

Fall HOME IMPROVEMENT

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Issue Two

- Design ideas to give your home a farmhouse feel
- Budget-friendly dining room renovation ideas
- Autumn marks a great time to clear away clutter



Tips before deciding to do a DIY demolition

Home improvement projects can range from relatively inexpensive undertakings to complex endeavors that cost homeowners thousands of dollars. In an effort to make expensive projects more affordable, homeowners may look for ways to pitch in, and do-it-yourself demolition is a common way to cut costs.

Due to geographical fluctuations in price as well as the scale of a project, it's hard to pinpoint just how much homeowners can save by doing demolition work themselves. HomeAdvisor estimates that the average small interior demolition project costs just over \$3,000, though more significant demolition projects can cost considerably more than that. Given the cost, it's no surprise that so many homeowners volunteer to do demolition on their own. Though it's possible to do so safely, homeowners can take steps to determine if it's in their best interest to take on a DIY demolition or leave it to the professionals.

- Conduct a cost analysis. Demolition projects seem simple, but they often require the use of equipment most homeowners don't have on hand. Rentals can be considered in such instances, but the cost of renting equipment can reduce the amount of money homeowners are saving by going it alone. For example, homeowners may be able to pull up vinyl or tile flooring on their own, but not all floors are installed the same. Some floors may have been glued more effectively than others, making it hard and/or time-consuming to pull them up by hand. A walk-behind floor scraper can make it easier to remove such floors, but that equipment must be rented. A cost analysis comparing the contractors' demolition cost estimate and the cost of DIY, complete with equipment rental projections, can give a more accurate picture of how much money homeowners will save by going it alone. If the savings

of DIY are negligible, homeowners should probably let the contractor handle the demo.

- Speak with your contractor. Prior to saying they'll do the demo work on their own, homeowners should speak with their contractors to get an accurate idea of what the project will entail. Demolition projects may seem simple enough, but contractors can illustrate the correct way to do things so as to minimize potentially costly damage. Some contractors may offer to help homeowners start the demo project and then leave them to their own devices once they get a knack for what to do. Once homeowners see what it will take, they can then decide if DIY is best for them.

- Enlist help. No DIY demo should ever be done alone. The risk for accident and injury is simply too great for homeowners to go it alone. Homeowners who can't enlist some volunteers to pitch in should leave the job to the professionals.

DIY demolition can save homeowners a lot of money. But such projects are not necessarily as simple as they seem. Homeowners should take steps to see exactly what they're getting into before they volunteer to take on demo duty. FH218175



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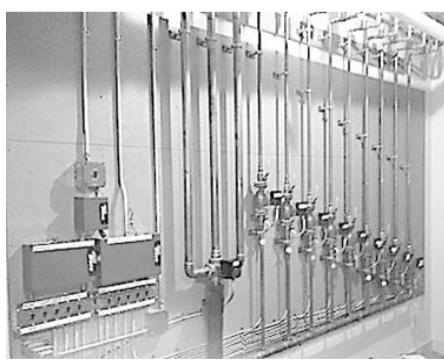
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Budget-friendly dining room renovation ideas

If the kitchen is the heart of the home, then the dining room may be akin to one of its arteries. The mood created in the kitchen spreads to the dining space where family and friends gather to eat and enjoy one another's company.

Dining rooms can get lost in the home renovation shuffle, as many homeowners tend to focus on renovating kitchens and bathrooms instead. Homeowners do not have to invest a lot of money in renovations to give their dining spaces awe-inspiring makeovers.

Improve lighting.

Make the chandelier the statement piece of the space. Go for a bold color or an innovative design.

A fresh coat of vibrant paint can work wonders and it doesn't cost much. If you can't remove a floor, cover it with a brightly colored area rug.

- Switch things up with slipcovers. Slipcovers can be changed each season to dramatically alter the look of a dining room for little investment. Slip covers also protect chairs and can be easily laundered after spills.

- Add floating shelving. Floating shelves provide much-needed storage or display space without the need to invest in another piece of furniture.

Depending on the shelving, they can work in modern design schemes or even farmhouse dining spaces.

- Clear out the clutter. It might be time to say "so long" to that large curio cabinet and the knickknacks within it. Curio and china cabinets used to be de rigueur, but plenty of people now prefer more open and airy dining rooms.



