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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2014
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ways to save

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Over Photography by MICHELE BUCK
Styling by VIVIAN ALVARADO



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Letter

FROM THIS OLD HOUSE

We could all use a little incentive, right?

No, no, no, I'm not going to do it. Definitely not. And just so we're clear, "it" has nothing to do with popping the cork on that champagne bottle I'm holding. I mean, opening a bottle, literally or figuratively, is kind of what you need to do this time of year, when it's colder and darker and with the holidays behind you, right? A little glass to having survived the job, raising family, one more page of the calendar, in more or less beribboned shape.

No, what I'm definitely not going to do is make any resolutions. That's just guaranteeing failure. Or at least it has been for me. For as long as I can remember. The 10 pounds I resolved one year to lose and didn't. And then the next year when I didn't lose the 15 pounds. And then 20 pounds the year after that.

Why does that happen? I'm no shrink (I don't even think I'm ever used to someone). "Why don't you tell me how you feel about that?" I, but I'd wager that my inability to follow through has to do with the greatest misadventure of all: money.

Sure, maybe I'll keep a few dollars in my pocket by eating less if I really lose those 10 pounds. But then I'll have to buy new pants, and, unless I'm really lucky, those new pants are gonna come with the pockets empty.

It's probably the same reason I've never finished walking between the counter and the kitchen backyards. Who's going to pay me for that? In fact, I'd go so far as to say that's the reason most of my smaller projects take so long to get finished, if they ever get finished. Maybe you're the same way.

That's why in this New Year's issue of *FOH* we decided to address the situation head-on with a story called "Little Resolutions That Will Save Your Backs" (page 44). Sure, the resolutions require a bit of work and, in a few cases, a small investment that might take a couple of years to recoup. But from making every candle and candle in your attic and basement walls with spray foam to restoring your home's old energy use via a smartphone app, they will not only benefit your quality of life, they'll save. They will actually put money in your pocket. No matter what size your pants are. Even if you're more successful than me and you need to buy new ones in a smaller size. Check it out and let me know if they work for you.

Sam Chesser

SCOTT OMELEANS, EDITOR
scott@thisoldhouse.com



The editor celebrates a solution to those resolutions that never quite work out.

Digital *thisoldhouse.com*



SPECIAL FEATURES

TOH Top 100 videos

See select award-winning products in action, as demonstrated by the editors of *This Old House* at thisoldhouse.com/top100



TABLET

Exclusive extras

Find more beautiful interior renovation photos, a helpful how-to video for our weekend project, and more product ideas to create a vintage industrial office—including the leather satchel shown above—all in the digital edition of *This Old House*. To get your copy, go to thisoldhouse.com/tablet



17 ways to make your fireplace stand out

- Add a new mantel with a classic profile
- Upgrade the tile on the hearth and surround
- Install glass doors to keep embers at bay
- And more!

See all the ideas at thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2014

FEATURED VIDEO

How to upgrade your fireplace

Get instructions from TOH general contractor Tom Silva on replacing a mantel, hearth and surround. Watch the video at thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2014



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6 FAST TYPES

- 

- ☐ **Add stakes along your driveway and sidewalk**
The markers will help you know where to stop shoveling.

- ☐ Organize new warranties: Label and file warranties for big ticket purchases before they get lost. Then they'll be almost bound to work on you.

- ☐ **Trade in old electronics.** Did you upgrade your TV this holiday? For easy earnings, take old electronics to stores like Wal-Mart, Target, or Best Buy for store credit.

- For the best selection, now's the time to order seeds for your veggie garden. You'll save money by starting seeds yourself, plus you'll have access to heirloom varieties that might not be available as seedlings. If you want some really unusual finds, try a seed saver's exchange to get access to heirloom plants growers follow gardeners from across the country.



- Closed windows mean stagnant indoor air can become a breeding ground for germs. If we offer pets, crack a window in the living area of your house to help usher in fresh air. "Go outside!" Aup up the humidity instead, since the stresses fall in dry, cold air. For health and comfort, aim for levels between 40 and 60 percent.

- You can avoid injuries with proper form—like bending at the knees instead of the waist—or opt for a pusher, a shovel with

- **C-shape** face that clears lightweight snow without putting strain on your back. If you're shoveling on wood decking, choose a plastic blade, metal on run and gauge boards. —*AL*

- your dishwasher start the year out strong by cleaning any lingering debris from spray holes. Remove them from the dishwasher and clean with soap and water, using a brush, a toothpick or needle nose pliers to dislodge any food stuck in the holes.



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- **ALVAXIN 330/210** is for the treatment of asthma symptoms 4 years and older. **ALVAXIN** should be used only if your healthcare provider decides that your asthma is not well-controlled with a long-term asthma control medicine, such as an inhaled corticosteroid.
- **ALVAXIN 330/210** is approved for adults with COPD including chronic bronchitis, emphysema, or both. It also may take 1 inhalation if **ALVAXIN** becomes a day. However, does not let outside additional benefits.
- **ALVAXIN 330/210** is not for and should not be used to treat: asthma, severe symptoms of asthma in COPD, asthma.

- People with asthma are later long-acting beta₂-agonists (LABAs) approved (SABA) medicines, such as albuterol (Xopenex) or the LABAs, have an increased risk of death from asthma problems. It is not clear if this risk is increased for all people who use LABAs, but LABA therapy may be the most serious concern. LABA therapy for use as a daily controller medicine should not be used.
- **Get new influenza vaccine if existing problems worsen over time with asthma.** LABA may increase risk of death in asthma.
- **Get emergency medical care** if breathing problems worsen quickly and you cannot stop your asthma medicine but you need more air breathing problems.

- [illegible]

- Deactivate AHRH more often than prescribed. Do not take AHRH with other medications that contain a MAOI for any reason. Do not take AHRH about 14 days after a MAOI or 14 days after an MAOI has been discontinued.
- AHRH may cause undesirable effects, including:
 - sexual-related problems, I do not I wish to provide it get emergency help 30 min I've got also the following symptoms of a serious allergic reaction with hives, swelling of the face, mouth and throat, difficulty breathing

- [illegible]

- [illegible]

- Adverse side effects of AZD6635/SGARs for asthma include:** upper respiratory tract infections, headache, dizziness, hypertension and blood pressure changes, GI upset, fatigue, muscle and joint pain, cough, flu-like symptoms and swelling in the ankles with sodium retention (rare), low and high blood potassium.

Please see Brief Summary of Important Safety Information about MONOMED 0.5A20 on next page.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

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With the exception of the first two, all the other studies have been conducted in the United States.

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home solutions

Edited by Michelle Brunner

INSIDE 30 USES EASY UPGRADES SURVIVAL SKILLS ENERGY-SAVERS MORE



Pipe fittings in a new light

Culverized-steel pipe fittings can do more than extend plumbing runs. Here, we've transformed them into quirky, industrial-style candlesticks. These decade-olds make connecting them in various configurations a cinch (we used tees, unions, elbows, and flanges, \$2 and up at home centers). A quick coat of metallic spray paint—Rust-Oleum's Antique Brass—adds a burnished finish. No Teflon tape needed.



PHOTO: JAMES HARRIS; PHOTO: JAMES HARRIS

10
uses

Wood flooring scraps

Installing a new floor is bound to leave you with some leftover lengths. Put those planks to use with these ideas.

1- Install them as wainscoting.

With base moldings removed, cut leftover wood planks to length vertically and glue to the wall using construction adhesive. Trim each tongue at the top and bottom. Fill base trim.



2- Make a doormat for a sheltered area.

Cut lengths to 18 inches. Drill four evenly spaced 1/8-inch holes through the side of each plank. String rope through the holes and tie a half hitch between each board and at the ends.

3- Make a T-square.

Lay a short piece perpendicular to the top of a longer length. Fasten together with nuts and bolts. Use the T to draw layout lines on sheet goods and as a cutting guide.



4- Craft a cabinet door.

Use unfinished planks, with the tongue cut off, for the stiles, and rails and plywood or glass for the panel. Arrange the boards groove-side in to capture the panel. Then secure with glue and screws.



5- Create a cleat.

By using a heavy object cut two pieces of flooring to a length just shorter than the width of the object. Screw one piece groove-side down to the back of the object. Fasten the second length, tongue side up to the wall, making sure



to be at least two studs. Lower the object onto the piece mounted to the wall, resting the groove on the tongue.

6- Smooth wallpaper.

Run the tongue of a plank across the paper, pressing down and working from the center to the edges to remove any air bubbles in the adhesive.

7- Cover a ceiling.

Install lightweight, oil-finished engineered wood planks perpendicular to ceiling joists with construction adhesive. Nail the tongue of each plank to a joist.

8- Frame a desk photo.

Cut the tongue off a length of flooring, cut four midspan pieces (groove-side up) to fit the size of your glass, which will rest in the channels. Nail three pieces together and finish the edges. Screw a block of torus wood (inspired at one end) into the back.

9- Build a coffee table.

Fit together planks, and secure from underneath with scrap wood braces.

10- Level outdoor

Drill off the outside tongue and groove and scribe the edges to match. Add precast legs.

11- Level outdoor

sand. Drag a piece of flooring, tongue side down, to even out the base for a deck path.

—NAA, HGTV

MORE TO USES
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Furniture face-lifts with overlays

Straight-from-the-crate furniture often lacks the personality—and detail—of their high-end counterparts. Now you can give plain, less-personal more expensive looks with the use of easy-to-apply overlays. Made of lightweight materials such as medium-density fiberboard (MDF) and PVC, the lathe-turned, carved, and bent pieces are designed to adhere to almost any surface with a compatible glue. We used overlays in three ways here: We gave a pine dresser Hollywood Regency style with red-on-red vinyl panels; gave old upturned wooden chairs with table tops a Moroccan tile pattern, and transformed a basic end table with an overlay framed with molding and topped with glass. Whether painted to blend or contrast with the base color, these details are definite standouts.



Overlay: \$27 for a dresser-size composite panel plus a \$25 fee for customizing. **Keynote:** Keynote.com
Paint: Behr's Silver Mouse



Overlay: \$17 per linear foot of 2-inch-MDF base. **Paint:** Behr's Ultra White
Paint: Behr's Ultra White



Overlay: \$22 for all 14 1/2-foot-MDF panels. **Paint:** Behr's Ultra White
Paint: Behr's Ultra White



Cut down on cold spots

Little leaks around your house can let in thousands of dollars as a window left wide open all winter. Seal these problem areas to keep the chill outside where it belongs.

OUTLET AND SWITCH COVERS ON EXTERIOR WALLS: The uninsulated void in the boxes allows cold air to infiltrate into your home. Slip a fire-resistant foam gasket behind the plate for all outlets and switches. **PLUMBING AND ELECTRICAL PENETRATIONS:** The holes cut through the outside walls of your house for pipes and electric or panel wires often let in drafts, too. Use caulk or grout (that are 1/4-inch or smaller) patch large holes from the inside with spray foam insulation.

EXTERIOR DOORS: A 1/4-inch gap around a standard entry door can let in as much as a 1/2 inch feels in the wall. For a tight seal, apply silicone weatherstripping to the sides and top of every entry door and install a silicone sweep under the bottom. —ALICIA BAKER

Latex mattresses

It's a big purchase, so avoid insomnia by finding out what's under the cushy covering and behind the fancy claims

While innersprings still rule and memory foam has many fans, latex is quickly gaining ground for the way it cushions pressure points and bounces back to offer support every time you move. Latex can be natural (from rubber trees, for extra resilience and durability), a cost-saving synthetic, or a blend, and options include layering latex over coiled coils for less "partner disturbance." As always, it pays to try before you buy and to ask lots of questions. Start with these. —CHRISTINE CHEN



TYPE OF LATEX

Natural latex for a regulated term, it may mean a blend of natural and synthetic that the top layer is natural and the core is synthetic. While there are many innersprings, we like the 10-inch-thick mattress shown here because it's 100 percent long-lasting, highly resilient latex. The 10-inch-thick innerspring top layer is softer (the innersprings can be flipped twice if you're a side sleeper) and it provides your mattress with a "partner disturbance" effect (durability).

OTHER MATERIALS

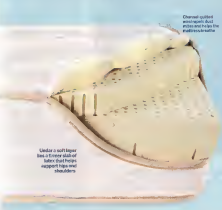
Many mattresses contain chemical-free materials. This one has a layer of the innerspring top layer instead of a covering of cotton and wool. It's also a good idea to look for a "partner disturbance" effect (durability).

CUSTOMIZABLE?

Some mattresses, including this one, can be ordered to be made to your taste—the left side firm and the right side softer, for instance.

FINE PRINT?

Latex is heavy—this model weighs 100 pounds—and handles in the bed, so make sure delivery includes getting it upstairs. Ask how the "partner disturbance" works and who bears the cost of a return. Finding sleep? Now all you need is the perfect pillow.



