. And the 2-inch thick doors are provided in a 10-foot by 20-foot size. From \$1,795 for a single door and \$3,800 for a double. closet.com

Trowel no more

TRACSTAR BY INNOVATIVE MORTAR SOLUTIONS



With this polymer-modified mortar, sticking bricks and blocks is as easy as spreading a cake. Squares it out of its mixing bowl by troweling. It's faster and less wasteful than traditional mortar, and you need less. \$25 for a 10.3-pound bag. innovative.com



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FINISHING TOUCHES



Energy-wise schoolhouse light

MURPHY PENDANT BY WAC LIGHTING
 Patterned after a vintage schoolhouse light, this is the first LED mini pendant we've seen that is a full-period style room and no less the only white shade. The built-in bulb, rated for 30,000 hours of life, puts out about as much light as a 30-watt halogen but uses a fraction of the energy. \$295 waclighting.com

Salvaged beauty

NATURAL PATINA KERRINGBONE TONE FLOORING BY WOOD TONER DESIGN

Made from old growth oak salvaged from demolished Dutch settlements in Indonesia, these planks are grooved on three sides to fit in a hand-glued pattern. Slice and natural oil make them virtually wear resistant. \$3.69 per square foot. intotiledesign.com



Goof-proof patterns

ALL-WEATHER JACQUARDS BY SUNBRELLA

The rift of sophisticated jacquard patterns makes us want to map them all to our indoor furniture with durable outdoor fabric. Showman Furniture Co. Greenlee, Arizona and Lane Indigo. \$21-\$35 per yard. sunbrella.com/bug

Hide-a-bed ottoman

CASTRO CONVERTIBLE OTTOMAN BY CASTRO CONVERTIBLE BEDS

Tucker made this benny ottoman in a trio of bed in 18 inches of solid wood frame and a convertible headboard. But target the guests—who also converts into a chair lounge. Plus the perfect \$699. castroconvertiblebeds.com



Harder hardwood

PERFORMANCE PLUS HARDWOOD FLOORING BY AMSTRONG

Perfect for those of us who are downright obsessive to our floors. The acrylic-reinforced product is twice as hard as the untreated stuff. See species available. \$4.99 per square foot. amstronorg.com



Blue lighting

HARPER LIGHT WALL SCENE WITH ICE BLUE GLASS BY CRYSTALINE

We welcome this 21st-century update of the classic candlestick scene: a mix of glossy chrome and blue-tinted glass. \$150. crystalinelighting.com



Multitasking table

HEAVY DUTY DINING TABLE BY CIE

From applied speckled sauce to seven-part screen project, this handsome accent table can take everything a household dishes out. It has a sturdy powder-coated iron base and handy drawers. Seats eight. \$1,099. cie.com

APPS

Valspar ConnectLive

VALSPAR ART.COM
 Took an appointment with one of the manufacturer's consultants, you can tablet a camera to display the room you plan to paint, and you get a personalized palette tailored to the space. Free for iOS.

FLOOR APP

Pin-design tips how to choose sample rug patterns and mix-and-match tiles to make your own pattern with the manufacturer's tool. It's promotional, but it's a good idea to be able to order right in the app. Free for iPad only.



New old paper

SOLICITED SURFACES WALLPAPER BY PAPER WALLCOVERINGS

Running a proprietary new ink nearly as thick as plaster through circa 1895 sheet paper, the process creates a pronounced relief that looks and feels like handmade paper. But the automated process keeps the cost within reach: \$20 a roll. yorkwall.com

Cage-tested (by an elephant)

BARSTOW STAND GILBY BY MOORE

Thanks to the dog shape of each leg, the cage stands up to just about any type of traffic or pressure. Need proof? After three weeks in the elephant cage at the Dallas Zoo, a sample looked good as new after a 10-day stress test. \$25 per square foot. metakalifornia.com



It'll take a beating

HAMMERED ORN COFFEE TABLE BY VIVITRUM

This recycled aluminum table is a heavy-duty, hand-finished beauty and a great shape—no matter if it's a centerpiece or a side table. It's made of a 100% recycled aluminum. Plus, it's a great point of the living room. Plus, it's weather-resistant and weighs only 11 pounds, so you can move it outdoors and enjoy it there. \$349. vivitrum.com

