

# FALL HOME

OCTOBER 21, 220  
PAGE 1B-32B

## Improvement and Contractor's Guide



**INSIDE:**  
**Over 60**  
**Contractors**  
**and local**  
**Businesses**

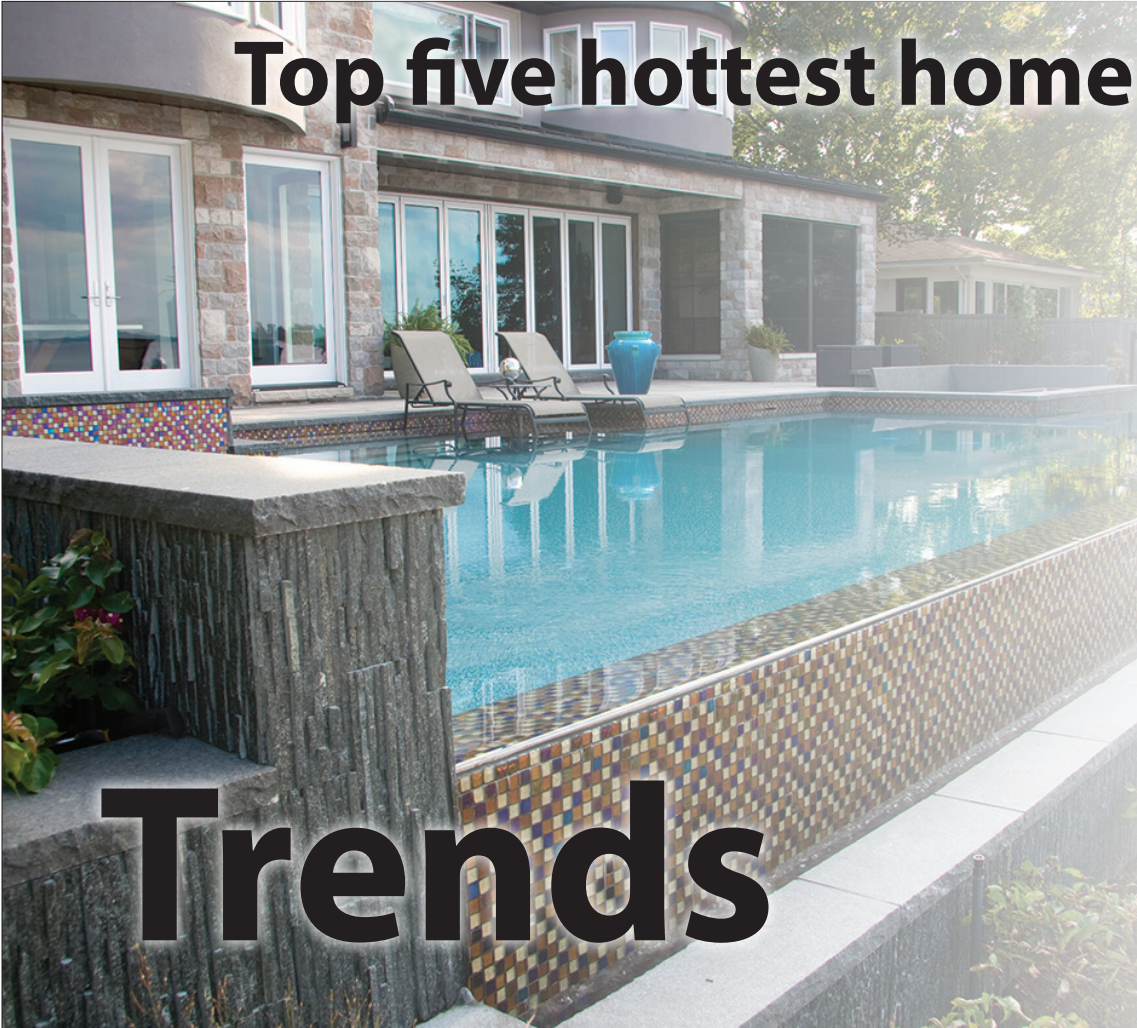
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# Top five hottest home building trends



**T**hese days, home trends are about more than good design and aesthetics — they're about creating spaces that reflect our values and are more comfortable and enjoyable to live in. From net-zero and net-positive construction to tiny minimalist homes, trends are all about your family's lifestyle.

Whether you're shopping for a new home, renovating your own or creating a new build from scratch, here are some of the biggest trends you need to know for inspiration.

**Sustainable design:** This one has been popular for a long time, but green design has evolved to be about much more than energy-efficient appliances and LED light bulbs. Now, it's all about making sure everything in your home reduces your carbon footprint and minimizes any impact on the environment.

To try the trend yourself, think big and get creative – install solar panels on your roof, choose building materials that don't require deforestation and upcycle old furniture for decorative elements instead of buying new.

**Disaster resiliency:** Climate change affects us in so many negative ways, and one of the top concerns is the increase in natural disasters. From wildfires that last for months to major floods that affect entire cities, we now need to prepare for the worst when building our homes.

Switching to disaster-resilient materials is an important first step. Many builders now prefer to use stronger, more energy-efficient materials like insulated concrete forms (ICFs) instead of more traditional

Trends - continued on page 3B

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**Trends — continued from page 2B**

materials like wood. For example, Nudura ICFs can withstand winds of up to 250 miles per hour (equivalent to an F4 tornado) and offer a fire protection rating of up to four hours.

**Outdoor living:** Many of us are now choosing to forgo getting a cottage or summer home and recreate the experience in our own backyards. This trend helps you make the most of your existing space and take full advantage of your yard or patio during the summer months.