Shown: Room & Board's Natural Latex Mattress. \$1,099 (queen); roomandboard.com

DIY chalkboard tray

This clever chalkboard is a perfect way to present a tasting sampler—no more fussing around with labeled foodpicks. At a minimum 18 by 24 inches, it's large enough to fit any tray you can find. To make it, we covered one side of 1/2-inch plywood with two coats of chalkboard paint, then added brass cap molding on top, around the perimeter, to ensure that dishes won't slide off. To finish the edges, we nailed on wood-nose or rope. A coat of stain (Minwax's Polywax) finished the molding and veneer, and sturdy iron scourpads serve as handles. It was almost as easy as using "stencils."



PRO
ADVICE

WINTER IS RADON-CHECK SEASON

"Don't just rely on past test results. It's prudent to check radon levels in the winter. Since it enters your home from the soil, the gas can build up in the basement when your house is sealed and the ground is frozen."

—BILL JACQUES, PRESIDENT, AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HOME INSPECTORS



Survive the marital stress of a remodel

If your patience with your partner is stretched this far by 15 in. of contractors sweating tiles and peeling grout without working indoors, you're not alone. According to a recent online survey, nearly half of spouses say their relationship hit enough pinch during home renovations. The stress that a remodel places on a marriage is enormous," says Heller. E. Brader, a master, M.D., is a clinical professor of psychology at UCLA's School of Medicine. Here are five ways to diffuse the tension.

BE TRANSPARENT ABOUT MONEY

You've spent a lot of time and decided on a choice. Did you, your spouse or even your budget? To keep track of expenses and avoid financial surprises, have a budget and a calendar to help you schedule every project. Business card, and consider the house a budget for your remodel. You may never be a professional (see Warner, p. 60). Go through it together once a week so that you're both on the same page.

COMPROMISE—WHEN IT COUNTS

One of you loves Craftsman style, the other likes French Country. Here's the reality: It's a healthy marriage, no one gets his or her way all the time. "If you're redoing your living room, don't buy a couch until you find one you both agree on," says Phyllis L. Kelly, co-author of *Remodel Deal: A Woman's Guide to Planning and Surviving the Madness of a Home Renovation*. Go this through the renovation process, especially for big ticket items.

KNOW FEELINGS OF INEQUALITY

It's common that one is a renovation for one partner to feel like he or she is pulling more weight than the other. "What's the biggest thing it's not down with your space and explaining your feelings about the project doesn't help in the end. And if he or she doesn't push it, it's more like the soft effort pressure. Take a break day when you're working. Remember that it's a very busy schedule. Take a day off and see how it looks toward the future—because

—CATHY GARRARD

A rustic boy's room for \$248

Warm gray walls and a pallet-planked ceiling turn a sweet nursery into a big-kid retreat.



THE PROJECT TALLY

- Saved about the down bed a wrought iron look with leftover spray paint \$0
- Painted the walls, shoring gray \$30
- Lined the ceiling with two wood pallet planks they saved and anchored to a plywood base \$30
- Installed an industrial-style ceiling fan \$140
- Finished the room with an iron bed, a vintage school desk, and a dresser bought at auction \$20
- Added a parchment oil and iron paint to the desk's surface \$0
- Hung curtains (snagged from the thrift store) and added the shabby chic bed on hand \$7

TOTAL \$248

OUTGROWING A NURSERY can mean more than just getting too big for the crib. Kat and Mitch Hunter knew their son Ryder was also getting too big for the room's bright blue baby decor. So when their neighbor wanted to get rid of a crib or a tubular aluminum bed-in-a-bed, Kat happily snatched them up spray painted the bed black and started planning a new rough and tumble big-boy room around it. First, she and Mitch painted the permeable-painted walls a more neutral gray. Then, inspired by images of salvaged wood plank walls they had seen online, Mitch lined the ceiling with wood from pallets he scored for free at the local processing plant where he works and added a new industrial-style ceiling fan. To complete the room, Kat added sturdy vintage furniture she found at local thrift stores and auctions, and hung gingham curtains and woven blinds on the windows. But Kat and Mitch's favorite part, by far, is that showstopping calling. "When we finished, we would just lie on Ryder's bed and stare at it," Kat says. "The texture and warmth are just right." —ADAM BAKER



BEFORE: The table that dominated the smaller baby space. But now their son gets older, it was time for a redesign. **AFTER:** The painted walls get a new sophisticated look with a coat of neutral gray painting the room a similar hue helps it blend in to give the illusion of more space. An iron bed that came with the new bed, boy decor while the wood-planked ceiling creates visual interest and warms up the room.

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before + after:
kitchen

More function—and character

A bare-bones kitchen gets a boost with an island, salvaged cabinets, extra windows, and a punchy paint job. BY MAGAN RAKER • PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRUCE RUCK

IN AN OLD HOUSE, the projects can seem endless. For Rick and Lisa O'Leary, redoing their 1940s farmhouse took by most means that pouring all their resources into the northside cook space was out of the question. So the couple, architectural designers based in Croton Falls, New York, tackled the project themselves with the help of friends and family. Together they tore out the low ceiling, revealing original rubber beams that they highlighted with white-painted pine planks in between, and brightened the space with openings for two new windows and a French door.

To create walls for additional cabinetry and a better appliance layout, Lisa designed a card opening to the adjacent breakfast room, opposite that, drawer-filled base cabinets salvaged from a stationary store went in, decked up with a countertop made from a stable remnant. Rick, an experienced carpenter, built the island, topping it with pine-veneered boards. Wide-plank floors, painted in a sunny chicken-board pattern, hark the old vinyl. As for what he's set it all, the designers like that their kitchen is "just a little different," says Rick. "It's quirky without feeling too handmade."



PHOTOGRAPH BY CLAYTON KIMBLE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE

BEFORE Low ceilings and four windows made the space feel claustrophobic, sparse cabinetry a floral mural design.

AFTER Exposed beams, pink the room history—and a higher ceiling. New windows let in more light. A painted floor adds a lot of sunny color and a vintage look.



BEFORE



after

A gallery layout in the same footprint fits an island, a new appliance configuration, and lots more storage.

Windows above the sink and island are flanked by built-in open shelves that keep the space feeling airy. Photo: Benjamin Moore's Living Style Color Gallery



- 1 Put island in place. Island cabinets that house refrigerator and freezer drawers. Upper keep some appliances out of sight but still close at hand.
- 2 Built a wall where the peninsula was to fit a 30" burner range. Ranging slim cabinets for oils, spices, and cookbooks.

- 3 Added island to provide a prep space, hold the dishwasher, and allow for air-side ergonomic setup.
- 4 Snapped on top men, adding extra storage space. 17 1/2" deep countertop on 27" deep base cabinets and prep space and bonus storage.
- 5 Installed a French door refrigerator here so all windows let bring more light into the room.

COURTESY: BENJAMIN MOORE

Open shelves above the sink and island are flanked by built-in open shelves that keep the space feeling airy. Photo: Benjamin Moore's Living Style Color Gallery



MORE CREAM FOR LESS
To find out how to customize your kitchen on a budget, scan this page with the digital app or go to bit.ly/2016kitchen

Designed by Ut and built by a local company, the kitchen-style front pulls open sets refrigerator and freezer drawers. The cabinets above conceal small appliances. Chrome knobs and pulls and vertically-placed walls complete the natural farmhouse look.



pro advice LEO LARRY CRITCHFIELD NEW YORK
"Extra-deep counters let you keep out the things you use every day without sacrificing room for food prep."

Wide plank pine floors add warmth to the room. Colorful perch pulls let them reveal things like and frequent cleaning. Photo: Benjamin Moore's Living Style Color Gallery



To the left of the island, a built-in French door refrigerator here so all windows let bring more light into the room. Slim cabinets above make more for oils and other working supplies.



DIY attic retreat

Shed dormers raised the roof, clearing the way for a luxe master bath that belies its wallet-friendly details. BY ANNE STRATTON • PHOTOGRAPHS BY SUSAN SEIBERT

COSMETIC FLAWS often scare off home buyers. But as Tim and Wendy Hogue, who now post 6-foot ceilings and luxury carpeting covered in cat hair to maximize the finished attic in their new Portland, Oregon, home in the size of their future master suite.

Three weeks after buying the house, they tore off the roof, gabled the top floor's two walk-through bedrooms, and built a pair of full-length shed dormers, granting ceiling height and increasing their usable floor space by 200 square feet. Half the floor became their bedroom and the other half a walk-on closet and the master bath. Tim, a former contractor, did the wiring and plumbing and fired his carpenter muscles, building lace cabinets, a walnut vanity, and wainscote cabinets. Wendy handled the finishes, snagging miter at a deep discount. "I build, she designs," Tim says. "If I let to just one of us, we'd have low ceilings with great decor or a well-built house with ugly walls."

Together, as this luxurious master bath takes place, they're a perfect team.

BEFORE: A low attic ceiling made rooms feel cramped and left dead space behind the walls. **AFTER:** Raising the roof with shed dormers and removing the old wainscote freed space for a luxurious master bath. Homeowner Tim Hogue built the vanity from salvaged oak and blue milk glass knobs add a vintage touch.



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- red, pink, or brown urine, red or black stools (looks like tar)
- coughing up or vomiting blood or vomit that looks like coffee grounds
- unexpected pain, swelling, or joint pain; headaches, feeling dizzy or weak

● ELIQUIS is not for patients with artificial heart valves.

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Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or plan to become pregnant or breastfeed.

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Colorize your mantel

Add oomph to this natural focal point and bring out the beauty of the woodwork with some unexpected color. BY THEODORA SALINGER

EVEN THE SHAPPEST mantel can look a little lost when cloaked in wallpaper white. Which helps explain why painter Amy Wax, an architectural color consultant in Montclair, New Jersey, can't begin to prescribe sanding a little leather. But one thing, unvarnished shades do a better job than white of highlighting molding details, like fluting and rosettes. Adds Wax, "You're making something that has some class even more important. It then becomes the anchor you can decorate around."

Painting a plain mantel in an unexpected hue can reinforce its status as a focal-point feature and provide a counterpoint to otherwise white woodwork. "Mantels offer just the right amount of surface for a splash of color," says Debbie Zawacki, a paint-and-ink expert with the Farm Country Innkeepers, who painted her own mantel a treacherous brown. For more examples of how to fix up the fireplace, turn the page.



1. strong statement

Bright yellow makes this mantel's details pop—just what you're giving a lift to pale neutrals like gray millings. A shot of white takes away color nearby: see side table along with the area rug's gold tones, introduced in the room's bathroom bed. For a similar look, try Behr's Modern Yellow (swatch) and Garden Blue (swatch).



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2. framed in black

Matching this mental's rich, dark hue to the frames above it helps unify the overall pairing of wall colors, says Zimmer. For another look, try Velour's Living-Collection Black (center), Amber Rose (upper wall) and Amerson Gift (bedrooming and ceiling).

3. layered greens

Latina loves a rich, warm, recent wall-painted pale sage. The mental and the slate gray surround stand up to the dramatic, exposed beams, and the two greens bring out yellow tones in the wood. For a similar look, try Benjamin Moore's Mindful Lane (center) and Felt Art (wall).

4. outlined in blue

In this cozy space, the simple mental outwreaching the back, says Wal, while a ribbon of cultural blue on the fireplace surround provides a welcome sound. For a similar look, try Sherwin-Williams's Maritime (mental and wall) and Regalia (surround). ■

Vintage industrial study

Mellowed metal finishes and utilitarian furnishings inspired by 19th-century factory settings give this workspace time-tested style

BY GILLIAN BARTH • PHOTOGRAPH BY LISA JOHNSON

THERE'S NO NEED to compromise design just because a room is meant for kids. "We wanted a study that would look good but would wear well too," says interior designer Brooke Gussens, who put this multipurpose space together in her own house. Since it serves, in part, as the homework area, she turned to flea markets and vintage shops to find no-nonsense yet stylish furniture, lighting, and accessories. The result is a space both handsome and hardworking that mixes zinc finishes and rusty iron with warm wood and woven textures. Gray-painted walls, trim, and built-ins give it a tranquil air.

For ideas on assembling a similar space in your place, read on.