Your name in lights

ARTIST GEMLE SIGN LIGHTS BY SHEDS OF LIGHT

We chose these retro metal sign in wall lights simply for their just-for-fun custom. Styled after design letters, they're all the character of salvaged signs without the need for wiring. \$89. shedsoflight.com



Toile for all

EMERALD LANE BY WAX

Toile, at a bargain? Yep. Boogie river scenes printed in edge-on a white 104 thread count cotton background. Each tank to get four models from 18th-century France. Go ahead. Add perched parrot to your current new bed for 20 bucks. wax.com

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colorful and cozy

Louise Mackin and Tim Bright wanted a warm, bright kitchen with just enough space to gather with Trishan, 11, and Miles, 8. A layered grid palette and varied seating contribute to this happy feel.

OPPOSITE: The house is former dairy cows, horse quarters, and an old family clothing store. Opposite: The house is former dairy cows, horse quarters, and an old family clothing store.



fit for a family

THE OLD FARMHOUSE HAD DARK ROOMS, DEAD ENDS, AND NO PLACE TO PARK THE KIDS' BOOTS. HERE'S HOW AN INVENTIVE REDO MADE AN 1830s ARTIFACT JUST RIGHT FOR A 21st-CENTURY HOUSEHOLD

by Deborah Ralabino photographs by Jane Westphalen
produced by Celeste Scoville styling by Laura Hillis

An old house, like some other oldsters, can be rather set in its ways and resistant to change. Crazy wires, a whirling furnace, windows so small you can barely gauge the weather—my telling does it's time to go and you may need reinforcements. Which helps explain why Tim Anglin and Laurel Mackus, seeking a new direction for their 150th farmhouse, hired plenty of backup, including architects and work crews who specialize in bringing old houses to life. The fate of the energy-sapping furnace? "We tied it to a pickup truck and dragged it out through an opening under the porch," general contractor Chip Odell says dryly.

That decision set them out to be just one of many during an ambitious redo that stretched over nearly nine years, long enough for both the house and its new owners to change. Today, no longer first-time homeowners who thought, as Laurel puts it, "everything was easy and possible," the couple have gained two kids and a keen understanding of how design decisions affect family dynamics. "When we first moved in, the notion of having no gathering space didn't seem problematic," Laurel says. "As the family grew, we realized we didn't need more space, just more 'together' space."

And more places to put the expanded house hold's stuff.

Perched above meadows in rural Thirford, Vermont, on a former dairy farm threshold with stone walls, the three-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath house had been added onto

three spaces in one

TOP: The new kitchen, half the size of the one that was there, has a dramatic accent wall of cabinets that anchors the openfloor plan, additional built-in family room, built-in and no exit through the fireplace. Interior Designer Denise White May provided the spaces with soft grays, blues, yellows and accents, and a reclaimed barnwood floor that has a shiplap look. Plus, some old counters and breakfast bar set off the kitchen, while a cottage-style rug defines the eat-in area.



"Think about the kind of family you want and how the space can support it. Then think about design."

—LAUREL MACKUS HONOLULU





floor plans

Before the ride, the 2,100-square-foot one-and-a-half-story house was chopped at a sideways stair. The design team's solution: open plans on the south side with a 150-square-foot bumpout. The back stairs came out, and the laundry moved upstairs to make way for a powder room and a new entry and mudroom built. The added throughout helped keep the heavy household well organized.



places to put stuff

OPPOSITE: Cabinet is under the family room windows; hide media components and a flat-screen TV on a suspended rail. **RIGHT:** The new entry has a bench for changing footwear and built-in shelving for coats and hats. **BELOW:** Custom built-in entry lockers store everything from baseball gloves to running shoes and four seasons' worth of outdoor wear.



over the years, giving the first floor a relaxed feel. Because the house overlooks a covered bridge, "everyone is down recognizing it," says the couple's architect, Les Clark. "I want and Tim wanted to be careful not to ruin it."

They loved everything about the house, in other words, except what was under.