You can design a full living space outside, complete with an outdoor television and comfy couches, as well as a kitchen and refrigerator for entertaining. Consider adding a fireplace or firepit to keep warm during cool summer nights and enjoy the outdoors through spring, fall and even winter if you're brave.

**Home automation:** This is another longstanding trend that shows no signs of slowing down. It has also evolved to encompass more of the home to make life even more comfortable and convenient. From an oven that can be turned on remotely to preheat, to skylights that can open and close automatically to create the perfect ambient temperature, there are more ways than ever to integrate smart home technology into your living space.

You can start small with voice assistant and smart light bulbs and work your way up to a total smart home system that includes home security, temperature controls and all your electronic devices.

**Customization:** You don't have to settle for what mass manufacturers decide to build, or what works for everyone else. Creating a home that's as unique as you are is the latest trend, with custom-built storage and personalized architectural features to make your space stand out.

You can even go as far as building a custom home that's suited to your family. Older home demolitions and purchasing land-only properties is becoming more common, allowing you to work with an architect to create exactly what you want with a new build.

Find more information about the benefits of building a home with ICFs at nudura.com.

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# Checklists

## Fall home improvement checklists from local businesses

BY ROXIE MURPHY  
REPUBLICAN STAFF WRITER  
rmurphy@wardpub.com

**W**hether a homeowner is new to the business or has experienced the joy of homeownership for several years, there is always a checklist of items to maintain or check on with the changing of the seasons. To help with the mystery of what that fall to winter agenda may include, several local businesses weighed-in to create a checklist.

Jerod Gross, store manager of **Pioneer Home Center** in Owensville, weighed-in on some potential Do-It-Yourself projects to get ready for the cold months.

- Check your attic for insulation.

“We do offer an insulation machine. A lot of insulation settles and you don’t get the value you need

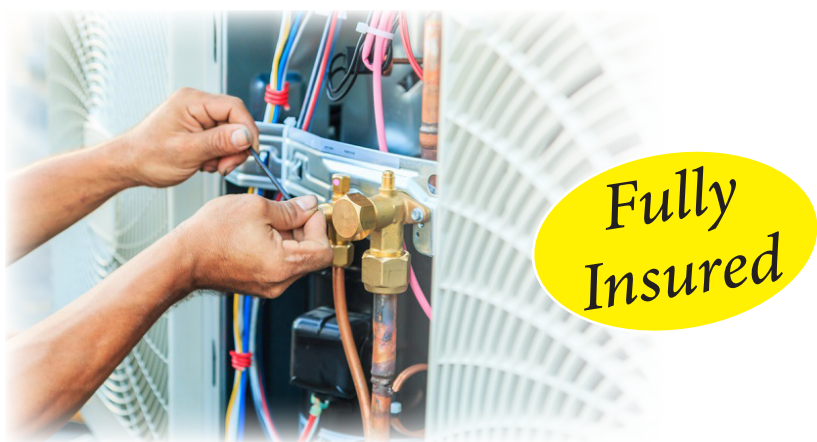
Checklists - continued on page 5B



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## Checklists — continued from page 4B

from it anymore,” Gross said. “Also check exterior door weather stripping that will let in a lot of cold air.”

- Make sure to unhook hoses from hydrants.

“During the cold months, hoses and hydrants will freeze up and bust your water pipes,” Gross said. “Make sure to unhook hoses, drain and/or shut-off hydrants.”

- Check pipes with heat tape.

“Make sure your heat tapes are working,” Gross said. “Many people don’t have basements, only crawl spaces. Pipes will freeze if they are not insulated correctly.”

- Cover AC units.

“Many people don’t think about this one. We sell covers right here at the store,” Gross said.

- Calk windows.

“If you need to calk windows, now is the time to do it,” Gross said. “If you want to replace your windows, we can send someone out to measure them and recommend an installer.”

- Storm window and glass repair.

“If you have a storm window or broken glass window, we do repair those if people don’t want to try to tackle that themselves,” Gross said.

- Check gutters.

“Make sure all gutter hangers are tight,” Gross said. “When you get ice and snow loads it can rip off your guttering.”

- Paint.

“Anything that is bare wood that needs a coat of paint or stain before winter,” Gross said. “We are running out of warm enough days to do it. About 55 degrees is as low a temperature as you want to go for outside paint jobs.”

- Check furnace filters.

Check all smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

“All the items we have listed here we sell,” Gross said.

The friendly folks at **Schroepfer Well Drilling** offer more in-depth advice for those who winterize their home-away-from-home or have mobile homes.

In addition to remembering to unhook hydrants, Schroepfer says, “check the well-house (if tank/controls are not in your home) to make sure the heat tape and heat bulb is in proper working order.”

If a weekend property is not heated, the well should be winterized.

- Remove all hoses and attachments from hydrants.

• Turn the fixtures on in the home to drain the lines out — make sure the toilet tanks, water heater, and washing machine are free of water.

• Disconnect the pressure tank from the piping and move it to a location that is protected from a hard freeze.

“If you have a mobile home, check the heat tape under the home where the piping goes into the home,” officials from the company suggest.

That suggestion is also good for homes with crawl spaces.

**RV Construction** contractor Denny Vogt adds most contractors have a months-long waiting list for those who were hoping for a fall addition this year. Since fall and spring are the best times to begin home addition projects though, all is not lost.

“Right now the main thing is to get your plans and everything lined up,” Vogt said, encouraging homeowners to get their project started. “They need to be doing these things right now if they are thinking about starting a project in the spring.

- Collect ideas and have plans ready.

• What ideas they are wanting. Do they have company preferences to complete furnace, electrical, and plumbing jobs? Have the list together.

- Get prices together and line up financing.