GLASS VASCS
Baths in complementary finishes make a fresh centerpiece. \$24 and \$32. www.etsy.com

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IRON TABLE
Gussens's round metal table is an antique, but this one is made from vintage factory parts for the same effect. \$400. www.etsy.com



storage baskets
Stained leather baskets keep papers and books organized neatly out of sight. \$40 and \$48. basketsonly.com

sturdy stool
The homeowner's is a pricey antique, but this one is a budget-friendly find. \$25. www.etsy.com

drafting stool
This vintage-style stool is designed to be a supportive spot to sit. \$144. wayfair.com

desk light
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machine gear
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DIY zinc-topped table
Like pro-Wood-Work it has legs designed to be a headliner. The best table legs at the time for sale are \$20. You can replace the top with a sheet of zinc. Secure the metal with construction adhesive. Then snap the edges using a double-ender. See the full tutorial on the page. The top is \$23 for a 3 by 4-foot sheet. www.etsy.com

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To learn how to replace the top of the table with zinc, see the full tutorial on the page. www.etsy.com

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Styling: M. Bell

Pub-style mirrors

With broad frames and plenty of hooks, these mirrors add functional style just inside the front (or back) door. BY MEGAN BAKER • PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES WOODRILL

WHEN IT COMES TO HINT-IT-WAYS, the double-duty mirror comes in. Designed by the famous art duo living in the back of a London pub, the 30-by-30-inch, 100-pound, hand-hewn wood-framed mirror provides a central for little necessities—keys, bags, scarves, and the like—without obscuring precious floor space. Some boast three or four tapered, pointed with additional storage hooks (such as clothes, cushions, or dresses). The looking glass comes in handy for on-the-fly spot checks as you're coming and going—and for the subtle bonus of making a cramped entry or a back porch a little more expansive. Yours to bring this charming style to your home? Here are seven of our favorites.

picture perfect
A hand-hewn mirror made of 100% natural MDF. Size: 27 1/2" x 27 1/2" x 22 1/2". Highlight: The double shelf is perfect for displaying other treasures. White-washed, it's a perfect backdrop for a colorful scarf or a tote bag. Price: \$199 (available online)



divided lights
HOME DECORATION
COLLECTION
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and vintage details give this
mirror a Dutchman look.
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larger accessories. \$225.
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including feature colors like
Island, Shiplap Pine, \$225.
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going vertical
Project
Made of Poplar with
a birch veneer
size: 27"W x 7"D x 27"H
Highlights: An oval
offwhite mirror fits
over a good fit for light
space, used drawers
have room for other bags,
phones, gloves, and
other necessities. \$185.
wayfair.com



TIP
Hang especially heavy mirrors using
a French cleat—just make sure it's
fastened into at least two studs for
maximum security. Find the how-to
at thehousework.com/janfile2014

all natural
HOME DECORATION
COLLECTION
Made of unfinished oak
size: 24.75"W x 8.75"D x 10"H
Highlights: The natural
beauty of the wood is
highlighted by the white
paint, or the gold of your choice.
Available in white with
dark staining and a gold
metallic spray finish, add to
the wall. \$185. \$225.
homedecorators.com



black white
HOME DECORATION
COLLECTION
Made of MDF
size: 24.75"W x 8.75"D x 10"H
Highlights: For an elegant
look, the mirror has a
black frame with a white
card. The high-gloss finish is
easy to clean. \$185.
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vintage look
HOME DECORATION
COLLECTION
Made of Veneer over plywood
size: 24.75"W x 8.75"D x 10"H
Highlights: Black lacquer
finish, brass hardware, and
gold leaf accents give this
mirror a vintage look.
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Retro reworked

A more interesting roofline and an upgraded entry improve the profile of a 1970s raised ranch. BY ANDRÉ STRATTON • ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID KATE INC.



A pair of gables and a cupola help break up the facade's horizontal lines.

"I'VE NEVER LIKED the look of raised ranches," says Candie McMillan, who recently bought this 1970s two-story, in New Paltz, New York, with her husband. But the house's lofty space and open layout were too tempting to pass up. So we asked architect Jeff DeGennaro of nearby Middletown to reimagine its facade.

"Adding too many historical references to a house like this would just look foolish," says DeGennaro. But some traditional elements wouldn't feel out of place, he adds, such as cedar shingles in place of the dated composite cladding, and some veneer over the brown brick foundation. He also suggests adding a gable to the left of the entry and one directly above it to break up the long horizontal roofline and fill the awkward gap above the door. Replacing the chunky double-hung with two of bigger casements would help draw the eye up.

"It looks beautiful," Candie says. "And I love the idea of bigger windows, that's a change I'd definitely like to make."

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redo@thefixmag.com

finishing touches

Cedar shingles and brighter natural paint colors give the house a more timeless look.



cupola
Custom features like this artisan metal-roofed cupola. Further remove the house from its cookie-cutter past. Customcrafters \$4250



paint
Smoky blues featured in large efforts just enough contrast to set off the new architectural details. Sherwin-Williams, \$34 per gallon



garage door
This workshop door benefits a big eye of windows and custom style panels. Artisan Custom Doorsworks starting at \$1,800



pendant
A three-dimensional style fixture with special glass and a delicate bronze frame, highlights the new reworked entry. Andelin Lighting \$350

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Do not take VIAGRA if you take nitrates, often prescribed for chest pain, as this may cause a sudden, unsafe drop in blood pressure.

Discuss your general health status with your doctor to ensure that you are healthy enough to engage in sexual activity. If you experience chest pain, nausea, or any other discomforts during sex, seek immediate medical help.

In the rare event of an erection lasting more than 4 hours, seek immediate medical help to avoid long-term injury.

If you are older than age 65, or have serious liver or kidney problems, your doctor may start you at the lowest dose (25 mg) of VIAGRA. If you are taking prostate inhibitors, such as for the treatment of BPH, your doctor may recommend a 25-mg dose and may limit you to a maximum single dose of 25 mg of VIAGRA in a 48-hour period. If you have prostate problems or high blood pressure for which you take medicines called alpha blockers, your doctor may start you on a lower dose of VIAGRA.

In rare instances, men taking PDE5 inhibitors (oral erectile dysfunction medicines, including VIAGRA) reported a sudden decrease or loss of vision or hearing. If you experience sudden decrease or loss of vision or hearing, stop taking PDE5 inhibitors, including VIAGRA, and call a doctor right away.

VIAGRA should not be used with other ED treatments. VIAGRA should not be used with REVATIO or other products containing sildenafil.

VIAGRA does not protect against sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.

The most common side effects of VIAGRA are headache, facial flushing, and upset stomach. Less commonly, bluish vision, blurred vision, or sensitivity to light may briefly occur.

Please see Important Facts for VIAGRA on the following page or visit viagra.com for full prescribing information.

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(vi-AJ-ruh)

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION ABOUT VIAGRA

Never take VIAGRA if you're taking medicines with nitrates. This includes nitroglycerin. Your blood pressure could drop quickly. It could lead to a stroke or a life-threatening event.

ABOUT ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION (ED)

Sex life dysfunction means a man cannot get or keep an erection. Health problems, surgery, or side effects of drugs may cause ED. The cause may not be known.

ABOUT VIAGRA

VIAGRA is used to treat ED in men. When you want to have sex, VIAGRA can help you get and keep an erection when you are sexually excited. This doesn't guarantee purity, taking the pill. Only pills about this powerful VIAGRA.

VIAGRA does not cure ED.

VIAGRA does not protect you or your partner from STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) or HIV. You still need to use a condom.

VIAGRA is not a treatment for anaphrodisia.

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Who should take VIAGRA?

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Who should NOT take VIAGRA?

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 - Medicines that treat chest pain (nitroglycerin), such as nitroglycerin or isosorbide mononitrate or dinitrate.
- If you use some sexual drugs, such as "poppers," benzyl alcohol, or similar.
- If you are allergic to anything in the VIAGRA tablet.

BEFORE YOU START VIAGRA

Tell your doctor if you have or ever had:

- Heart attack, abnormal heartbeats, or stroke.
- Blood problems, such as low blood counts, liver pills, kidney, or sexual, reduce swimming.
- Low or high blood pressure.
- Recent vision loss.
- An eye condition called retinitis pigmentosa.
- Kidney or liver problems.
- Blood problems, such as stroke, cell anemia, or leukemia.
- A deformed penis. Peyronie's disease, is an infection that lasted more than 4 weeks.
- Stomach ulcers or any kind of bleeding problems.

Tell your doctor about all your medicines. Include over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Tell your doctor if you take or use:

- Medicines called alpha-blockers. Medicines to treat high blood pressure or prostate problems. Low blood pressure could suddenly get too low. You could get dizzy or faint. Your doctor may want you to lower dose of VIAGRA.
- Medicines called prostate inhibitors for HIV. Your doctor may prescribe a 23 mg dose. Your doctor may tell VIAGRA to 15 mg in a 15-day period.
- Color medicines to cause erections. These include pills, cigarettes, capsules, or pumps.
- A medicine called rifampin. VIAGRA should not be used with rifampin. Rifampin is used to treat tuberculosis. The cause could be based on VIAGRA.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF VIAGRA

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- Indigestion
- Dizziness
- Back pain
- Muscle aches
- Stuffy nose
- Tiredness
- Blurred vision
- Trouble seeing blue and green colors or seeing a blue tinge or haze
- Eyes being more sensitive to light
- Stomach pain
- Rash
- A small number of men taking VIAGRA have reported these serious events:
 - Having an erection that lasts more than 4 hours. If the erection is not treated right away, long-term loss of potency could occur.
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 - Sudden decrease in loss of hearing. We do not know if these events are caused by VIAGRA and sometimes like it is caused by other factors. If you have sudden hearing changes, stop using VIAGRA and all medicines like it. Call your doctor right away.
 - Heart attack, stroke, irregular heartbeats, and death. We do not know whether these events are caused by VIAGRA or caused by other factors. Most of these happened in men who already had heart problems.

If you have any of these problems, stop VIAGRA. Call your doctor right away.

HOW TO TAKE VIAGRA

Do:

- Take VIAGRA only the way your doctor tells you. VIAGRA comes in 25 mg, 50 mg, and 100 mg tablets. Your doctor will tell you how much to take.
- If you take less than 100 mg every time or before sex, you should stop taking it for 24 hours before you take 100 mg.
- Take VIAGRA about 1 hour before you want to have sex. VIAGRA starts to work as soon as 30 minutes when you are sexually excited. VIAGRA lasts up to 4 hours.

Don't:

- Do not take VIAGRA more often or in higher doses.
- Do not take more VIAGRA than your doctor tells you.
- If you think you need more VIAGRA, talk with your doctor.
- Do not eat or use any other medicines before checking with your doctor.

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- See www.viagra.com or call (800) 6-VIAGRA (684-2474).



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It may look like a standard deadbolt, but the Kēvo deadbolt by Kwikset is anything but ordinary. It's the first deadbolt to employ touch-to-open technology, using smartphones as virtual keys. When your smartphone or your Kēvo key comes within range, Kēvo unlocks with a simple touch. And, with its patent-pending intelligent performance technology that detects whether an authorized user is inside or outside the home before granting access, Kēvo is engineered for maximum security, convenience, and peace of mind. **BUY IT NOW:** Kwikset.com/kevo

Jelly cupboard

Construct a cupboard from edge-glued pine panels, or select one to buy and get a jump on making preserves. BY TILLI BORK • PHOTOGRAPH BY JENNIFER TAYLOR

THIS CLASSIC CABINET

Because popular in the mid-1800s, when heartland housewives, far from town centers, needed a handy spot to stockpile preserves. Sometimes you'll see more ornate, antique versions in oak or cherry, but yours are painted pine, like this handsome example. If you want to build one, we recommend working with edge-glued panels. They give you enough width to get the face frame and door out of a single piece, and, unlike plywood, the cut edges are smooth and feel finished when painted. If you prefer to spend your time canning, you can certainly buy a cupboard. Typically, the more you pay, the more weathered the finish. But whether you build or buy, don't think you have to keep this versatile accent piece in the kitchen—or stock it with jelly, for that matter.

Shawn Collier/
Portland Jelly Cabinet
Michèle Chetty
Price: \$55, etsy.com

More info:
To find a cut list
for this cupboard
visit the page
with the book
offer to thisoldhouse.com/servlet/2004
for the download.



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BUILD
IT

Transform stock lumber into a timeless cupboard befitting any space

COST: \$54

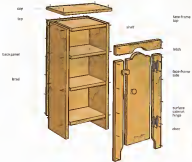
TIME: 4 hours

SKILL LEVEL: Easy
Assembly is simple, though cutting curves with a plane requires a steady hand

panel in place. Flush at the top and inset 1/4 inch at each side. Nail the cap into the cabinet, flush at the back but overhanging the front and sides equally.

2) **Make the face frame.** To create the face on the front panel, measure and mark a rectangle 30 1/2 by 11 inches, centered at one end. Trace the curve of a 3-inch paint can to round off the corners, then cut the line with a jigsaw. At the opposite end, draw a straight line across the panel 2 inches down from the top. Mark spots 4 1/2 inches in from each side on that line and 10 inches above the line's midpoint. Use the curved edge of a 1-gallon paint can to connect the marks and trace the curve above that line. Follow this curved line with a jigsaw to cut out that top piece of the face frame. Then use a straightedge and a circular saw to rip 2 1/2-inch strips off both sides of the remaining piece, creating the sides of the face frame and the cabinet door.

3) **Install the door.** Lay the box on its back, and glue and nail the top and sides of the face frame to the front. Use sandpaper or shims to center the door. Install the hinges and knobs. To install the latch, use an 1/8-inch diameter countersink bit to drill through the latch and into the face frame, then loosely screw the piece in place with a 1/4-inch wood screw. Fill any nail holes with wood filler and smooth rough spots with 220-grit sandpaper before painting the cupboard.

BUY
IT

Pine is the main ingredient, but the price picks show off a timeworn finish.