"It was in good shape, but not very practical from a 21st-century point of view," Tim explains. The previous owners had appended a kitchen in the south end, like a caboose, but a wicket off from the rest of the house, ignoring the code. The core of the house had a cluster of small spaces, including a laundry room and the stairs to an unused attic. Beyond the laundry room lay a den, a master suite, a powder room that opened oddly into the dining room, and stairs to two steep-canted bedrooms and a bath. "It was like a rabbit warren," Tim recalls. "In the old days, small rooms meant you could shut off some and heat a smaller space. We wanted to open it up and think very hard about every square foot."

Cold air, nonetheless, pushed through the dry-stacked stone foundation, a 19th-century design aimed at relieving the pressure of snowmelt by allowing it to seep into the cellar and down through its dirt floor.

The couple remedied their cold feet—and began a new life as lean-as-pogo homeowners—by sealing up the foundation with spray foam insulation. They also asked Clark's firm, Smith & Voss, to make firm to and around the master suite and dining room, eliminating the powder room and upgrading the bath and closer space.

The second test of the couple's mid-century came when they tackled the barn, turning it into a finished greenhouse. After that, a lull period followed—for the house anyway—while they concentrated on adding outdoors. Then they asked the architects back to tackle the tricky run.

There was less relaxed years of living with steep and-go traffic patterns and a light deluge. "The old kitchen was shot up," says Tim, "with no windows facing out to the outdoors, where the sun comes up." There was no space near the kitchen for the kids to hang out before dinner and no place to drop their backpacks. The family's goal was a brighter and more open and fluid layout and a resolution of

two conflicting demands common in many of today's households: a serious desire for sophisticated and a desperate need for closer control. In Vermont, where each season yields a fresh crop of sporting gear and outdoor gear, how do you keep an open plan from turning into an open field of mittens, hats, and ski poles?

To clear the way for a redesign, the family relocated to the greenhouse. And while 14 months may sound like a long time to hole up in 900 square feet with one bath and little more than a microwave and an outdoor grill for meals, "it really helped us figure out what the house would be," says Laurel. "It brought us about how little space you really need."

They also learned a helpful rule: "I think about the kind of family you want and how the space can support it," Laurel says. Some families crave lots of private space, for example, while at her household, she notes lightly, "we seem to all like to be together."

Clark, joined by interior designer Denise Welch-May, looked for ways to wrap gatherings, like a family TV room with a home-wood-framed dining nook, around a usually more efficient cooking zone, opening work and play areas to one another—and the house took newly landscaped front and back yards. They also rented every corner and wall to a corner for their arduous cake-making, flower day.

Old and new work crew dismantled the stairs that went up to the attic space. They opened away the laundry room and a closet, fitting space for a new powder room and a more relaxing entry and a mudroom. And they took the south side down to its denning and removed part of the attic floor to extend the old kitchen's cathedral ceiling. Flooring came next, and insulation and a more efficient heating system went in.

"We also added more windows," Clark says, "and that really lets the life of the house shift to the summer southern end." Radiant floor heat doesn't hurt, either.

Various rooms played musical chairs: The laundry beat a retreat to a spot again; the kitchen got pushed toward a central location, facing an addition for a family room.

To help define discrete areas, Welch-May devised a color scheme so complex that it threatened to turn the paint crew into mad babblers. Further setting off the cooking area is



a small peninsula, with seating areas for nine. "I like people to think they are in a place when they aren't really in my kitchen," Laurel says with a laugh.

She also appreciates having a sight line to the TV. "Now I know what they're watching," she says of the kids. "It's right there, so we all decide what to watch together."

The mudroom has become what Tim calls a staging area for smoother comings and goings. "On a February day, when the kids have their backpacks and lunch boxes and skulls I bags full of sporting gear, there are places to dump it all besides the laundry." And besides the home-work-friendly eating nook, The family has all its meals there, enjoying views of the meadows and the barn.

Looking back to a more innocent time, Laurel admits that "every project has more pieces than you think." That applies whether the project is having kids or creating the perfect home environment. In this case, it looks as if all the pieces keep falling right into place. ■

In a new light

ABOVE A French door and matching windows gives the master bedroom a sense of openness. **RIGHT** The wet stage area of the whole-house redo fits much to be acquired inspiring style and storage.



captured space

BELOW A new shower enclosure was made possible by the demolition of an unused powder room. Tons of open shelving keep fresh towels at the ready.