• Begin applying for permits from city and county planning and zoning boards.

“For Gasconade County, you don’t have to do much for out-of-town permits. But Franklin County you do,” Vogt said.

- Get all contractors on the same page and set a

start date.

“They are probably looking realistically at a month to six weeks of planning,” Vogt said. “Now is the time to plan for those spring projects.”

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## Home office must-haves

**R**emote work has been around for many years, though it certainly picked up steam in 2020. In an effort to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus COVID-19, in March 2020 government officials implemented stay-at-home measures that mandated many working professionals to begin working from home. That transition occurred seemingly overnight, forcing men and women to find somewhere in their homes to work.

As the dust settled and working professionals grew accustomed to working from home, many recognized the need to have an office in their homes. Various factors can make home offices more conducive to getting work done, and the following are some home office must-haves that can help people be more productive while working from home.

### Lighting

Lighting is important in a home office. It's easy to overlook natural light, especially for workers who previously worked in offices that did not have windows. But natural light can help save on energy costs and boost mood. In fact, natural light is a valued commodity for people used to working in office settings. A 2018 survey of more than 1,600 workers conducted by the human resources advisory firm Future Workplace found that access to natural light and views of the outdoors were the most sought after attribute of a workplace environment. In addition, 47 percent of workers surveyed admitted they felt tired or very tired from the absence of natural light or a window

Office - continued on page 7B

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Office — continued from page 6B

at their office. When designing their home offices, homeowners should keep this in mind and choose areas of their homes that get ample natural light during a typical workday. Additional lighting also will be necessary. Recessed lighting can give an office a sleek look, and lights that can dim can allow workers to adjust their lighting based on how much they need at any given point in the workday.

### Quiet

Professionals forced to work at home when social distancing measures were implemented may not have had much quiet, especially for those with young children whose schools were closed. But when designing a home office, homeowners have the chance to make their offices more conducive to concentration. Soundproofing walls may not be necessary, but look for areas of the home that don't get much foot traffic. Kitchens are very popular rooms in many homes, so try to locate your home office away from the kitchen. A spare bedroom upstairs may make for the most ideal home office setting if the home does not have a traditional den.

Spare bedrooms come with doors, which can instantly create a sense of quiet when closed. A converted garage also can make for a useful home office, but make sure the room already has cooling and heating and, ideally, windows.

### Electrical outlets

Recently built homes tend to be equipped with enough outlets to accommodate our increasingly connected lifestyles. But older homes may need some electrical updates before they can capably accommodate home offices. When updating your electrical, replace existing outlets and fixtures with energy-efficient LED fixtures, which save money and benefit the environment. Before updating the electrical, decide on how you want the office to be laid out so you can have outlets installed where your computer, devices and other items, like a printer and television, will be. This makes it easy to hide cords and give the office a clean, professional look.

Home office capabilities became a big priority in 2020. Designing such spaces can be fun and easy.



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PHOTOS BY DAVE MARNER

**KRIS FLEMING**, owner of Fleming Enterprise, LLC, of Beaufort, pushes away a limb he had cut off from a maple tree he was removing in Owensville in October. Fleming and his friend, Josh Schengbier of Schengbier Logging, Beaufort, were working together to remove two decayed maples on West Madison. "Removing limbs is like taking apart pieces of a puzzle," said Fleming, who uses ropes and climbing pegs on his boots to secure himself in a perch (below). "It took 40 years for this to grow. It took us about 45 minutes to tear it down." Fleming wipes his forehead (far left) after topping out a large limb. Schengbier used ropes to control the drop of limbs.



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## Establish winter habitats for backyard animals

**P**reparing a property for winter involves putting away lawn furniture, raking leaves and removing any annual plants that have shriveled up and spent the last of their energy. It can be tempting to want to clean up completely and leave a blank slate in the yard. But by doing so, you may be robbing wildlife of the resources they need to overwinter.

The nature and conservation resource In Habitat says plants and animals depend on one another to survive. During the winter, animals may struggle to find adequate shelter and food, especially when there is a lack of sufficient plant matter available. In turn, these animals may actually take up home in people's residences, turning into pests in the process. Bats, field mice and even opossums and raccoons may move indoors into attics or basements, leaving behind waste and damage if they can't find adequate shelter outdoors.

Homeowners concerned about potential pest infestations can take steps to ensure animals have places to bed down and escape the cold in their yards this winter. These tips can help local wildlife when the temperatures dip.

- Leave parts of the yard wild. Animals can make a nest in leaves or piles of brush-wood. Just make sure piles left out are away from the home so curious critters don't try to get inside. Leave the task of tidying up shrubs and garden borders until spring, as shrubs can be dense areas to hide for both insects and animals.
- Consider planting animal food sources prior to winter. Plants like elderberry, holly, mulberry, sumac, and crabapple will grow in colder months and animals can enjoy them as a vital food staple.
- Don't forget water sources. Provide access to fresh water and replace as needed if the water freezes. For homeowners with fish ponds in their backyards, use a hot pot to melt a hole in the top of the pond and allow gases that have accumulated underneath to escape. This allows oxygen to reach fish and frogs in the pond.
- Leave bird, squirrel or bat houses in the yard. This is a fun and crafty project that can ward off winter boredom while also providing a safe place for local wildlife to



**LEAVE SOME** wild areas of the backyard so animals can roost safely during the winter.

shelter in winter.

Animals and insects need some extra help staying comfortable when cool temperatures arrive. Leaving some clean-up tasks for the spring ensures that there are plenty of backyard habitats available to local wildlife.

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## Turn your new house into a home

**H**istorically low mortgage interest rates are helping to drive a new wave of home sales. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates roughly 14 percent of the population, or around 40 million people, move every year for various reasons.