\$150 **The basic model**
A classic option outfitted with two shelves. Finished in one of four traditional colors. dunelm.com



\$179 **The end-of-range model**
This entry-level cabinet comes in 12 shades, and the wood door latch evokes a rustic look. artline.com



\$229 **The heavy model**
A four-legged farmhouse this made-to-order piece has the look of a family heirloom. pioneerhardware.com



Hidden gems

In an act of upside-down residential archaeology, the This Old House TV crew reveals—and rebuilds—historical plaster details entombed above a false ceiling

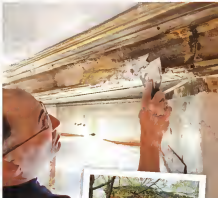
BY JONAS CAREY • PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANTHONY TREBUL

THE QUESTION had been hanging over their heads for years. Epic too overhead, to be exact. Five years Heather and Malcolm Fuchs bought their 1872 farmhouse, in the Arlington suburb of Boston, a few years ago, they wondered if there might be something interesting hidden above the suspiciously low ceilings of the parlor rooms.

But it wasn't until their home became the star of the current TOH TV season that they would get an answer. Once TOH general contractor Tim Silva and the crew had set up shop, Tim wanted no time cutting a people in the ceiling. Heather stood at the foot of the ladder, waiting for his assessment. "Oh, you've got to see this," he said.

Heather was up next, and she shined a flashlight into the dead space above the false ceiling. "The original ceilings were amazing," she says. There was a robust medallion and cove-style plaster crown molding in hand around the dining and living rooms. "We were blown away."

The discovery fit right into the



ABOVE: This Boston plaster confectioner on the TOH TV project house in Arlington, Massachusetts. Filming in the original plaster rooms making RIGHT: The best of the 1872 Malcoms will get a new front door, porch railing, and second-story window. LEFT: Malcom and Heather Fuchs, shown here with their two children, are looking to expand and modernize the floor plan of their home.



BEFORE

couple's overall approach for the renovation of their 2,100-square-foot house. "We really wanted to create a more open and brighter feel while preserving the period character of the house," says Leathers. The Fushlers, who have two children, are adding a master suite above a single-story basement at the back, a mudroom, a half bath, and a larger kitchen on the first floor, and finished space in the basement. In the process, though, they've committed to preserving the historical features of the 143-year-old house, such as the coffered cornice outside and the original stony and belustrade inside.

Nowhere are Leathers' more evident than in their decision to invest substantial time and money in restoring the ornamental plaster. "We're a bit puzzled that anyone would not cover up these ceilings to begin with," says Malolos. Someone had used Zerk and dry wall to lower the ceiling height from 10 feet to 8 feet, probably, says Tom, to make heating the rooms easier.

Holding on to the past

Being up high provides ornamental plaster with protection from the dents and damage of everyday life. Being covered up protects the details from being ripped out altogether by busy homeowners. Still, the Fushlers' end goal would require a lot of work to restore. "The plaster

is more than a century old, so it was in rough shape in some places," says Bob Bacco, the plaster contractor on this and many past TON TV projects.

The Fushlers' house was built on a rubblestone foundation, and as the structure settled over time, the framing twisted, causing the rigid plaster to crack. Large chunks of the crown molding had come off in a number of places. In the living room, the old plaster ceiling was largely intact, as was its medallion, minus one chunk near the edge. But in the dining room, the medallion was missing and tended to be re-created (see "Replicating a medallion," page 55), and the entire ceiling had to be replaced.

But as Bacco—after 33 years in the trade—can attest, plaster is mucky stuff, and moldings that are still well anchored to wall and ceiling can be repaired right in place—at a certain cost. "Sure, some people might have torn the old stuff out and replaced it with new materials," says Bacco. "But I'm glad they decided to repair the original work because it fits the home, even with all the patched areas and holes. New plaster molding looks too perfect."

Working in layers

Restoring old plaster is a multi-step process. Working from a 4-foot-high scaffold, Bacco and his assistants first

about patching all the holes in the walls and the living room ceiling, then covering the repairs with fiberglass mesh and a coat of veneer plaster. With a solid surface to build upon, the crew turned to the ornamental work.

"The crown molding was the most tedious part of this job," says Bacco. He started above the bay window in the dining room, filling a hand-size hole in the crown that went all the way down to the wall. He built it up with layers of high-strength mending plaster, mixed by hand in small batches. Then he dragged a stainless-steel straightedge, called a jacking rod, over the repair like a squeegee. "It takes time and patience to get the surfaces to meet so that they look nice," he said.

When the plaster finished setting, Bacco and his crew sanded the surfaces smooth by hand before they started work on the two diamo or other damaged areas. Each hole in the crown took about 4 hours to repair, start to finish, using pretty much the same methods tradesmen would have used a century ago.

Making the mold

Repairing the ornate ceiling medallion required a different strategy. To replicate its details, Bacco created a mold and used it to cast a plaster patch. After Tom had done a bit of surgical trimming to both the patch and the edges of the hole with an oscillating tool, Bacco buzzed the back of the patch with plaster and pressed it in place. Then he used his fingers to push the joint with pliers. Holding up a plaster-coated hand, he said, "That's the most important tool you need."

As part of the overall project, the passage between the two rooms was enlarged, opening up new sight lines from the dining room to the front windows of the living room and out onto the tree-lined street. "The false ceiling board right on top of the casing, giving the room a cramped, dark look," says Malolos. "One of my favorite

Patching a medallion

- (1) Bacco creates a new joint mending putty onto an unadorned section of the medallion to make a mold.
- (2) Once the putty sets, it remains flexible and can be peeled off.
- (3) He covers the hole in a thick layer of plaster, pressing it into all the detailed areas.
- (4) Once the plaster sets, the patching is trimmed to shape and placed back into place.



things about the new look is that it lets more light in and you can appreciate the casing."

The transformation of the two rooms is dramatic. The restored 24 inches of headroom and the ornamental plaster provide a touch of grandeur despite the rooms' modest footprints.

"We're delighted we were able to save the ornamental plaster," says Malolos. "Someone in the past put a lot of work into making the rooms special, and now Bob has made them look fantastic again." ■



Resurrecting the crown (1) After preparing the damaged area by shaping a mold from glass mesh and bonding agent, Bacco packs the area with a layer of high-strength plaster to secure the area and continues layering until the patch is flush with the adjacent surfaces. (2) He drags a steel straightedge over the protruding plaster, shaping it to the contour of the old profile. (3) While the plaster is still soft, he uses a brush to clean details by hand. (4) Once the plaster has set, Bacco uses sandpaper to smooth out any areas bleeding new and old.

Replicating a medallion with a 3-D printer



IN CONTRAST TO THE OLD-WORLD METHODS used to repair the medallions in the living room, the TON TV team turned to a decidedly 21st-century solution to replicate the one missing from the dining room. That solution came by way of David Kempel, a senior technology consultant with AET Fab Labs, an Essex Massachusetts-based additive-manufacturing digital shop. As it is, and even the reports a 3-D printer like the one at the left. The printer had immediately and built, spraying millions of microscopic droplets of resin with each pass and slowly building up a physical version of the digital file. The resin, which can be used to cast a new one in plaster or masonry directly on the ceiling, has a normal weight—just a bit of the Fushlers' house.

PHOTO TOP BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS FOR TON TV; BOTTOM BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS FOR TON TV

ADVERTISEMENT



More than a Renovation— a Renaissance

Time in as we transform an 1872 Italianate in 18 brand new episodes, premiering this January

Produced by **QVC**
Presented by **GMC** **State Farm**



Build a cocktail hutch

Turn a plain pine cabinet into a sophisticated vertical bar by adding crown molding and custom rack assemblies BY THE OLD HOUSE EDITORS • PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEAN PERCY

If you're always getting caught bustling through cupboards for cocktail flasks just as guests begin arriving, it may be time to control all those extra minutes in one location. A tall and slender cocktail hutch provides a perfect place to hang glasses, store wine bottles, hold bottle openers and mixers, and display signs. The natched boards that create the X-shaped wine rack and simple glass rack assemble quickly, but installing the flashing touches of crown and base molding takes a little time. It'll all pay off at your next party, though, as your guests admire your craftsmanship. This time, you won't be too busy to chat with them. Follow along as senior technical editor Mark Fawcett and colleague Douglas Adams show you how to make an impressive piece of furniture that is as handy as it is handsome.

Photo: William Lloyd
Cabinet design: Douglas Adams
wine racks: \$20 per
yard; lowes.com



4 MAKE THE WINE RACK

A) Bevel the parts. Clamp a rack piece with one end overhanging your work surface. Adjust the blade on your circular saw to 45 degrees and bevel the end, as shown. Repeat on the piece and bevel the other end at an opposing angle. Repeat the process on the other piece.

B) Lay out the boards. Place the first piece in the box diagonally with the bevel flat against the bottom and the side. Hold the second piece perpendicular to the first, and mark the edges of both pieces where they cross. Set the depth on a combination square to 2 1/2 inches. Hold the square at each mark, and draw lines for a 1/4-inch wide by 70-inch long notches on each board, as shown. The notches will allow the boards to slip together in a fit.

C) Cut the notches. Clamp one of the pieces to your work surface, and use a jigsaw to cut to the end of the lines. To connect the lines at the top of the notch, use a 1/4-inch drill bit to make a hole at one corner. Then slip the blade of your jigsaw into the hole and make the short 1/4-inch cut to complete the notch. Repeat the process on the other piece.

5 INSTALL THE RACK

A) Assemble the pieces. Slip the boards together at the notches. The base is at the bottom; the side piece goes on top, and the ones at the top should face the tubes.

B) Secure the rack and shelves. Set the wine rack insert in the hatch, and set a shelf above it. Nail through the sides of the back and into the edges of the shelf with 1 1/4-inch nails to secure it. Do not nail into the wine rack insert—you want to allow for slight movement. Mark the location of the reinforcing stickers, and nail them in place.



6 INSTALL THE FACE FRAME AND TRIM

A) Attach the side and end stiles. Measure and cut the 1x2 and two 1x5 face frame pieces to length on your miter saw. Apply glue to the front edges of the butch. Set the 1x5 ribs at the top and bottom, connecting the lip of the glass rack and bottom shelf, respectively. Set the 1x2 stiles flush on the glass edges. Flush with the sides of the butch. Nail through the glass pieces and into the hatch edges with 3/4-inch brads.

B) Install the baseboard molding. On your miter saw, bevel both ends of the baseboard molding. Bevel the front ends of the side pieces but straight-cut their back ends. Apply glue to the back of each piece and nail them in place. Flush with the bottom edge of the butch's sides.



7 INSTALL THE CROWN MOLDING

A) Install the backing strips. Clamp a 2x4 to your work surface and rip the angle of the backing strips with a circular saw. Cut them to length. Temporarily cap the hatch with a scrap board overhanging one side. Hold a piece of crown with its bevels flush against the cap and the butch, and mark along its bottom edge. Transfer the line around the butch. Position the backing strips enough above the shelf to account for the crown's bevel, and nail them in place with 1 1/4-inch brads.

B) Cut-out the crown molding. Using another saw, cut the crown molding to length. Hold the mitered pieces in place on the back to dry. Fit the joints. Trim straight-cut the back and end of each face piece to length.

C) Attach the crown molding. Set each piece of crown molding on your marked lines. Nail through the molding and into the backing strip using 20-inch brads. Fill all the nail holes and joints with wood filler and sand the spots smooth. For the finish, we used an interior latex paint with a satin finish in a color that mimics the rich look of stain to give the piece a formal look appropriate for a living room. ■



CROWN CRASH COURSE
To watch a video of TOM general contractor Ron Shick demonstrating how to crown-mold, scan this QR code with the Shopper app or go to houzz.com/janetm2014

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LITTLE RESOLUTIONS THAT WILL **SAVE YOU** **BIG BUCKS**

Forget getting in shape or learning to make compound miter cuts—nothing beats a New Year's resolution that puts more money in your pocket. Here are 30 wallet-fattening changes to make for 2014

BY JOSH GERSKOFF • ILLUSTRATIONS BY CATHERINE MEURISSE

Resolve to BE MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT

A LIST OF 15 ENERGY-RELATED TIPS AND HOW THEY CAN SAVE YOU MONEY

1. GIVE YOUR WINDOWS A LITTLE TLC. For aging double-paneled units (and single storms), order replacement gaskets from the manufacturer, cut them to length, and pop them in, says building efficiency and technology consultant Mark LaLiberto. **THE PAYOFF:** Just tightening the seal in this manner could cut **up to \$30** a month in heating and cooling costs.

2. LATCH ALL YOUR SASH LOCKS. Making sure to replace any that are broken and for those that are misaligned, says Tim Old House general contractor Tom Silva. It's a basic, low-tech task that too few people do. If you have old windows, be sure to shut all your storms. **THE PAYOFF:** Save **10 to 15 percent** on your yearly heating bills.

3. CLOSE YOUR CURTAINS and lower your blinds at night to help stop drafts. **THE PAYOFF:** You could slash your overall heating bill by as much as **30 percent**.

4. TURN DOWN YOUR THERMOSTAT 1 DEGREE. You won't feel much of a difference in ambient temperature—and the same goes for racing up your air-conditioning 1 degree in summertime. **THE PAYOFF:** Turn your heating fuel bill by **5 percent** each month.

5. RESOLVE TO STOP BUYING CFL RULES. The quality and brightness of the light just don't compare with those of incandescent bulbs, so you're less likely to put CFLs in your most heavily used fixtures, where the savings would

add up more. LED bulbs, on the other hand, don't require any comparison. So whenever a bulb blows in a high-use location, resolve to spring for an LED replacement (about \$10 for a good one) that could pay for itself within a year. **THE PAYOFF:** By the time you've replaced twenty 75-watt incandescents, you'll have reduced your annual electricity bill by **at least \$125**.