Built-ins that make entertaining easier

The holidays are upon us. For help getting party-ready, we've assembled a portfolio of bars and servers that pack style and utility into the typical untapped spaces in a home. Coming up, 12 hardworking built-ins that take a load off busy hosts

by Curt Grevelberg

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELYS SWP

all-access bar This wet bar was designed and built as part of a kitchen addition by handy homeowners at frequent entertainer Karen Covey's San Diego, California. The designers' mother site was once rising town water windows, which Karen wanted to create easy passage between the new and old spaces. Thus built peak clearances the length of the bar, which he filled with small drawers for cocktail mixes and other cocktail accoutrements. A double drawer bridge for mixers under the counter on the left and for symmetrical sleek sides panel on the right that lifts out to access plumbing for the sink. In the upper cabinets, jock lights illustrate liquor bottles. Karen's collection of vintage look signs announces that this is where the fun begins.





Wet bars and drink stations

Mix function and a twist of fun with a built-in bar that encourages guests to gather round and get loose.

entryway bar Here, an art gallery featuring other side tables and wood stools. If it backs into a kitchen or bath, you may be able to take advantage for a sink or service maker. Here, brass cabinets with an antique pine and a board-and-batten look for the bar fronts. Surroundings: Open shelves up top keep the look light.



bookcase bar No slake to skip! Build out into the room instead. The shelves of this bar are just one bottle deep to preserve floor space. When not in use, a heavy-duty door with a semi-circular window in front, offering a glimpse of liquor bottles and a playful painted diamond design on the back wall.



kitchen bar Perhaps the most likely end up in the kitchen. So if you give them their due, it's best they stay off yours. The location of this bar, built just inside the work triangle, allows guests to help themselves from the under-counter wine fridge without getting in the cook's way. Painted to match the kitchen cabinets, the unit is highlighted with furniture-like details: crown moldings, divided light doors, and a glossy wood countertop.



Paint the back of a built-in to amp up its style. You can even use a mirror to add visual depth.



passageway bar Any transitional space near a kitchen or dining room is ripe for a bar. This unit has white-painted recessed-panel cabinets to match the adjacent kitchen's, making a connection between the two rooms. Beneath its ample wood countertop is a wine fridge and a liquor cabinet with built-in shelving. In the doors, the upper cabinets, colorful glassware and tumblers on glass shelves look almost as if they were floating.

tabletop exclusive

All this talk of parties making you thirsty? Find the answer, TDM's signature cocktail recipe, exclusively on our tablet edition. It's free for subscribers. Learn more at thisoldhouse.com/tablet

"Nothing says festivity like a fully stocked bar with sparkling glassware. And by building one in, you give guests a place to chat and congregate until food is served."

—JULIANNE INTERIORDESIGNER BROOKLYN, NY



sit-down bar A kitchenette can become a full-scale bar with the addition of two seating—on opposite ends. In this small secondary kitchen off a family room, green paint and a wood counter with a large edge edge lends a cozy feel. With the bar's warmth, a built-in table (top) brings a modern look. In the built-in bar, a wine cooler, built under the counter.



Servers, cupboards, and pass-throughs

These built-ins—end cabinets, buffets, and pass-throughs—become your home's dead zones to life with, minimizing the effect of clutter and the holidays celebrated in style.

buffet-style partitions In lieu of walls, use cabinetry to separate prime entertaining spaces. These two-sided built-in units topped with iron bars provide serving surfaces and storage that are accessible from both sides and the dining room. Windowed doors on the upper create clear sight lines, making the combined space seem larger and brighter.



window-like opening Partitions that are closed off from the kitchen create a simple outlet to shuffle dishes and food. In summer, this unit opens to reveal the nearby nook and a view of the new counterpane. An oak counterpane that overhangs the wall by an inch or so either side makes out extra surface area.

radiator sidebar

Turns space-hogging cast-iron heater into a server. Boarded up with painted aluminum drawers and a metal grille that allows warmed air to escape, this cover-turned-sidebar becomes a standard piece of dining room furniture.