While people may be inclined to move far from their current residences, the moving resource Move.org notes that some U.S. states are seeing an influx in people leaving while others are absorbing new residents. Illinois, Alaska, New Jersey, New York, and West Virginia are the top five states Americans are leaving, while Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, Oregon, and Montana are gaining residents.

People relocate for various reasons. After moving into a new house, it can take some effort to turn that house into a true home. These steps can help that process along.

- Create at least one complete and serene space. Focus on setting up the bedroom so you can retreat at the end of the day. Invest in new furniture or get new bedding to give the room this comforting feeling.

- Create an organizational plan. It can be tempting to want to throw everything in closets and unpack quickly, but give yourself time to fully analyze where you want to store items, where you may need to paint or reconfigure spaces, as well as any home improvements you want to make before taking out all of your stuff. When you fully unpack, you can immediately enjoy your hard work.

- Hang artwork. Hang a few select pieces of artwork or family photos shortly after moving in. Surround yourself with things that make you feel good.

- Bring mementos. Your first home may bring about warm feelings. While you can't recreate it entirely, you can use a piece of furniture or a few family heirlooms to make your new space feel homey.

- Rely on familiar scents. Break in the new space with familiar aromas, whether it's preferential air fresheners, scented candles or baking your favorite chocolate chip cookie recipe.

Moving into a new home can be exciting. Certain touches can help make the new space feel more like home.

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# Kitchen

## Affordable features to consider when revamping your kitchen

**K**itchens are popular gathering spots in many homes. That popularity is reflected in various ways, including how many homeowners choose to remodel their kitchens.

A 2019 report from the home renovation and design resource Houzz found that kitchens were the most popular room to renovate in 2018. Homeowners considering kitchen remodels should know that the Houzz report also indicated that spending on kitchen remodels increased by 27 percent in 2018.

Homeowners concerned by the cost of remodeling

**Kitchens - continued on page 13B**

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Kitchens — continued from page 12B

a kitchen should know that there are ways to give kitchens a whole new feel without breaking the bank.

**Appliances**

Consumer Reports notes that luxury home buyers expect high-end features, including professional ranges and built-in refrigerators that match the surrounding cabinetry. However, many mainstream brands offer “faux pro” features that can equal more expensive alternatives. Consumer Reports even notes that many budget-friendly faux pro appliances outperformed their high-end counterparts in terms of reliability.

**Countertops**

Countertops tend to capture the eye’s attention when walking into a kitchen. Outdated and/or damaged countertops grab that attention for all the wrong reasons, while updated countertops made from today’s most popular materials provide that wow factor homeowners seek. If granite is a must-have, Consumer Reports notes that homeowners can save substantial amounts of money by choosing granite from remnants at the stone yard. If marble is your ideal countertop, save money by choosing a domestic product as opposed to one imported from overseas.

**Cabinets**

Custom-built cabinets may be a dream, but they tend to be a very expensive one. Such cabinets are designed to adhere to the dimensions of the kitchen, and Consumer Reports notes that they can cost tens of thousands of dollars. If that estimate would bust your budget, examine the current layout of the existing cabinets. If the layout is fine but the cabinets need work, you can give them a whole new look by refinishing them. If the cabinets must go, stock units or semi-custom cabinets can provide a new look without busting the budget.

Kitchen remodels can be expensive. But there are many affordable ways to revamp a kitchen.

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## Get ahead of chimney repair this season

**W**oodburning fireplaces or fuel stoves can add warmth and ambiance to a home. These appliances are particularly coveted in the cooler months when people spend more time indoors. Maintenance is necessary in order for fireplaces and stoves to function safely, and that upkeep must include paying close attention to the functionality of the chimney.

Chimneys are designed to last for decades. Cracks and spalling in brick chimneys are common concerns that can cause significant damage if left unchecked.

Chimney maintenance involves more than cleaning the flue. Rather than running the risk of costly repairs, which can cost several thousand dollars, homeowners can take some simple steps to keep their chimneys in tip-top shape. Certain components of chimney maintenance are do-it-yourself tasks, while others may be better left to the professionals.

- Start from the inside and ensure that dampers are working properly. When using fireplaces and other appliances, dampers need to be open to allow smoke to vent outside; otherwise, smoke will be trapped in the home and could lead to carbon monoxide buildup. Dampers need to be fixed or replaced if they are not operational. Replacement fireplace dampers should be snug and not have any gaps, states Vertical Chimney Care.

- Conduct a visual inspection of the chimney to check for any cracks or spalling. Spalling is the

wearing away of masonry due to water, weather and time. If enough of the material erodes, that erosion can adversely affect the structural integrity of the chimney. Some repairs can be made by patching up cracks or replacing missing bricks. Chimney tuck-pointing is the process of repairing mortar.

- Think about waterproofing the chimney to prevent damage. A water sealant applied to the outside of the chimney can prevent moisture from breaking down the masonry.

- Inspect and replace the chimney cap if it is worn out. A chimney cap is a contraption that sits atop the chimney to allow the smoke to vent while also preventing critters and water from going inside the flue, helping to extend the flue life. The chimney cap attaches to the flue liner, so outside dimensions should be taken to ensure the cap is the right size for the chimney.

- Have the chimney swept. Sweeping helps remove the soot and debris that clings to the inside of the flue, known as creosote. The amount of time the fireplace is used will determine how often the chimney must be cleaned. Generally speaking, the chimney liner needs to be cleaned if it has 1/8-inch or more of soot.

Regular inspection and maintenance can help keep a chimney working safely for decades. For those who do not like working at such an elevation, leave exterior chimney repair to a certified professional.