6. REPLACE THAT AGING EXTRA REFRIGERATOR in your garage or basement with a new, modest size Energy Star model, such as Frigidaire's 2-in-1 Upright Convertible freezer (\$669, frigidaire.com). **THE PAYOFF:** This simple swap could knock **\$50 to \$150** off your annual electricity bill.

7. TURN OFF THE LIGHTS WHENEVER YOU LEAVE A ROOM—as in rooms where kids come and go a lot, install vacancy-sensor switches (about \$20 each). Don't worry about the surge of energy consumed when you turn a fluorescent bulb back on, as long as the light remains off for at least 5 seconds, you come out ahead. And if you swap an LED instead (see No. 5), there'll be no extra consumption or early wear and tear from turning the bulb off and on. **THE PAYOFF:** You could save **neatly \$100** on your annual electricity bill.

8. TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT YOUR ENERGY USAGE with a free account at energygizmo.com. The dashboard-like app links to your utility company accounts to track your household energy use, so you can identify and change behaviors that are costing you money. "You almost can't help but find simple ways to adjust your habits, by turning the thermostat down further

at night, say, or using the quick-cycle setting on your dishwasher," says Axi Foss, LEED residential technical development director at the U.S. Green Building Council. **THE PAYOFF:** The average size of the one—it's owned by the makers of the Nest thermostat, but you don't need to purchase one to use the app—saves **over \$100** on annual energy bills.

9. WASH YOUR CLOTHES IN COLD WATER instead of warm—and definitely not hot. "There's this perception that you need hot water to clean clothes properly," says Foss. "But with today's detergents, it's just unnecessary." **THE PAYOFF:** Using the cold setting could save you **\$75 or more annually**—and, more important, prolong the life of your clothing and lessen dry-cleaning costs.

10. PLACE AN INSULATED COVER over your attic hatch to prevent heat loss through this

11. Put an egg timer in the bathroom and enforce a 7-minute shower rule. You could save \$125 a year.



12. Clean your gutters at least twice a year, in late spring and fall. And be sure to fix even the tiniest leak in them (or your roof) immediately. What may not look like a big deal can quickly balloon from a simple DIY- or handyman-fixable problem to a \$1,000-plus contractor repair.



gaping hole in your attic floor insulation. "We like the Batts Door B-50 Best Attic Seals Insulated Cover, as three standard hatch sizes (battsdoor.com). **THE PAYOFF:** Depending on the overall level of insulation in your house, you'll likely recoup that **\$125 to \$150** outlay on anywhere from one month to one winter.

**Resolve to:
CATCH UP ON DEFERRED MAINTENANCE**

13. FLUSH OUT YOUR WATER HEATER to remove sediment that makes the equipment work harder to do its job. To empty the tank, you'll need to turn off all electrical and water supplies, then connect a basic garden hose to the drain spigot and run it to a sump pump

or a sink, or outside through a door or window. Once the tank is empty, turn on the water supply full blast to flush out sediment. For a step-by-step video, go to thisishow.com/energy/1014. **THE PAYOFF:** You'll save a lot on your energy bills—and you could delay a **\$700-plus** water-heater replacement for several years, says TDM plumbing and heating expert Richard Timkenew.

14. DECLUTTER YOUR DRYER HOSE. Unplug the clothes dryer, slide it out, detach the hose from the back, and vacuum out the lint at least once a year to dramatically shorten your drying times, prolong the life of the machine, and, most important, reduce the risk of fire. **THE PAYOFF:** You'll shave your clothes-drying costs by **25 to 30 percent**, estimates HVAC contractor Jan Godbout of Baddley & Moore.

15. HIRE AN INDEPENDENT HVAC CONTRACTOR instead of the oil company to change the filter and clean out leaks your oil-burning furnace or boiler each year. Either way, you'll get a tune-up that could yield a **5 to 15 percent** savings compared with standard oil-pumpers. **THE PAYOFF:** Some oil companies may set up your equipment to use more oil than it needed in order to bolster their business (selling oil). By using an efficiency-minded independent, you could see another **5 to 20 percent** in savings.

16. SEAL FORCED-AIR DUCTS in your attic, crawl spaces, and under shed basement. Remove the old joint tape, clean off the surface with a wet rag to remove dirt—and allow good adhesion—then attach fresh foil tape. **THE PAYOFF:** You'll knock in as much as **20 percent** off your annual



17. Use a can of spray foam to seal holes in the perimeter of your basement—in walls, sills, and rim joists—as well as in the floor of the attic to help prevent heated air from escaping and cold from intruding. You could save 10 percent on your heating bills.

heating and cooling bills, says Mike Sherman of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

Get to: GET MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

18. USE THE TIMER ONLY ON YOUR DISHWASHER AND LAUNDRY APPLIANCES or put out a manual timer to remind you to run your loads after 6 p.m. (But always be sure to finish the cycle before you turn it for the night—in case of a short that could result in a fire.) Though they don't always prompt it, many utilities offer cheaper off-peak pricing for electricity—to the tune of a 50 percent discount or more. **THE PAYOFF:** This simple time shift could save you over \$100 annually.

19. HIRE A PAINTER TO DO INTERIOR WORK IN JANUARY OR FEBRUARY In cold climates, business typically slows down during the winter months, but it's actually an ideal time to paint. You won't need as many touch-ups later because the cold, dry air cures the wood in moldings to shrink and gaps to appear, so the can's caulk to fill them. **THE PAYOFF:** Since the painter is probably looking for work, you could get a 10 percent price cut—and a quicker turnaround.

20. SELL YOUR UNWANTED HOME PRODUCTS ONLINE. That cool original ceiling fixture you took out of the old bedroom but have no place for now? The hatch door doesn't fit in your new kitchen? The railroad dinner your kids outgrew? Post up some space by selling goods you no longer use on Craigslist or eBay. As the saying goes, One woman's

trash is another woman's treasure. **THE PAYOFF:** You could turn any one of these into \$50 to \$100 or more in cash.

Resolve to: PROTECT YOUR HOME AND BELONGINGS

21. REPLACE OLD MODERN OUTLETS with new AFCI (arc-fault circuit interrupter) ones, for around \$30 each. These receptacles detect electric arcs, like those that can occur when a lamp cord is punctured, and instantly cut the power at the outlet instead of waiting for your home's circuit breaker to pop. **THE PAYOFF:** Avoiding a house fire could save you \$25,326—the average property loss for residential electrical fires—net to account for labor.

22. PULL DOWN UNRULY VINES from your home's facade. On brick walls, climbing vines suckers, such as Virginia creepers, can damage the mortar, creating entry points for water. As the moisture-laden bricks freeze and thaw, the mortar layer may crumble and drop off. Vines also trap moisture, which can cause wood cladding to rot. **THE PAYOFF:** You may avoid having to shell out for brick repointing, which costs \$5 to \$25 per square foot, and can save up to \$3,000 in costs to rebuild and reside a rotted clapboard wall.

23. SET A SMARTPHONE REMINDER TO REPLACE THE FILTERS on your furnace's first every three to six months. These self-sticking disks pick up debris—and often fall off unnoticed—quickly leading to an irregular burning of your hardwood floors. **THE PAYOFF:** You could save yourself \$200 or more in refinishing costs.

24. SWITCH TO A WIRELESS BURGLAR ALARM and avoid the long monthly monitoring dues of standard alarm companies. With a system such as SimpliSafe (simplisafe.com), you just "peel and stick" the motion detectors, door-opening sensors, and keypads into position, and they'll sync wirelessly. You can also get smoke and carbon monoxide alarms—and operate the system remotely from a smartphone app. A cellular connection transmits a signal to a cell center for 24/7 monitoring, all for about \$15 a month. **THE PAYOFF:** You'll

use as much as an extra \$50 a month in your wallet.

25. FIX A CRACK IN A PLASTER WALL before it branches out and causes large sections of wall or ceiling to delaminate, or pull away, from the lath behind it. You can patch the crack with a plaster repair kit—Tom Silva likes Big Dilly's Plaster Magic homeowners' pack (\$9.95; plastermagic.com). Get the low-in for this job at theskillshare.com/post3214. **THE PAYOFF:** Before getting a probe \$700 or more would cost to fix extensive cracks or delamination.

27. REPAIR A LEAKY TOILET if you spot moisture on the floor underneath it. What seems like a drop could indicate a serious leak in progress in the water pools beneath the subfloor, which could cause the ceiling to collapse onto the floor below. Check the supply line to the tank—over time, these can get loose and the seal can wear out. You can replace the supply line yourself for the cost of the \$5 part. **THE PAYOFF:** You could save more than \$1,000 in repairs to water-lagged bathroom walls and floors, and damaged rooms below.

28. USE A SMARTPHONE APP to record the model numbers, powers, and serial numbers of your belongings. Use it to share photos of the items, as well as receipts and appraisals, then save all the data off-site for safekeeping. In the unfortunate event of a burglary or fire, you'll have all the

documentation you need to maximize your claim. Home Inventory, \$5 from iFlare. **THE PAYOFF:** Proving the existence and value of just one electronic device or piece of jewelry could yield \$500 to \$5,000 in insurance money when you only need it.

29. PURCHASE (AND USE) A FITTED COVER for any outdoor gear, from your BBQ grill to your Adirondack chairs, that doesn't get put away for the winter. Check out those at the cover-store.com. **THE PAYOFF:** You'll prolong the life of those items by perhaps five years, saving about \$200 to \$500 each in replacement costs.

30. PUT THE BATH FAN ON A TIMER SWITCH to help keep mildew at bay. You can also install a condensation- and humidity-sensing switch (Dewdrop FS-190, \$49; dewdrop.com) that'll turn on the fan automatically when the air gets steamy from showers and then shut it off after 30 minutes, once the air is clear. It's compatible with any exhaust fan, but this gadget's built-in sensor may work better in smaller bathrooms where the steam is close to the shower. **THE PAYOFF:** You could postpone the need to hire a painter to kill mildew and repaint the bathroom, easily a \$500-plus job. Or, if you need to leave your manual switch on every long, you could save \$50 in annual heating and cooling costs. ■



25. Cooking for one—or two?
Use a toaster oven and save one-third to one-half the energy a conventional electric oven would use.

grit & polish

With its listing walls and sagging roof, this fixer-upper farmhouse was a sorry sight—until two serial renovators gave it new life and a new look

By Deborah Baldwin
Photographs by John Gruen
Styling by Raine Kattelton



THIS HOME: Restoring this fixer-upper farmhouse was a labor of love for the owners, who used the original materials to create a new look. The new look is a mix of old and new, with a focus on the original materials and a touch of modern design.

A COUNTRY HOUSE EARLY BECOMES an object of fantasy. With a few engagements, the charming and resourceful and will become the staging ground for a whole new way of life—one that involves leisurely meals, long walks, maybe a bit of gardening.

On so the fantasy goes.

Then those four take on a life of their own. Which is pretty much what happened to Bobby Houston and Eric Shores, seasoned renovators who nonetheless had little idea of what was in store when they happened upon a centuries-old farmhouse nestled in the Berkshires of western Massachusetts and decided to make it their own.

What's not far second-floor windows—or skylights, as they are known locally—used its congested 19th-century address, the house felt incoherent and light-deprived. "The addition was really a panacea," says Bobby, "a dark kitchen with just one window, a laundry room with doors, a back staircase, and an all-pink bath."

This, in a house that is rumored to date to the 1760s, around the time rebels were preparing to smuggle arms to George Washington along a path nearby, and amidst the town line of historic Egmont, a hotbed of the late-17th-century-Federalist terror known as Shays' Rebellion.

Nic Cooper, of the local historical commission, guesses that the house may actually be more recent than Shores has realized enough to deserve a little dignity. "It's abominably wide for an early house, one-and-a-half-story house," he says, adding that the builders may have arrived that way by recycling long beams from an older house or barn.

When Bobby and Eric found it, about eight years ago, the previous owners were flipping it after a year and had done little to undo the mishaps of 18th-century alterations, which included a picture window permeably added in the 1950s. "But no views to the west," recalls Bobby, who developed a vision of what might be after walking around back and picturing scenes enjoyed through windows that did not yet exist.

A former filmmaker who fell on good times, Bobby saw potential in the funky, well-used farmhouse and persuaded Eric, his partner in life and in real-estate ventures, to invest in a project that would almost inevitably include sweating with pipes and peeling up kitchen



ABOVE: The clapboard exterior became a light box after new dormers went in on the backside and interior walls came down. Cedar roof shingles and painted siding contribute to the fresh look, along with a post-and-beam side wing made without labor parts and placed with their be-calling windows.

lineback for an unexpected glimpse of the basement.

The property, which the new owners dubbed Borderline Farm—the town line passes right through the house—had lost its charm but retained a ruggedness and a stone-tile walk with the charm of a rural 18th-century French chateau. The front door opened right into living space, having acquired, the owners believe, from the gable end of a barn and some around the time a Victorian-style porch sprang up.