Top a radiator sidebar with heat-retaining insulation so that it doubles as a food warmer. It is a radiator.



butler's pantry

Take cues from the past. This hallway and, for instance, only looks as if it's from another time when butlers were for real. Designed in a period style for the modern-day host, it offers room for walking and well-to-do storage, as well as a counter that is deep and wide enough to double as a self-serve buffet for setting out finger foods.

corner cupboard

Use a wedge-shaped built-in to create extra storage for cluttered dining rooms—especially storage for end-of-the-epoch. Here, glassware and serving dishes are stored in the upper walls of the table. Cabinet doors below keep less display-worthy necessities hidden from view.

coffee station Turn a casual eating area into an after-party destination for coffee, tea, and dessert. The central feature of this kitchen storage unit is a built-in coffee station with a small sink and a built-in coffee machine. The unit doesn't take up too much space, as it's designed to be a straight line to the kitchen.



"Designed to fit a particular space, built-ins add architectural appeal, plus storage and an extra prep or serving area away from busy kitchen traffic. A piece of furniture can't do all that."

—GORDON SCHWETZER
INTERIOR DESIGNER
NAPVILLE, IL



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any best fix, use needle-nose pliers to straighten them so that they don't touch each other. Finally, reattach the cover and turn the heat back on.

Next year, when the heating season is over, close the damper. That movable flap near the top of the hearthboard's metal housing blocks out drafts—and the Lego bricks that kids love to drop in there.

SAGGING RAFTERS

The home inspector who found that we had three layers of asphalt shingles and several cracked rafters suggested that we build a knee wall to support the roof. But a contractor said we should replace the old 2x6 rafters with 2x10s. Whose advice should we take?

—SAM MAUER, GLEN EDEEN, IL

Tom Silva replies: Three layers of asphalt shingles is too much weight for any roof, so here again to take off all those layers. Forget about building a knee wall, though. Screwing a 2x6 to every rafter, not just the split ones, is the best way to give your roof the strength it needs.

Once a carpenter to remove the bottom 3 feet of the shingles and dip in the new rafters from outside. He can set each one in position next to an old rafter, push up the old one until it's straight, and then the two pieces of lumber together along their entire length using construction adhesive and deck screws. When this work is done—it should go quickly—have the roofer reroof the shingling, if it's still in good condition, and lay the new roofing.

And don't ever let any roofer add a new layer without first stripping off the old one. This approach keeps the load light on the rafters and allows the shingling and flashing to be inspected and repaired, if necessary.

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When a fireplace smokes, there's a good chance that its opening is too large for the chimney flue. A built-in heat can easily be corrected with a smoke guard.

SMOKY FIREPLACE

Our fireplace won't quit smoking, no matter what we do. We increased the flue height, added glass doors, and, most recently, fitted the flue with a chimney fan. What else can we do?

—ROLAND TOUCHER, NEWTON, MASS.

Kevin O'Connor replies: According to chimney-repair specialist Mark Schaub, of Chimney Systems in Hillsborough, New Jersey, any one of these solutions might have cured your smoking fireplace. But he says that a problem this persistent is usually caused by a mismatch between the size of the flue and the fireplace opening. "Most square and rectangular flues should have an area at least one-fourth the dimensions of the fireplace opening," he says. So if your fireplace measures 36 inches by 24 inches—720 square inches—your flue opening should be at least 72 square inches.

If your flue is too small, there are two ways to correct it, Schaub says. "Either make the flue bigger, which would be very expensive if it were even possible, or make the fireplace opening smaller with an inexpensive short-metal smoke guard." Fireplace shops and online retailers sell short-metal smoke guards in widths of 4, 6, 8, and 10 inches.

To find the size of guard you need, wait for a calm, cool night and light a fire. Position a piece of aluminum foil over the top 4 inches or so of the fireplace opening and move or lower the foil until the smoke stops coming into the house. Measure how far down the foil projects into the opening. "That's the minimum width your smoke guard needs to be," he says.

Schaub makes his own guards from 0.040-gauge aluminum, trimmed to fit the opening and painted with high-temperature paint. He secures the fit to the inside edges of the fireplace surround with 8/32 (room temperature vulcanizing) sealant. You can use the same stuff to install a smoke guard yourself.