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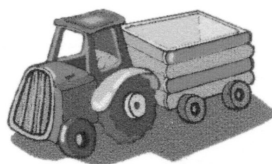
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## The value of mulched leaves

Homeowners who don't look forward to dusting off their rakes each fall might be happy to learn that mulching fallen leaves with a mower may be a healthier and less labor intensive way to confront a yard covered in leaves. For 20 years, turfgrass specialists at Michigan State University studied how lawns reacted to having ground up leaves left on the lawn and the results were overwhelmingly positive. Researchers found that tiny pieces of mulched leaves eventually sifted down through the turf and provided the lawn with essential nutrients. Mulched leaves also served to control future weed growth by covering up bare spots between turf plants. Such spots typically provided openings for weed seeds to germinate and ultimately infect lawns. In fact, researchers found that mulching leaves for just three years could produce a nearly 100 percent decrease in dandelion and crabgrass growth. Homeowners with mulching mowers that also have bags can even help their gardens by alternating using the mower with and without the bag on once leaves begin to fall. When mowing with the bag on, mulched leaves can then be used as mulch in landscape beds and vegetable gardens.



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## Three common DIY mistakes to avoid

**P**ride tends to swell when homeowners successfully complete do-it-yourself projects on their homes. In addition to saving homeowners money, DIY projects provide a unique way for men and women to personally connect with their homes. The ability to look at a finished project and say it's a result of your own handiwork can make a home feel more your own.

As fun and fulfilling as DIY projects can be, they also can be nerve-racking and induce anxiety. When DIY projects falter, fixing them can prove costly, as homeowners typically must call in contractors to correct their mistakes and get a project back on track. That results in additional labor and material costs that might have been avoidable, especially for homeowners who make an effort to avoid some common DIY mistakes.

### Failure to secure permits

Even though homeowners own their homes, that does

# Mistakes

Mistakes - continued on page 17B

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## Mistakes — continued from page 16B

not mean they have carte blanche to do what they want with them. Many renovation projects require homeowners to secure permits before projects can commence. Some may even require additional permits as the projects advance. If proper permits are not secured, homeowners may be fined and projects may be nixed, regardless of how much money homeowners have spent up to that point. Before beginning a home renovation project, homeowners should always contact their local permit office to determine if any permits are required. Bankrate.com notes that permits are often required for any project larger than painting or wallpapering.

### Overestimating your abilities

DIY television shows make home renovation projects look easy, but reality suggests otherwise. Homeowners with little or no experience renovating a home may want to take classes before they think about starting a project on their own. Even online tutorials tend to make jobs appear easier than they are. Roofing and plumbing projects tend to be best left to the professionals, as these projects can be either dangerous or vulnerable to disaster if not addressed by trained professionals.

### Incorrect materials

Whether it's to save money or a byproduct of inexperience, DIYers do not always choose the correct materials for a job. Experienced contractors have ample experience working with all sorts of materials and are therefore in a unique position to recommend the best materials for any given job. That resource is not available for DIYers, who must perform ample research before beginning a job so the project involves the most appropriate materials. Incorrect materials can be a sunken cost that derails a project, but even jobs completed using incorrect materials may need to be redone a lot more quickly than those that employed the right materials the first time.

Many home renovation projects can be completed without the help of professional contractors., especially when homeowners take steps to avoid some of the more common mistakes made by DIYers.

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## Simple ways to improve a kitchen pantry



**P**eople have been spending more time at home in 2020 than in years past, and certain projects around the house have become a priority. One home improvement idea that serves the double benefit of creating organization and making cooking at home more efficient is to reimagine the kitchen pantry.

A pantry is a room or closet where food, beverages and linens or dishes are stored. Pantries can be highly useful spaces that provide ancillary storage in kitchens. Many modern homes are equipped with pantries, but older homes may require some modi-

Pantry - continued on page 19B

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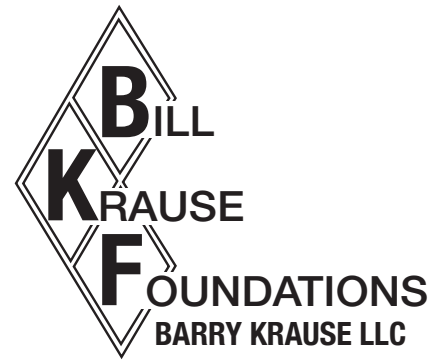


**Pantry - Continued from page 18B**

fication to create more useful pantries. Whether starting from scratch or modifying an existing pantry, these tips can help projects go more smoothly.

- Maximize vertical storage. Utilizing vertical areas can help increase storage capacity. Build in extra nooks by investing in undershelf storage baskets. These baskets can instantly create designated areas for different types of ingredients. Homeowners also can look for ways to use the inside of cabinet doors or add extra shelves on walls or in eaves.
- Consider your needs. Figure out which items you would like to store in the pantry and then shop for corresponding storage systems. For example, storage solutions may feature wine bottle racks, baskets for potatoes and other produce, shelving for small appliances, and even pull out racks for baking pans or cutting boards.
- Use clear storage. Put ingredients in clear, airtight containers of similar dimensions so that you can easily find items you need. Transfer bulky items, like cereals and baking supplies, to storage containers for uniformity.
- Store bulk items elsewhere. Bulk shopping can be cost-efficient, but bulk items can quickly eat up real estate in the pantry. Designate another area for non-perishable bulk products, like paper goods or canned items, such as in a garage or utility room.
- Pull out drawers are convenient. Pull-out drawers can reduce the need to seek and reach for items. These drawers conveniently roll out so items in the back can be accessed without disturbing foods in the front. Drawers can be custom built for any pantry space.
- Make it accessible. Think about who will be taking items from the pantry. Put children's snacks on the bottom pantry shelf where they can reach them, and then organize other shelves for adults in the home.