The exterior look was fine country with a bit of '50s retro thrown in, becoming patterned Formica, scalloped valances, and fern boards set diagonally on first-floor walls, an effort that resembled Bobby, he says truly, "of a stark house wanting to look like a real one."

It was not their first floor-upper but it soon became their most ambitious. Determined to improve the windows, insulation, and tight lines, they ended up contemplating a whole-house gut job that left them



LEFT: The homeowners moved the main entry to the gable end above the kitchen. Salvaged French doors clear a seamless buffer while channeling light into the dining room. BELOW: The dining room gets its luminous look from plaster that was dated and used to reflect light.



floor plan

The owners rebuilt the main farmhouse, replacing its rear addition to enlarge the kitchen and later added a post-and-beam wing, which is linked by an elaborate pergola. The pergola is a double-height living room. At the wing is a bar and a study. The wing is a double-height living room. At the wing is a bar and a study. The wing is a double-height living room. At the wing is a bar and a study.



CHECK OUT THE UPSTAIRS
For the second-floor plan
and additional photos, visit
thislighthouse.com/janet2004

with a roughed skeleton of studs and joists. What remained of the interior stood open to the elements. Wouldn't it have been easier to build from scratch? "I've never once considered tearing down a house," Bobby declares.

Helping the homeowners were two fields as important as the property itself: general contractor John Scapin, an expert at taking apart and reassembling old buildings, and Enrico Hinz, who earned his carpentry degree in Germany and specializes in half-timbered houses.

So Scapin and his small crew fell the job of demolition and major reconstruction. They tore out the back stair case, pored radiant heat under the floor, and sealed the exterior walls, adding fiberglass batt insulation. The three-bedroom, one-bath second floor became a TV room flanked by a large master bath and a guest suite. When the new addition came back up for air, it held the master bedroom over a well-appointed kitchen with banks of windows that look north, south, and west—capturing views just as Bobby had envisioned.

The work went pretty smoothly, sure one "moment of reckoning," as Bobby puts it. The kitchen windows were almost in when it came time to install the island, a wooden chest that had traveled from Mexico before coming to rest at a vintage store in nearby Hudson, New York. With Hinz loaned up to retrofit the chest with a sink and copper tap, delivery was arranged. "But there was no opening big enough to get it in," Bobby recalls.

After pondering the alternatives, Hinz removed the framing around two of the windows and pulled out the entire joist. The island slid through the makeshift entry, and window-framing repairs went onto the to-do list.

Rebuilding this chunk of the house allowed the owners to set off the kitchen with a powder room and a bathroom that frame an opening into the older section of the house. This area now holds separate dining and reading rooms, a small office, and an entry with light-chaunting interior glass walls. Miraculously, the flooring stairs survived, gaining only a hairline crack.

"I'm restoring a whole old glass," says Bobby, backing into the story of the use-through entry. Soon he had added four pairs of French doors, "weighing about 200 pounds apiece," as another salvaged stone—he and Hinz were able to find these places in their sleep—for no particular reason aside from their wavy glass. After being allowed to look around the construction site for months while the crew knocked out masonry walls, the anxiety set landed a creative job assignment: to set off the entry without blocking the new or old flow of light. "We could have it back ways," says Bobby. "The glass walls are a way of having a defined space without closing it up."

Though the house needed all-new everything, includ-



ABOVE: Cottage style demands blackwood cabinet doors, butcher block countertops, and a pine ceiling (LEFT) mix it up with a muscular stone and range hood (RIGHT)



RIGHT: A weathered chest reinforced with a black copper top and a sink became the kitchen's centerpiece. The pot rack above just shows it off.



ABOVE: The kitchen's theme is salvaged stone, but not before a freestanding hatch which happened to be a perfect fit for the stove. (LEFT) A built-in desk helps set off the kitchen from the dining room while offering a perch for recipe perusing.

ing a roof, work wrapped up in just six weeks. And another three years passed quietly before the guest-friendly homeowners decided to make further enhancements, this time by adding on.

Perhaps showing off the home the property once held, they went online to see if they could buy one secondhand, maybe even an antique, and attach it to the house. In short order, a truck drove up and out hauled the remains of a small barn—minus roof, walls, and rafters—all the way from Minnesota.

The mail-order lot compacted only a set of drawings and numbered post-and-beam timbers, some of them rare chestnut, just awaiting assembly. "That's what I went to school for in Germany," says Hinz, adding with a grin, "A nice old hand-hewn beam that's weathered well—there's nothing like it."

After replacing a couple that had rotted, Hinz and his crew erected the beams atop a poured-concrete floor and filled in the blanks with structural insulated panels, which consist of a foam core sandwiched between layers of oriented strand board. They cut openings for doors and windows, and finished the exterior with burning strips (to prevent moisture buildup)





FIGIT A built-in tucked-under the seatlow is a coffee table provides seating space as well as storage



OPPOSITE In the living room, were Barn Kitchens, rough examples, and the kitchen brushed with mortar and plaster with a polished concrete floor and a six down seating. **LEFT** Down, upstair and downstair slide open for bedding and close when guests leave

barrel atop a riding. Ceilings were lined with rough-sawn pine, which it was a timber frame, and the old beams were capped with a new roof.

Structural steel Blacked plans for a full bath on the wing's second floor, forcing the shower and toilet into separate spaces on the adjacent floor. "Non-ideal," Bobby concedes. But to save bed and bath, he and Eric would have had to add yet another dormer—and they'd already counted four along the roof.

Since no barn addition is complete without a beastly, they brought in Mark Mendel, a much-in-demand mason, who built a soaring fireplace on the back of the existing one and rebuilt the chimney for a second fire.

Mendel glazed his brickwork with a translucent coat of mortar, a technique he calls "smoking" (and "difficult"). In other rooms, hand-troweled plaster gives the walls and ceilings their faux aged look. Cuda for that goes to Bern-born Robin Bertrich, who dips into natural and synthetic pigments, including ochre unearthed in Rocaille, France, and hand-trowels his plaster over blue-board. "We're not big fans of drywall," says Bobby. "It's not very charming in the end, if you are serious, which we are. And plaster is for the long run."

Not that they plan to grow old here, necessarily. As an avowed old-house addict, Bobby has a pathological saving eye. Even on vacation, he confides with out remorse, "by the third day, I'm looking at houses."



SHOP THE STYLE
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Read This Before YOU REDO YOUR BEDROOM CLOSET

You reach in there every morning—and promise once again to mend your closet's ways. Now's the time to make it happen. Whether you decide on an off-the-shelf system, custom built-ins, or a DIY special, read these tips before you wade in.

BY DEBORAH BALDWIN ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERIC LARSEN

TAKE STOCK OF WHAT YOU'VE GOT

Sell, donate, and whittle down. Then get out a ruler.

□ START WITH WHOLE HANGERS. Place clothes that on their hangers in two piles—one for short items, like shirts, and the other for long items, like coats and pants, hung full length by their cuffs or hemline. Measure the height of each pile to get the dimensions for the short- and long-item rods. Keep in mind that hangers need sliding space.

□ NEXT UP: CLOTHES THAT FOLD. Arrange foldables in 10-inch-high stacks—any higher and they could topple. Each stack needs 3 inches of shelf length.

□ EXTRAS. Size up items like hats and T-shirts that also need real estate. Get them? (See facing page.)



DIMENSIONS YOU NEED TO KNOW

The ideal reach-in closet (we're not talking walk-in here) is 6 to 8 feet wide and 24 to 30 inches deep. Standard double doors are best, assuming there's room to swing them open. To prevent blind alleys, the middle of the return walls, the ones to which the doors are hinged, should be no longer than 25 inches. For shelf depth, see "How Deep?" page B-3.

OKAY, TIME TO PLAN THE INTERIOR

SIZE UP YOUR SPACE

- > Beginning with the left wall, measure everything to a T.
- > Sketch a to-scale layout on graph paper, with each wall's width and height as well as details such as base moldings, chases, and receptacles.
- > Make note of sloped ceilings, knee walls, and other odd-house oddities. If facing walls aren't the same length, at least one angle isn't square.

DIVIDE AND ALLOCATE

- > Start with storage for your shoes. While options include slide-out racks and lifted shelves, your best bet is open shelves without dividers. To squeeze in an entire pair, alternate toe-facing and end toe-facing.
- > Sketch in rods for shorter items, making them as wide as your wardrobe warrants, and a higher rod for longer items.
- > Draw shelves 4 inches above the rods plus a high shelf for less-used items, and mark their depths.

- > Draw shelves 4 inches above the rods plus a high shelf for less-used items, and mark their depths.

- > Draw shelves 4 inches above the rods plus a high shelf for less-used items, and mark their depths.

LOOK FOR NOOKS

- > Allocate space for a folding valet stand, against the wall under the highest rod, say.
- > See if there's space for a robe hook on a return or side wall.



Repurpose a chest

Drawer systems can be short on charm. Instead, see if you can slide in a small dresser or ingene chest for socks, ties, and underwear. Top it with a dish to catch pocket change, a jewelry organizer, and a snapshot from your last vacation, as you dress for work, you can always dream.

THE BIFOLD SOLUTION

No room for swing-open doors? Avoid sliders, which block the view, and invest in sturdy, solid-core or solid-wood bifold and heavy-duty fittings (we like those at johnsonhardware.com). Lightweight doors with bad fittings wobble and constantly fall off their tracks.



MAKE IT EASY TO ROTATE

Decide on a destination for off-season items. Identify a wardrobe in the attic or a dry corner of the basement. If you have spare room on the same floor, consider a clothes rack that can be wheeled to the closet when it's time for a swap-out. If elsewhere isn't an option, stack off-season items in easy-to-hoist bins and space-saving vacuum-storage bags on the closet's topmost shelf. Label them so that you can find your bathing suit in January—you never know.

Bring order to shoe chaos

Keep them off the floor—1.5-inch-deep and just as wide as the shoe's sole. Instead, allocate adequate shelf space, allowing 6 inches of width per pair and extra height for boots. Tight squeeze? Find a spot for a freestanding shoe cabinet, perhaps near the front door.

SYSTEM OPTIONS



OUT OF THE BOX You measure your space, shop for the closet kit in a ready-to-go setup like this adjustable one from iCharmade, and screw standards to studs on the back wall. Cost: \$50-\$150



SEMI-CUSTOM An expert at a specialty closet retailer reaches through a window to map out and build a custom array of accessories and compartments. Like those from Ditz. The California kit fits in or by the door. Cost: \$100-\$2,000



FULLY CUSTOM An independent designer or franchisee comes to your house, gauges your needs and space, offers a range of materials and features, and does a fitment, as California Closets did here. Cost: \$700-\$2,000

DIY tricks and tools

Clubs, rods, and poles may be all you need to get started, but if it's an awkward space, the plaster is cracked, or the studs are all the wrong places, avoid tearing out your hair—or a wall—by using these smart work-arounds.



THE PLYWOOD SOLUTION
To share a wall, and plan for that L-shaped shape, line the closet with 1/2-inch hardwood plywood and screw it to the studs. Now you can attach rods and shelves wherever you want. Or build three or four-sided plywood boxes. Use side trim to



STEP-BY-STEP
To watch I am a fix-itout expert visit www.istep.com to watch the video. Or visit the website for more info. www.istep.com



INDUSTRIAL PIPE, WITH A TWIST
To overcome odd configuration or tricky walls, build a scaffold using commercial Speedo Steel tubing (available at big-box stores) and closet rods. Use them to make a system supported by vertical rods screwed to the ceiling and floor or to make freestanding sides. The result looks like other industrial pipe fairs but does the job better. Right-angle splices include connectors with swiveling joints that can handle awkward angles for just a few dollars.

Straighten up

Sliding stacks create shelf havoc. Block the flow with dividers. We like these painted home-center wood corbels (just \$2.50 each!) to add a little extra detail.



Parking spaces

Shallow drawers fitted with tray organizers are the best bet for items that are easily wrinkled or separated or just plain get lost. Here, different-size subdivisions separate ties and corral small items.



No bare bulbs, please!

Prosty installed-light fixtures are where it's at, not to mention unattractive. Spring for an electrician who can hard-wire incandescent bulbs that activate by opening the door or flipping an exterior wall switch. Add an outlet too, if you want to set up a charging station inside or a clothes steamer.



SAFE DISTANCE If you choose an enclosed fixture, you should give it a minimum clearance of 6 inches in all directions, says the National Electrical Code. If it's a fully enclosed surface LED or incandescent fixture, make that 12 inches.

Fast fix: a stick-up puck

Here's a solution when hard wiring isn't an option: a puck. Simply add a little wire light that's rechargeable LED light. Thanks to a motion sensor, it blinks on when you reach in. It looks like a night light and ambient light of an emergency, but it will help get you out the door with matching socks.



See-in storage

A magnetic spice rack with windowed portholes like this one (\$15, containerstore.com) can organize bits like cuff links and collar stays. Mount it on a wall or the back of a door.



NO LADDER NEEDED

FOR REACH-INS, A CEILING-MOUNTED PULL-DOWN

Want to stack a short-hanging rod over one that's set up high? It's doable with a specialty hinged pull-down fitting. (Find them at new-a-shelf.com and harkle.com.) Just grab the rod with the included hook to pull items within arm's reach.