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GIROLED APPLE TREE

Someone wrapped a rubber tubing around one of our apple trees a few leaders to hold it up.

straight. Now the leader has grown over the trunk, and isn't looking good. Can the tree be saved?

—SUEWY SIMPSON/BAIR

Roger Cook replies: Unfortunately, there's no way to save a girdled trunk or leader. You can try cutting off the dying portion, but that would probably disfigure the tree and leave it structurally unsound. I'm afraid it's time for the crane not to go.

I'm not a big fan of providing support for new trees, because they develop stronger root systems if they're left to stand on their own. Even so, there are certain situations when extra support should be provided—windy locations, or tree snags, or if the tree is loose in its root ball.

In those situations, I use chain link ties at ArborTie fabric (arbor.com) because they won't girdle trunks and choke off nutrients the way hose or bare-covered wire can. But whatever you use, keep the loop around the trunk open and remove the support after a year so that the tree can develop a good root system.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH



Rory Brennan uses a trowel against the lath and the first coat of plaster patch.

The electrician who put in new light switches left gaping holes in our lath-and-plaster walls. How should we fix them?

—DANIEL AND LAUREN HEDGECOCK, BRATTLEBORO, VT

Rory Brennan of Preservation Plastering replies: Kudos! Most work by chisel electricians is the number one cause of damaged plasterwork these days. But it's easy to make the damage disappear for good if you use good techniques and the right materials.

Cost: Approximately \$60 for patching materials.

Time: 3–4 hours of work, plus drying time over three days.

Difficulty: Easy like spreading cake frosting.

What's the wrong material? So-called patching plaster sold at home centers. It's much harder than the wall's original plaster, and it sets in the blink of an eye. A softer, slower-setting lime-based plaster, like the one I developed for Big Willy's line of plaster-repair products (plaster.com), takes about an hour to set, so you can re-crack or de-laminate, and make no sanding, which keeps dust to a minimum. Just follow the steps on the next page, and your electrician's less-than-handwork will be history.

STEP-BY-STEP

Patch plaster

1. Fix the lath

Replace any missing strips of lath, and replace all loose pieces. Use drywall screws, and insert drywall holes to avoid splitting the wood. If there's no stud to anchor a lath end, slice a piece of lath into the cavity and screw it to the back of the existing one, parallel with the studs. Then you can screw or loose lath in it, so it floats a stud.



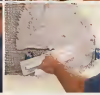
2. Stabilize the wall's edge

Use a 1/2-inch masonry bit to drill holes every 3 inches around the damaged area, about 3 inches from the edge. Drill vertical bit into the lath. If it misses, pencil a mark by that hole. Vacuum the holes and spray them with plaster and sand. Wait 25 minutes, then fill all unmarked holes with a quart of plaster adhesive. Wipe off the excess with a damp rag.



3. Wet the substrate

Dry lath and the exposed plaster edge will suck water out of wet plaster before it can set. To prevent this, saturate those surfaces with conditioner. Wipe up any drips or overspray with a damp rag. Wet until the conditioner soaks in about 20 minutes—before going to Step 4.



4. Apply the scratch coat

Use a chisel and a trowel to cut a hole in the lath—about an hour—then mix up a new batch of plaster to a slightly thicker consistency—closer to that of buttercream frosting. Use a plastering trowel to smooth the mix flush with the wall surface, scrape any excess off the wall. Wait another hour for that coat to set.

5. Trowel on the second coat

Wait another 15 minutes and it's time to the finish—about an hour—then mix up a new batch of plaster to a slightly thicker consistency—closer to that of buttercream frosting. Use a plastering trowel to smooth the mix flush with the wall surface, scrape any excess off the wall. Wait another hour for that coat to set.

6. Smooth the top coat

Using a 6-inch taping knife, scrape the patch area smooth, and cover the patch with a final layer of ready-mix joint compound. Let dry overnight. Gently scrape it smooth and apply a second coat. On the third day, spread another coat and after 48 hours, smooth it gently with a damp sponge. The patch is now ready to prime and paint.

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