A pantry remodel can add valuable storage space and make one of the busiest rooms in the house operate more efficiently.



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# Garden

## Tips for your fall garden

SANDI HILLERMANN MCDONALD

**F**all is the perfect time to evaluate the garden for improvement to your home's curb appeal, and it is also the perfect time for planting. The cooler crisp days of October make it a great time to care for your yard and garden with the following tips:

- Your curb appeal can be enhanced by decorating with pumpkins, gourds, corn stalks, mums, pansies, kale, and the great selection of Fall plants that are available.
- Lawn seeding should be finished by October 15th this month to insure growth yet this fall. Choose a seed mix for your specific lawn area; sun, shade, sun/shade, play, drought, etc.
- Winterize lawn mowers before storage, by draining gasoline from the tank and the gas line.
- Apply a Winterizer fertilizer on lawns anytime from mid October through November to promote green growth in early spring, the BEST of the neigh-

Garden - continued on page 21B

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## Garden- Continued from page 20B

borhood.

- The average first frost usually arrives sometime between October 15th and October 20th.

- You can gain a few degrees of frost protection by covering tender plants with sheets or lightweight fabric row covers. Do not use plastic; this tends to “draw in” the cold temperatures.

- Dig up Cannas, Dahlias, and Elephant Ears after frost nips their foliage. Before storing them, allow the plants to dry under cover in an airy frost-free place. Store in a cool, dry area, such as a basement, in paper sacks with peat moss.

- Plant flower bulbs (Tulips, Daffodils, Crocus, etc.) for spring bloom. Plant them into groupings for a massed effect of spring color. To fertilize them, use bone meal or a complete bulb fertilizer at planting time.

- October is an excellent month to plant trees, shrubs and perennials. This gives the plants a great start in the warm soil and cool weather of fall, with plenty of moisture in the spring to become established before the harsh summer heat and drought arrives.

- Continue to water all your plants, especially evergreens, when soils are dry. Until the ground freezes, the plants need moisture for root growth even if they are going dormant.

- After beds have been cleaned and raked, refresh them with bark mulch for the winter months.

- Towards the end of October, trees should be fertilized with tree spikes at their drip line. Use one tree spike per one inch of tree trunk diameter. This will make for beautiful foliage next spring!

- Harvest gourds when their shells become hard or when their color changes from green to brown.

- Do not take hummingbird feeders down before mid October. The bird’s biological clock tells them when to migrate south. It is not dependent on how long we leave our feeders up. Stragglers migrating from areas that are more northern may also find your feeders for some needed nourishment.

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## Home repairs that can sink budgets

**A** home is the most substantial investment many people will ever make. Once down payments have been made and closing costs have been paid, homeowners may still be staring down sizable expenses as they begin to tackle any repairs that need to be made.

Home maintenance and renovations involve a certain measure of trepidation. Even after vetting contractors and establishing budgets, homeowners may worry that repairs will unearth problems that snowball into expensive fixes. Planning ahead for such projects and learning to recognize issues that tend to be costly can help homeowners weather any storms that may arise.

- **Foundation issues:** A strong foundation is key to any home. If there is a problem with the foundation, it can be unsafe to live in the house. The foundation repair company Foundation Experts advises that foundation fixes can range from \$4,000 to upward of \$100,000 depending on the scale of the job. Clogged gutters and water pooling around the foundation can contribute to damage, so water issues must be remedied first.

- **Roof damage:** A roof is a key barrier between the indoors and outdoors. Roofs must remain in tip-top shape. The home improvement resource HomeAdvisor says that a roof repair or replacement can cost between \$3,000 and \$12,000. But

homeowners also must budget for the cost of removing the old roofing materials and fixing any damage to the interior of the home. Inspecting the roof and making repairs as you go is key to avoiding a big headache.

- **Siding replacement:** Another costly project can be replacing the siding. Siding may need to be replaced if there is water/wind damage or penetration from insects. Spot repairs may be relatively inexpensive. However, the home improvement resource Modernize says the average siding installation project can cost between \$5,500 and \$15,000 depending on the materials homeowners choose.

- **HVAC update:** Keeping a home at a comfortable temperature is also a matter of safety. If a system gives out, homeowners may be scrambling for a solution. Yearly inspections and upkeep, which includes changing system filters regularly, can help identify potential problems. Neglect is one of the main contributors to the failure of heating and cooling equipment. Based on national averages, a whole-house HVAC system can cost between \$4,000 and \$12,000.

These are some of the more costly repairs homeowners can expect. Keeping on top of the home will help mitigate damage and could extend the life of major home components.

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## What to expect during a bathroom remodel

There are many reasons to renovate a home. Some homeowners purchase fixer-uppers and commit to making major renovations before they even move in, while others may renovate their homes with an eye on resale value. But many homeowners also take on renovation projects to make the homes more livable for themselves.

Bathroom renovations are popular projects. In fact, a 2018 survey from the National Association of Home Builders found that bathroom remodels are the most popular remodeling projects. But just because bathroom remodeling projects are popular doesn't

**Bathroom - Continued from page 25B**

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# Insulation

## Types of home insulation, where to use them

**W**hen thinking about renovating their homes, homeowners may imagine changing wall colors, expanding room sizes or upgrading appliances and fixtures. However, unless people take inventory of the less glamorous components of the home, such as structure, plumbing, heating and cooling, and insulation, other improvements may be for naught.