BE FLEXIBLE

Wardrobes change, so do closet owners, so buy or build a system with adjustable-height shelves and rods, using easy-to-reposition screws or shelf-standard clip-ins.

TWO COMMON BAD CONFIGURATIONS AND THEIR FIXES



CAVE CLOSET

The space under a special corner-inward swing is narrow, deep, and/or a steep climb, if opening up the front wall for double doors is not at the question. Hang rods in front of the opening where they are visible. Then build out the front for reach with a shelf or bar.



SLUMPED-WALL CLOSET

Tucked under the rafters, the slanted ceiling creates lots of overhead space, but the shelf is too low to reach. Position your upper shelf to back between the rafters' walls and back wall. Then build out the lower wall with shelves.



Three-way hook

A single hook is easily swamped. Look for three prongs, preferably swiveling ones, so that you can reach the belt or bag you want.



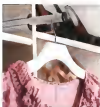
Clothes captioning

If all first lines and labels seem to be OOD, think again. It is important to put clothes in order—they are much more space efficient than not—but it is not just having to plunder every morning for a search of your favorite long sleeve T. Shelf labels not only save time but also keep the space within a series of control and order.

ONE ACCESSORY THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE

It's called a valet hook because it leads a life of service, extending an arm when called upon to hold multiple hangers. Handy when:

- ▶ assembling outfits to take on a trip
- ▶ stashing items just back from the dry cleaner, for sorting later
- ▶ putting out clothes for tomorrow
- ▶ stowing out lightly worn clothes



WHERE TO POSITION YOUR SHELVES

Keep at least one within arm's reach or no higher than 7 feet. The topmost shelf is typically at least 12 inches from the ceiling. Reserve it for off-season clothing and gear that can be retrieved using a stepladder.

Practical ways to personalize

DRRESS IT UP Here, all the shelf storage bins convey color pattern and travel inspiration with the help of old maps. *Visible-but-Mod* (Pond's plan, which becomes transparent when dry) is a great brush, and a fluffy knit to smooth out bobbles.

KICK UP THE WALLS No one says the closet has to match the rest of the room. Capitalize on its identity as a room of its own by painting it with a dramatic shade, like navy, or choose a mood-boosting hue borrowed from your favorite jacket, skirt, or shirt.

GIVE IT A CUSTOM STAMP Whimsical wallpaper, wallpaper or stenciled patterns combine a small closet to feel like a jewel box. Choose an evocative pattern that goes up quickly and won't look too busy.



HOW DEEP?

Shelves 14 inches deep extend over rods and can hold men's shoes and folded jeans. Much deeper and you risk losing things—unless they are kept in a handy bin.



Nonslip storage

Last seen in the kitchen, these slim, C-shape paper-towel holders are heavy enough to trap silky items so that they won't slide off, yielding an easy-access scarf display inside a closet door.

WORTH-THE-SPLURGE ACCESSORIES



SPACE-SAVING HANGERS Designed to slingshot smooth fabrics from billowing to the floor, these solid hangers also keep men's jackets in shape. \$7.50 each, munching.com



PULL-OUT PANTS RACK Avoid having to reach and seek with a visible pull-out that holds slacks. \$74, organizeit.com



FOLDING LADDER The Cress Rackord Series Mahogany Step Stool folds flat to slide into a tight spot. \$45, homedepot.com

<ALL ABOUT>

Wall-to-Wall Carpeting

It's warm, cozy, and soft underfoot—and there's a type to suit most rooms in your home. Here's how to choose the right carpet. BY SARAH STEINBERG

WHEN YOU DECIDE TO INSTALL WALL-TO-WALL, you can count on it having a big impact on the look of the space. But carpet can also affect how a room feels—well not just to your feet. As a natural insulator, wall-to-wall carpeting prevents warm (and cool!) air from escaping and absorbs sound. And, unlike hard flooring, it can also add a bit of give and cushion falls, important considerations if you live with roughhousing kids or an aging parent.

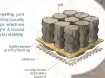
Wall-to-wall carpeting, which first came on the scene in the 1930s, now accounts for half of all the flooring sold in America. The majority of carpet is made here too—how many things can you say that about these days?—usually in Dalton, Georgia, where the industry began. Most is tufted (see floorplans, below), but some carpet is woven on looms for a slightly more durable construction.

Unlike hardwood and stone, carpeting can be laid over damaged or uneven surfaces, a concrete slab, and many types of existing flooring, so you may save money on prep work. And since it's, you know, it's a slick to care for, thanks to advances in fibers and stain-resistant treatments. Not to mention there's an almost endless variety of styles, from nubby, looped designs to closely clipped "velours" with a silky feel and sheen. You'll find patterns, too, including florals, houndstooth, diamonds, and "scalped" looks that combine different pile heights.

Before you kick off your shoes and sink your feet in, read on to learn everything you need to know about wall-to-wall carpeting.

ANATOMY OF CARPET

In tufted carpeting, pile is machine punched through a backing (usually polypropylene) to create rows of tufts, which are stitched or knotted (depending on the style). A second backing (usually polypropylene) is glued on for stability.



VITALS

WHAT DOES IT COST? From 40 cents to \$10 per square foot, depending on the materials and type of construction. For a price guide, compare the labor in the cost of installing (25 cents to \$1.50 per square foot) and not wall-to-wall carpeting (\$1.50 per square foot).

HOW TO CARE FOR IT?

Vacuum with the rug beater brush at least once a week to suck up dirt and dust that could dull the carpet and mat down the fibers. Every 12 to 18 months, have a pro give it a deep cleaning to remove embedded grime—industry pros will do it right.

HOW LONG DOES IT LAST?

Most wall-to-wall carpeting lasts 10 to 15 years, but most carpeting is replaced every 10 years or so.

DIY OR HIRE A PRO?

Carpet installation is a specialized skill. With a pro, you'll likely have a smoother, more uniform result—and you can get a warranty on the work.

Pile primer

Is your room high traffic or low traffic? That will influence the type of construction you choose. Here, the three main pile styles



CUT PILE

Loop piles are formed to create a soft, cushioning surface that is best for lower-traffic areas. Variations include short, dense Seagrass and velvet, which show footprints and vacuum marks, and longer plush and shag styles, which hide them but are hard to clean.



LOOP PILE

With no points exposed, this low-pile carpeting often called Berber, tends to wear better than cut styles in busy spaces, such as family rooms and hallways. But the tight loops can be soft as a cat's paw, and if you have pets, their claws may snag in the fibers.



CUT-AND-LOOP PILE

A combo of the two, this variation in texture creates a pattern on the surface that helps disguise wear and dirt, so it's a good choice for high-traffic rooms. The pile can be of the same height or a mix of high and low to create more visual interest.

Shop smarter

GET SCHOoled ON THE BASICS BEFORE YOU BUY

► **Face-weight** Carpet is assigned a weight, from 25 to 70 ounces, based on the amount of yarn in a square yard. The higher the number, the more durable the carpeting. But the measure is only useful when comparing the same material. A polypropylene sample, for instance, may weigh more than a nylon one but won't perform as well.

► **DCF versus staple fiber** Carpeting is woven from either bulked continuous filament (DCF) yarn, created from long threads, or staple yarn, derived from shorter strands. Most synthetic carpets are made with DCF yarn, whereas wool is a natural staple fiber. Both are equally durable, but staple carpets will shed for a few weeks after installation.

► **Twist** The number of times a carpet fiber is twisted per inch of length. Most yarns have between 2½ and 8 turns. A lighter twist indicates a longer-wearing carpet.



Manufacturers don't typically tout their twist numbers, so you may want to request for yourself.

► **Warranty** Quality carpeting should have a warranty of at least seven to 10 years. Price tags call attention to the stain and texture retention warranties. Stain warranties typically cover discoloration from food and beverages, but may have exceptions for pet stains and spots caused by blood, grease, ink and cosmetics. Texture retention warranties cover fibers' ability to maintain their original shape for a specified length of time.

WHICH MATERIAL IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

The fiber type will impact your carpet's looks, cost, and performance.

WOOL Soft and naturally durable, stain- and fire-resistant—its characteristics necessary—wool (\$36–\$200 per sq. ft.) is exceptionally durable. To save money, consider a wool option for the island, which takes less wear and handles in terms of cost and performance and isn't shed as often as the way cheaper wool, worn from shorter fibers, can BOTTOM LINE: Agree to all around through extensive testing.

NYLON Like wool, most nylon fibers (\$2–\$7 per sq. ft.) are easy to dye. After they're dyed, they're often treated with a finish for resistance to stains and odors. They're typically coated with topical stain treatments. Some newer nylons are solution-dyed prior to being woven, so they're more resistant to stains and odors. But they come in fewer hues. BOTTOM LINE: As versatile as wool and priced as durable, with a lower price tag.

POLYESTER Polyester (\$3–\$4 per sq. ft.) and the rest of the synthetics (see below) are solution-dyed, so they resist stains and avoid fading better than wool solution-dyed nylon. Polyester doesn't hold up as well to stains in busy rooms, and may crack permanently under furniture legs. BOTTOM LINE: Good for all-around spaces, like playrooms.

POLYPROPYLENE/OLEFIN You meet these resistant fibers, polypropylene also called olefin (\$3 cents–\$2 per sq. ft.) is often used in indoor-outdoor rugs. It's a natural choice for sunny spaces. The material cleans easily, though it gets dirty more quickly due to its oily film that attracts soil. Polypropylene resists acids and is permanently resistant to low-pile Berber styles. BOTTOM LINE: Use it in sunrooms but not the family room.

TRISTEX A polymer-based Tristex (\$2–\$4 per sq. ft.) looks and wears like nylon, but the stain and texture retention of polyester. Many are made with commercial or commercial. BOTTOM LINE: A greener synthetic that works over the house.

Pick your carpet

Take a closer look at a sampling of current styles and colors, from hard-wearing Berber to plush wool-cut pile.

Oriental classic

PRICE: \$21 per sq. ft.
MAKER: Karastan
HIGHLIGHTS: Take the traditional Oriental rug look with a twist with this color/100 per cent wool cut pile.

Casual green

PRICE: \$4.50 per sq. ft.
MAKER: Mohawk
HIGHLIGHTS: This textured cut-pile, high-pile carpet has a Berber-style treatment to help repel stains and soil.

Pediatric

PRICE: \$12 per sq. ft.
MAKER: Karastan
HIGHLIGHTS: A low-pile, high-traffic style made of tightly woven wool. Try it in a study or a living room.

Blue velvet

PRICE: \$20 per sq. ft.
MAKER: Mohawk
HIGHLIGHTS: Subtle stripes on this velvet-look nylon Berber help disguise footprints, so it's a good bet for any long room.

Rustic chevron

PRICE: \$14 per sq. ft.
MAKER: Berberidge
HIGHLIGHTS: Weaves a look with the chevron motif. It's thick, so it's a good bet for any long room.

Maroon loop

PRICE: \$5.40 per sq. ft.
MAKER: Shaw
HIGHLIGHTS: Inspired by the look of the tan-on-tan pattern, this loop pile is made with a super soft, low-pile yarn that feels great underfoot.

Diamond tough

PRICE: \$2.20 per sq. ft.
MAKER: Shaw
HIGHLIGHTS: This low-pile, solution-dyed nylon resists stains and odors, so it's a good bet for any long room.

Variable choice

PRICE: \$4.27 per sq. ft.
MAKER: Mohawk
HIGHLIGHTS: This low-pile, solution-dyed nylon resists stains and odors, so it's a good bet for any long room.

Berber beauty

PRICE: \$10 per sq. ft.
MAKER: Shaw
HIGHLIGHTS: This low-pile, solution-dyed nylon resists stains and odors, so it's a good bet for any long room.

High spirits

PRICE: \$24 per sq. ft.
MAKER: Berberidge
HIGHLIGHTS: A low-pile, solution-dyed nylon resists stains and odors, so it's a good bet for any long room.

Choose the perfect pad

Don't overlook the cushion. This underlayment makes a carpet more comfortable to walk on and can help keep it from becoming worn and matted. Consider these factors:

• **Density:** Pads are sold in densities of 3 to 24 pounds per cubic foot. In general, the heavier the pad, the more durable and supportive—but less costly—it is. Choose one that's at least 4 pounds.

• **Thickness:** Follow the carpet manufacturer's guidelines on pad density and thickness, measuring outside the specified range may void your warranty. While most pads are 1/2 inch thick, extra-low-pile carpets, such as Berber, require a thinner pad to prevent wrinkling. For a more luxurious feel, opt for a thicker pad.

• **Material:** Pads are typically made from polyurethane foam, but you can also find fiber or synthetic-rubber ones. If budgeted foam, made of multi-colored polyurethane foam chunks, is a good all-around pad and is used most often. Some synthetic foams, in more porous and tends to compress, so it's best for lower-traffic areas. Frothed foam—a firmer, denser material adhered to felt—and synthetic rubber are extremely durable. Fiber or felt pads, called fiber synthetics or natural fibers, such as jute, provide a resilient surface that's sturdier than foam.