For those who want to keep the cabinet, try decluttering inside to only include the very best display pieces and see if the cabinet can be refinished with paint or a lightly colored stain.

- Improve lighting. Make the chandelier the statement piece of the space. Go for a bold color or an innovative design. Then add accessories throughout the space that coordinate with the chandelier.
- Add bench seating. Those who need additional seating may not have to get entirely new furniture. Swap out some chairs for benches, which can fit a couple more guests than chairs.
- Create depth with color. HGTV says that using various shades of the same color in a space can add depth. Coordinate drapes, walls, seat fabrics, and accessories for a cohesive design.

Renovating a dining room doesn't require a large investment of time and money. A few simple steps can give dining spaces a whole new feel without busting homeowners' budgets. DE21B459



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Thermostats Save Money And Energy

Homeowners who have not yet upgraded to a programmable thermostat could be doing themselves a significant disservice. Not only are programmable thermostats key to saving energy, they also save money. The Alliance for Environmental Sustainability note that for every degree they adjust their thermostats, homeowners save between 1 and 3 percent on their heating and cooling bills. Setting the thermostat slightly warmer in the summer and a notch or two cooler in the winter can save a considerable amount of energy and money. The United States Department of Energy says homeowners who make slight seasonal adjustments to their thermostats can save as much as 10 percent a year on heating and cooling costs.

Consult With An HVAC Expert To See If A Particular Thermostat Works Best With Your System.

But such adjustments are only truly effective when homeowners commit to them on a daily basis. The best way to stay on top of temperature settings is to purchase a programmable thermostat, which allow homeowners to predetermine when heat or air conditioning will turn on and off. Many programmable thermostats can store multiple daily settings, allowing homeowners to further customize their heating and cooling schedules based on the time of day as well as the day of the week.

According to Energy.gov, a common misconception associated with thermostats is that a furnace or an air conditioning system works harder than normal to get the space back to a comfortable temperature after the thermostat has been set back, and that this hard work means the overall savings are negligible. However, when a home's interior temperature is similar to the temperature outside, the home will lose energy to the



surrounding environment more slowly. The lower the interior temperature, the slower the heat loss in cold weather, and a higher interior temperature will slow the flow of heat into your house in hot weather. Programmable thermostats are available in a variety of models. Some are easier to program than others.

Certain thermostats can be linked to a home's wireless system so that adjustments to the thermostat can even be made when you are not at home. Consult with an HVAC expert to see if a particular thermostat works best with your system.

Some homes may benefit from a dual- or multi-zoned system, which allows homeowners to adjust the temperature independently from other floors or wings of a home.

The location of the thermostat also is important. The thermostat should be placed where it can get the most accurate reading of the house. It should be on an interior wall away from direct sunlight, doorways, drafts, and windows. It should not be directly facing an air vent. Avoid placing furniture above or below the thermostat, as such furnishings can impede proper air flow.

If you feel like your HVAC system is cycling on and off even after programming, you may need to call a technician, who can determine if there are any obstructions to the thermostat or if the unit is the appropriate size for your home. TF148434



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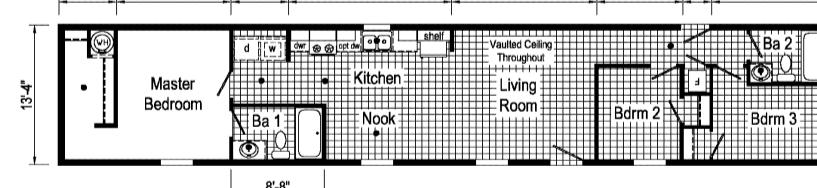
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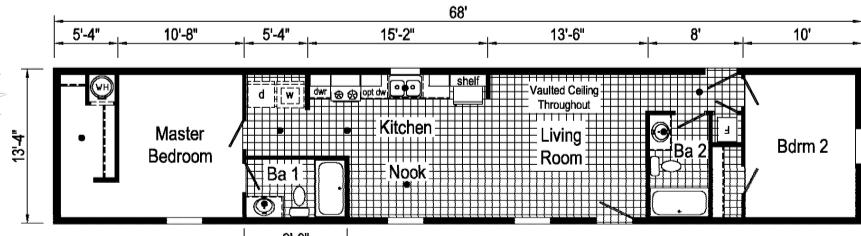
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Must-have features in your bathroom remodel

Veteran homeowners recognize the value of remodeling their kitchens and bathrooms. Kitchens and baths tend to appear dated more quickly than other spaces, such as living rooms and bedrooms, which can always be revamped with some fresh paint and new furnishings.