A home insulation project certainly doesn't offer the wow factor of a kitchen remodel, but insulation serves a vital function in the house that helps keep people comfortable and reduces energy consumption. Insulation is typically placed in areas where air escapes, such as between the stud cavities inside the walls and in the attic, and serves to slow and reduce heat transfer.

The U.S. Department of Energy says between 50 and 70 percent of the energy used in homes is for heating and cooling. By improving home insulation, homeowners can make their homes more comfortable, consistent and efficient. In fact, the ENERGY STAR program overseen by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says homeowners stand to save an average of 15 percent on heating and cooling costs by adding proper insulation. To do so, homeowners can

Insulation - continued on page 25B

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## Dust - Continued from page 24

mean they're easy to endure. Knowing what to expect during a bathroom remodel can help homeowners get through the renovation process.

### Cost

Bathroom remodeling projects can be expensive. According to Remodeling magazine's "Cost vs. Value 2019" report, a mid-range bathroom remodeling project cost an average of \$20,420 in 2019, while an upscale remodel cost just under \$64,000. Homeowners should develop budgets for their bathroom renovation projects to determine which type of project they can afford. In addition, setting

aside a little extra money for overruns is a wise move that can help homeowners handle any unforeseen expenses that arise during the project.

### Noise

Few home renovation projects can be undertaken quietly, and bathroom renovations tend to generate a lot of noise. The noise can be difficult to overcome for professionals who work from home full-time, and it also can be hard on parents of young children who still nap and don't yet go to school. Parents of young children may find it best to delay bathroom renovation projects until their children are school-aged and out of the house for most

of the day on weekdays.

### Mess

The debris generated by bathroom renovation projects is another thing homeowners must prepare for. In addition to preparing for the waste generated by the project, first-time renovators must realize that dust might be a big issue once the project begins. Dust can pose a threat to residents' overall health, particularly the health of youngsters whose bodies haven't yet fully developed. As a result, parents of young children may want to schedule renovations during family vacations so their children are exposed to as little dust as possible.

### Changes

Few renovations go off without a hitch. Once a project begins, contractors often uncover issues that weren't noticeable to the naked eye. These issues may increase the cost of completing a project or force homeowners to change their plans to make the project stay as close to their budgets as possible. Recognizing that these decisions may have to be made on the fly can help homeowners feel more prepared when unexpected issues arise.

Bathroom renovation projects are worthwhile investments. Knowing what to expect during a bathroom renovation project can help homeowners handle all the twists and turns that may arise.

## Insulation - Continued from page 24B

take a crash course in home insulation and find the products that fit their needs.

### Blanket batts and rolls

Blanket batts and rolls typically are constructed with fiberglass, so proper safety gear, such as a mask and gloves, is needed when handling them. Installing this type of insulation is relatively easy since the materials are designed to fit the standard width between studs, rafters and floor joists.

### Loose fill

Loose fill is usually made of fiberglass or cellulose (recycled paper fiber). It is blown or sprayed into place with pneumatic equipment, according to The Home Depot. Loose fill can be ideal for hard-to-reach areas in attics or inside wall cavities. It's good for adding insulation to irregularly shaped areas. Since it requires special equipment, this is a job best left to professionals.

### Sprayed foam

Sprayed foam is just as the name implies, a foam made from polyurethane, polyisocyanurate, cementitious, or other materials that are applied by a spray container. DIYers who need only small applications can use canned products. Large quantities are pressure-sprayed by professionals.

### Foam board/rigid foam panels

Ideal for unfinished walls, such as basement or foundation walls, floors and ceilings, these are boards of polyurethane or polystyrene. Foam boards tend to reduce energy consumption more effectively than other types of insulation.

Homeowners considering upgrading their insulation or amending existing insulation should do their homework on the type of insulation that will be most effective for their homes.



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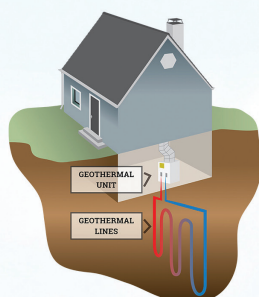
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## How to design a fitness room

**P**eople exercise for many different reasons. Exercise can improve one's appearance, reduce the risk for illness, alleviate stress or anxiety, and even help pass some time. Exercise is often a social activity, but in the wake of social distancing guidelines issue in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, many people have found themselves looking for ways to exercise at home.

Building a home fitness room has never been a more timely project, and such a project can continue to provide rewards even when life returns to some semblance of normalcy. Here's how to successfully stock a home gym.

- Find a dedicated space. A home gym will be limited by the amount of space that can be devoted to workouts. Possible fitness room locations include a spare bedroom, a garage, a basement, or an enclosed patio. Measure the space so you can pick and choose equipment that will fit. Leave some floor space empty for movement exercises or mat activities.

- Keep the space bright. Darkness can sap energy levels, so invest in mirrors and adequate overhead lighting to make the space inviting. Natural light can make the exercise area more enjoyable.

- Consider the flooring. New flooring can protect against damage and make an area more conducive to working out. Rubber mats can offset echoes and reduce the noise of running on a treadmill or setting down heavy weights.

- Use space-saving equipment. A home gym space will likely not be as expansive as the space inside a traditional fitness center. Thankfully, many activities do not require a lot of space or equipment. Classic exercises like squats, lunges, push ups, and sit ups require little gear but still produce results. Figure out which equipment you like the most and invest in two or three key pieces. Dumbbells of various weights, a medicine ball and a yoga mat can be all you need to create a versatile, effective workout. A TRX system and a door-mounted pull-up bar also are great space-saving options.

- Have a TV hookup. A home gym may benefit from a smart TV that you can use to stream workout videos or catch up on the latest news while running the treadmill or using the stationary bike.