Rebonded pad
Adding memory foam, a polyurethane blend, makes this 8-pound pad more comfortable. Shown: Biscayne. 55 cents—73 cents per sq. ft. shawfloors.com

Frothed foam pad
With its strong ball-barnet, this 20-pound pad can double your carpet warranty. Shown: Tauca. 78 cents—\$1.30 per sq. ft. shawfloors.com

Synthetic fiber pad
Great for fibers, this pad is moisture resistant (won't be used below grade). Shown: Specimen. 35 cents—40 cents per sq. ft. waterlocking.com



CALCULATOR

To get a rough estimate of how much new carpeting you'll need, measure the room's square footage and add 10 percent for cuts and waste. Multiply that number by the price per square foot to get total cost.

$$\left(\text{SQUARE FOOTAGE} + 10 \text{ PERCENT OF SQUARE FOOTAGE} \right) \times \text{PRICE PER SQUARE FOOT} = \text{COST}$$

GREENER OPTIONS

The latest on carpeting's environmental impact—and your health

REDUCED EMISSIONS

Every year, more than 100 million new carpet "rolls" are installed in the United States. The good news is that the manufacturing process for these rolls is getting greener. And, good news, too, is that many of the materials used in carpeting are made of recycled materials that can offset the energy costs and chemical pollution. To reduce emissions, purchase carpeting and pads that carry the Carpet and Rug Institute's Green Label Plus seal, which certifies that the products emit low levels of VOCs. With proper ventilation, VOCs fall to very low levels within three days after installation. Be aware that the certification process doesn't evaluate the safety of chemicals used in stain treatments, so if there is a stain, call that in of concern, go for a stain carpet that doesn't have either of these.

ECO-FRIENDLY MATERIAL Many carpet manufacturers now use recycled materials in their products. Some polyester fibers, like those in Shaw's ClearTouch, incorporate recycled plastic bottles. Trixide (shown below), a polyester polymer, is made from 30 percent corn ethanol, a sustainable resource. Certain nylon fibers can be reused over and over again in new carpeting. Though currently there isn't enough recycled material to make this option widely available.

RECYCLING PROGRAMS Check to see if your installer will recycle your old carpeting and padding. Shaw's ClearTouch (shown below) is a good example of a carpet that can be recycled. Shaw's ClearTouch is a good example of a carpet that can be recycled. Shaw's ClearTouch is a good example of a carpet that can be recycled.



Style guide

While looks obviously matter, choosing the right carpeting for a room isn't only about aesthetics

3 • **LIVING ROOM** In a four-season room that leads out to a deck or pool, go for a polypropylene carpet that won't absorb moisture or fade over time. Similar to shown: Tuscanry in Ravelite. \$3.50 per sq. ft. shawfloors.com



2 • **HALLWAY** Multicolor striped wool in a low cut-and-loop construction can stand up to the normal wear and tear that an entryway takes. Similar to shown: Biscayne in Terra-Cotta. \$9.89 per sq. ft. countson.com



3 • **BEDROOM** Up the cozy factor in the space where you're barefoot most often with plush cut-pile or a new extra-soft nylon. Shown: Truly Tender II in Waverest. \$4.50 per sq. ft. mohawfloors.com



4 • **DINING AREA** Go for a short, dense nylon cut-and-loop pile that makes it easy to pull chairs in and out and springs back from indentations left by chair legs. Shown: The stain-resistant yam keeps spills from penetrating. Shown: Suede in Panama. \$4.99 per sq. ft. shawfloors.com

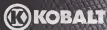


PRO ADVICE

"If you have a little room in your budget to upgrade, go for a premium pad rather than a pricier carpet. A quality cushion makes any carpet look, feel, and wear better."

—TIMOTHY WOOD, VICE PRESIDENT, CARPETING ASSOCIATION

PHOTOS: (TOP) JEFFREY M. HARRIS; (MIDDLE) JEFFREY M. HARRIS; (BOTTOM) JEFFREY M. HARRIS



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questions

INSIDE
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/ CHIMNEY DEMO BOILER LEAKS, MORE

Q Misty water is
leak-free into our
basement around
metal rods in the
concrete walls.
How do we stop it?

—JENICE MATTHEW, DUNSMITH, MOIL

A The rods once held
together the forms used
when your foundation was
poured. To fix the leaks,
first, a pin punch—like the
one depicted on the left—
and a ball peen hammer to
drive the rusty rods back
to the wall. Saw them
off or snap them off the
surface of the concrete,
then fill each recess with
epoxy mastic cement.

—TOM SILVA
GENERAL CONTRACTOR

PHOTOGRAPHY
BY FLAMEN PETROV



What is it?

Paint prop capped onto a metal bench (see trick separately). The 5-way enables you to push both sides of a workpiece without having to switch one side to dry. \$40 for four. Bridges. \$23 for four. Derek Goodies, rocker.com

Find the floor joists underneath a loose floor. Remove some courses of brick around the top of each loose piece, then pull it out. The demolition will move along a loose without loosening the way.

There shouldn't be much needed in the way of structural repairs, so timbers should stand on its own without touching the house framing. But you will have to install joists and flooring to cover the hole that opens up as you clear each floor. Do this right away, the last thing you want is for someone to step in that hole and take a tumble.

As time goes on, you will have all that extra space on each floor, keep in mind that this is not a project that has to be done all at once. You can tackle a section on one floor and safely leave the other sections intact until you have time.

By the way, if you're checking out using these bricks in outdoor projects, keep in mind that they may not hold up very well.

so your cold climate. Chimney bricks from the period your house was built generally weren't fired at a high enough temperature for enough time—they didn't have to be—so they tend to be soft and porous. That makes them vulnerable to crumbling after repeated freeze-thaw cycles. Of course, you'll have plenty of other bricks on hand to take their place.

Leaking boiler

Every heating season we have to manually add water to our steam boiler to keep the water at a safe level. I've replaced the air vent valves on the radiators, but that hasn't helped. Is there something else I should do?

—ROBERT NELSON GLEN COVE, NY

RICHARD TRETHEWEY REPLIES: A properly installed steam heating system should not lose much water at all. You've already taken care of the air vents, which will let steam escape if they're not working properly, so I suspect there's a crack along the water line in the boiler's case-iron sections. A lot of steam can escape through a crack and go up the flue without your realizing it. You can take off the boiler jacket and inspect the sections yourself. Or call a plumber to check them for you.

Unfortunately, cracked cast iron can't be repaired; you'll have to replace the boiler. But if that's not in your budget right now, no worries, just keep adding water when the level gets low, until you can save up enough for a new unit.

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Go to thisoldhouse.com/askdo

Or write to: Ask This Old House, This Old House magazine, 135 West 50th Street, New York, NY 10020

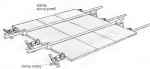
Include a complete address and daytime phone number. Published questions will be edited for clarity and length and may be used in other media. We regret that inclusion in the volume of mail received is not a guarantee to receive an unpublished question.



Norm's tricks of the trade

When I glue several boards together edge to edge, they tend to buckle. How do I make the panel stay flat?

—MICHAEL DODSON, SECURITY GOLD



A There are two common reasons for edge-glued boards to buckle when being glued. Either you're ignoring the clamps too much or the edges of the boards aren't perfectly square. If the boards still buckle when you take care of both those issues, try this:

Place a board to protect a panel's edges from the clamps (see photo). Panels should be made oversize and then forced down. And while I don't use any about glue getting on the clamps, I do try to keep glue drops off my bench top by covering it with a piece of newspaper.

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Laser levels

These battery-powered devices shoot precise beams of light that stay level, and plumb over a long distance—perfect for installing cabinets, doors, tile, trim, and more. Here are our picks for the laser beam types of self-leveling lasers, with pointers on how to use each one. —GAIL KROGER

Bosch GLL8-80
(\$699) bosch-usa.com

As of the only tool in its class that automatically compensates for 10-degree plumb error, the device can be used on the wall, ceiling, and floor. It also shows levels horizontal or vertical lines. It has no moving parts, adjustments, and parts last longer. **Specs:** 7 pounds, 60-foot visibility. 1/4-inch accuracy at 100 feet. Includes mount with lock and plumb height adjustment.

Technique: TIE A CEILING (WITH TIE)
Ceiling panels look best with one row centered above a main doorway. Mark the ceiling 32 inches to one side of the doorway's center, where the panel edges will end. Transfer this mark to the opposite side of the room, using a three-axis laser, align one beam with both marks and the co-dimension where you want the central panel's perpendicular edge to land. Add the first row of panels along the laser line.

DOT
LASEROUR PICK
Johnson 40-6670
(\$99) johnsonlevel.com

This device shoots two plumb beams—one up, one down—which is all you need to install doors or mark ceiling furniture locations. We liked its bright dot and the housing's easy-to-grip protective rubber-like covering. **Specs:** 1.77 pounds, 300-foot visibility, accurate to 1/4 inch at 100 feet. Includes target plate to enhance beam visibility.



Technique: PLUMB A JAMB
Set the dot laser a several inches from the jamb, with the dot centered between the edges of the head jamb. Hold a measuring tape horizontally against the centerline of the jamb at each hinge location, and check where the beam lands on the tape. Shift between the jamb and stud at those locations until all the joints to both requirements match.

CROSS
LASEROUR PICK
Craftsman 48250
(\$99) craftsman.com

It projects 120-degree level and plumb beams separately or together. Handy for lining walls or floors. Like these other lasers, it beeps when out of level, but this one's beam can be locked for example to help you lay out a basement or roof. **Specs:** 1.5 pounds, 300-foot visibility, accurate to 1/4 inch at 100 feet. Includes adjustable base.



Technique: TIE A WALL
Measure and mark the centerpoint of the area to be tiled. Set the cross laser far enough from the wall so that the beams go into the area and cross at the marked centerpoint. Working in one quadrant at a time, spread the adhesive, then start setting tiles along the vertical beam. Tie up to the horizontal beam. Finish one quadrant before starting the next.

ROTARY
LASEROUR PICK
DeWalt DW074KD
(\$464) dewalt.com

The spinning beam creates a 360-degree level line. Used for projects on multiple walls, such as kitchen cabinets and chair rails. Outdoors, a receiver detects the invisible beam up to 600 feet away. **Specs:** 4.5 pounds, 300-foot visibility, accurate to 1/4 inch at 100 feet. Includes receiver, wall mount, and target plate.



Technique: INSTALL WADROOST
Mark a wall where you want the top edge of the wadroost to land. Set the rotary laser in the middle of the room or along a wall. Turn on the laser, and adjust the speed of the beam's rotation until a solid line appears around the room. Adjust the line's height until the laser line meets the mark on the wall.

Find level the
old-fashioned way

Lasers are flashy, but a simple, reliable spirit level still has its place. These three are updated versions of the standby every DIYer should own.

Torpedo: FOR PLUMBING,
STEEL FRAMING, AND
TIGHT SPOTS

Billed from a bank of aircraft-grade aluminum, this 3-inch-long level is lightweight and sturdy. Strong curved earth magnets let it cling to iron drain pipes and steel studs, and illuminated vials prove helpful in dark spaces. **Swing Lighted Torpedo Level** TL049M, \$30, sawgetoolsand.com.

I-beam: FOR CARPENTRY,
PLUMBING, AND LANDSCAPING

This rugged 24-inch level is a versatile, lightweight workhorse for plumbing and leveling everything from cabinets to fence posts. It features a graduated vial that reads pitch in 1/4-inch increments, useful for checking the slope of a gutter or a walkway. **Engine True Blue** E90.24, \$25, enginelevel.com.

R-beam: FOR CARPENTRY,
LANDSCAPING

The R-shaped cross section is easy to grab and accurate to the manufacturer's, 120 percent stronger than its top-of-the-line beam levels. Use this 48-inch model to hang doors, set a straight edge—also three unmarked edges for striking lines—or use as a screed. It's a snap-to-lean **Stabila 48048 R-beam**, \$182, stable.com.

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THE HISTORY City Clerk William Finch, who built the Folk Victorian in the 1890s, was known locally for his meticulous attention to detail. In fact, so many friends and family made "His books were the perfection of accuracy and accuracy and his work gave the best of satisfaction." It should come as no surprise, then, that he was equally detail-oriented in designing this home, where he lived most of his life with his wife, Abeline, and where they raised their three children. The Finches sold the house in the 1940s, and it has since been home to five more families. The current owner began a restoration but now needs to move, before it can be completed.

WOW FACT #1 The exterior has a pleasing, symmetrical facade with stacked window bays topped by hipped gables. Braking the center pediment. The interior boasts elaborate wood millwork and built-ins.

WHAT IT NEEDS The three-bedroom one-bath house needs extensive repairs to the plaster walls on the second floor. Most of the first floor has been stripped to the studs, so it's a good time to reconfigure the layout and add a second bathroom. The roof and furnace have been replaced, and the electrical has been updated.



A Folk Victorian full of fancy millwork.



1) The exterior is of the 2,200-square-foot battle-born elements of Gothic Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne styles. 2) An addendum to the window bay. The house is a small woodwork is intact on the first floor. Most of the walls, however, have since been stripped to the studs. 3) One of the home's two porches. 4) The front door, original woodwork and glass panes. 5) The interior is a small woodwork.



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