The home improvement pricing resource Home Guide indicates an average bathroom remodel costs anywhere from \$5,500 to \$15,000 depending on the size and scope of the renovation. However, a bath redo can increase a home's resale value and can return as much as 68 percent of homeowners' investments. As homeowners plan their bathroom renovations, it's a good time to consider improvements that will improve function and add design appeal for years to come.

- Floating vanity: Add an airy feeling to the room by creating space between the vanity and the floor. A floating vanity can be a counter with a vessel sink or even have cabinets, as long as the vanity doesn't extend to the floor.
- Freestanding traditional sink or tub: There's something elegant about a freestanding tub or pedestal sink. Such fixtures can lend a classic vibe to a space. However, freestanding fixtures also come in modern or eclectic forms, so there are options for any design style.
- Frameless showers: Switch to a walk-in shower option, which improves aesthetics and makes it easier to "age in place" in a home. Pair that frameless shower with clear glass shower doors so sightline in the space remains unencumbered.
- Natural textures: Create a calm and serene sanctuary in the bathroom with light, natural hues and materials. Nature-inspired colors on tiles, walls and vanities can add to the spa vibe.
- Dual sinks and vanities: With a double vanity, two people can share the space and easily use the bathroom without getting in each other's way. One vanity with two sinks works, but homeowners can create even more personal space by dividing vanities and mirrors.
- Small textured tile on shower floors: Small textures are appealing and add



safety. The added texture and grouting will keep feet from slipping on wet floors. Also, opt for mold-resistant grout to make cleanup even easier.

- Special shower heads: Invest in shower heads that can run the gamut from creating steam showers to rainfall effects. Some showers will have multiple shower jets to offer an invigorating experience.
- Improve drainage: Increase the diameter of the drain pipe in the bathroom from the standard to a two-inch drain pipe. This will reduce the risk of clogs and overflow leaks.
- Install a window: Natural light and air flow can reduce the risk for mold and mildew growth, and windows add some aesthetic appeal to a space. Just be sure to choose frosted privacy glass.

Additional considerations for a bath remodel include heated floors, well-placed and attractive storage options and a toilet enclosure (water closet) for added privacy. These and other bathroom renovation ideas can add value and improve the appeal of the room. TF21A423



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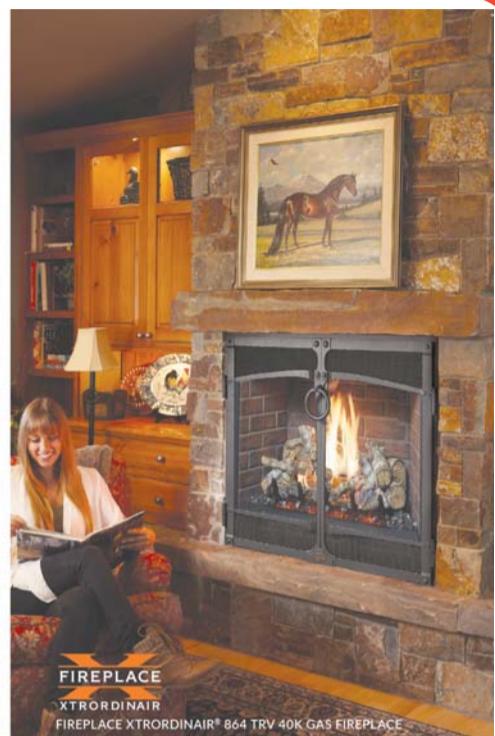


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Autumn Marks A Great Time To Clear Away Clutter

Clutter is a concern for many homeowners. Clutter can gradually accumulate, and over time a home can turn from a welcoming respite to a claustrophobic place overwhelmed by items of little or no value.