A home gym is beneficial year-round, and can be especially valuable when social distancing guidelines are put in place.

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## Did you know?

Basements may not be go-to hangouts during spring, summer and fall, when many homeowners spend more time on their patios and decks enjoying the great outdoors. But as winter approaches and the great outdoors becomes less welcoming, basements once again become popular places to relax and spend time with loved ones. That's why fall is such an ideal time to address mold issues in a basement. According to WebMD, exposure to mold can irritate a person's eyes, nose, throat, and lungs. That's true whether a person is allergic to mold or not. Even people who are merely sensitive to mold can experience sneezing and runny nose, and some may even develop red eyes and skin rash if exposed to mold. Reactions are much more severe for people with mold allergies, who may experience shortness of breath or suffer from asthma attacks if exposed to mold. Molds require moisture to grow, and basements may provide ideal growing conditions for mold. Mold spores cannot grow without moisture, so dehumidifiers can help homeowners effectively reduce the risk of mold growth in their basements. WebMD advises homeowners keep indoor humidity levels, which can be measured with an inexpensive instrument known as a hygrometer, below 60 percent. In lieu of wall-to-wall carpeting in basements, install concrete floors and area rugs to make mold growth less likely. Basement floors also should be routinely inspected for leaks, as leaks can promote mold growth. Address leaks promptly if any are found.



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# Windows



## Five tips to prepare for window replacement

**W**inter is coming, and for millions of people who reside in areas of the country that see the mercury drop considerably between December and March, that means prioritizing staying warm. Inefficient or aging housing materials may compromise your ability to do just that.

Drafts from doors, poorly protected attics and basements and aging windows may force heating systems to work extra hard to maintain interior temperatures.

Replacing old windows can make a home quieter by blocking out exterior noises. Consumer Reports also notes that new windows are often easier to clean and maintain than older varieties.

Many homeowners are interested in replacing their windows, but may not know where to start. These guidelines can help the process along.

1. Get several estimates. Ask for recommendations

Windows - continued on page 29B

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## Windows — continued from page 28B

from neighbors or other people in your area on which companies they used to install their replacement windows. When you interview the prospects, ask several questions about how they go about installing the windows. Questions can include:

- How long will the project take?
- Will I need to remain home during the process?
- Do you discard of old debris?
- What is the protocol for installation during inclement weather?

2. Research permits. Most home renovation projects need to be approved by the local municipality. Go to the permit office and find out the requirements. Some window contractors will include securing permits in the cost of the project. After the project is completed, an inspector will come by and ensure the work was done according to code.

3. Change up the appearance. Look at the type of hardware you have around the home and other fixtures. Choose windows that have locks or latches that can match those features for continuity of style. Think about choosing a different style or frame color of the window, or a different type of window to improve efficiency and function.

4. Research top window manufacturers. It's tempting to purchase windows based on price alone, but replacement windows are often a decision that only has to be made once or twice for the life of the home. Invest in durable windows that will have staying power. Consumer Reports offers unbiased reviews on various window brands and can help homeowners make sound decisions.

5. Prepare for installation. Clear pathways, remove window treatments and disconnect window alarm systems. Plan for one to two days of installation, advises Andersen Windows and Doors. Keep pets and children away from work areas.

Replacement windows can be a smart investment. New windows can improve the look of a home, reduce heating costs and can keep interior spaces comfortable.

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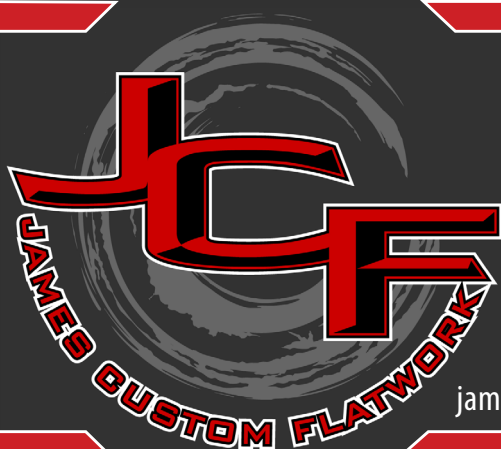
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With so much laundry being generated, homeowners may want to consider paying extra attention to the space in the house where their clothing is being cleansed. Laundry room renovations may not top homeowners' priority lists, but it may be time to give these rooms another look.

### Assess your equipment

If your appliances are aging, a laundry room renovation can start with an investment in new appliances. New models have large capacity loads, tend to be energy-efficient and could have innovative features that help fit with your laundry lifestyle. Purchasing front-loading models also can free up design space, as you can install a counter directly above the units, saving room for other items like drying racks.

### Figure out your room needs

A laundry room need not be limited to laundry only. Many homeowners make large laundry rooms catch-all spaces that can serve as utility or mud rooms, pantry overflows, or off-season storage areas. Consider the functions you want the room to serve and include those ideas in your designs.

### Add some natural light

If possible, include a window in your laundry room. Natural light can help make the room more enjoyable. It also can help you identify stains on clothes that need to be addressed and make it easier to fold matching items like socks.

### Think about a utility sink

Many washing machines drain out directly to waste pipes in the floor or wall, but you also can opt to have them empty into a utility sink. This sink also provides a convenient place to handwash items, clean tools or paintbrushes, or store items that perhaps you do not want to bring into a bathroom or kitchen sink.

### Include some flair

This utilitarian space need not be boring or bereft of design elements. Mirror your home's style in the laundry room, and include wall hangings, plants, accent items, and even task lighting. Play up certain

features with a bold floor tile or brightly colored walls.

Updating laundry rooms can be a great way to make doing laundry more enjoyable and efficient.

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