Homeowners who have battled clutter in the past often find that it is most likely to accumulate over the winter, when frigid temperatures outside drive more people indoors. Spending more time indoors means more trash indoors.

Newspapers and magazines might be easy to discard when the weather is warm, but a trip outside to discard such items takes less precedence when it must be made in below freezing temperatures.

The likelihood that even the cleanliest of homeowners might accumulate some clutter over the winter only highlights the importance of clearing a house of clutter in the fall. While clearing clutter can seem like an arduous task, the following tips can make the project much easier.

- Clean one room or area at a time. A disorganized approach to getting organized is likely to waste time and may even prove fruitless. Work your way through your home or apartment one room at a time rather than jumping from room to room. Have boxes or crates designated for items you find that belong in other rooms, and place items in the appropriate boxes as you clean rather than returning items to the right room as you find them. Once you have finished a room, move on to the next one and try to finish a room on the same day you started.

- Invest in a paper shredder. Old bills, bank statements, receipts, and other once-important papers have a way of accumulating on desks, in drawers and on counters. Such documents often do not need to be held onto, but men and women are hesitant to discard them because they contain personal information. A paper shredder is a great investment for homeowners and apartment dwellers alike and can be the safest way to discard documents with potentially sensitive information. It's also a friend to anyone attempting to clear clutter. Many shredders can shred multiple pages at a time, making them a quick and safe way to discard documents that have been littering a home long after they were useful.

- Decide to donate some items. Many unused items lying around your house can

likely be donated to a worthy cause, which can help motivate you to clean out your closet of all those extra sweaters and other items you no longer wear. Encourage fellow members of the household to donate as well, and set aside a few boxes for clothes that will be donated and those that will be discarded. Donated items need not be clothes, as many goodwill organizations accept appliances and other products as well.

- Put seasonal items away. Storing seasonal items like patio furniture and swimsuits can help reduce the likelihood that clutter will build up in the months ahead. Pack items from your summer wardrobe together and store them in a suitcase in the back of your closet. This frees up room for your fall and winter clothing and helps you avoid overstuffed drawers. In addition to clothing, store seasonal furniture neatly in the back of your garage or storage shed, pulling out items like snow shovels or snow blowers you may need come the winter.

- Tackle the hall closet. Hall closets are convenient dropoff spots for items of all shapes, uses and sizes, as the hall closet is not necessarily opened each day and therefore men and women can simply ignore it as it gradually accumulates more and more random items. But hall closets can be valuable storage spaces when used appropriately. Designate a significant amount of time to tackle hallway closets in your home so you can thoroughly reduce the clutter within them and get back to using the closets as the valuable, organized storage units they're intended to be. Discuss having different purposes for each closet, such as one devoted to cleaning items, another to coats, and so on. Resolve to keep the floors in each closet clear of items, as clutter tends to be on the floor and then work its way upward, eventually encompassing the entire closet. Once the hallway closets have been cleared, work hard to keep them clean as autumn turns into winter.



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Why excavation is best left to the professionals

When shopping for a home, buyers often try to envision themselves living in a given property. Images of family gatherings and holidays may instantly come to mind, but prospective homeowners also may begin to envision changes they would make to a property if they were eventually to call it home.

Changing an existing structure or building an entirely new home on an empty plot of land can be exciting. Such changes typically require excavation, which is a complicated process that may be necessary for projects big or small.

What is excavation?

Excavation is the process of extracting material from the ground by digging. Earth, rock and other materials may be moved during the excavation process.

Can do-it-yourselfers excavate?

Skilled DIYers who have participated in excavation projects in the past may be able to handle a project on their own. However, it's important that homeowners recognize that excavation is about more than just digging in the ground. It's a complicated process that requires the use of specialized tools and equipment. In addition, a strong understanding of the land that will be excavated is required for the project to be safe and go smoothly.

Why hire an excavation professional?

Even the most skilled DIYer might be better off hiring an excavation professional than going it alone. That's true for a number of reasons.

- Liability: Homeowners who hire a fully licensed and insured professional excavation firm can rest easy knowing that they will not be responsible for



any damages or injuries that may occur during the project.

- Permits/requirements: A professional excavation firm typically files all the necessary paperwork for work permits or can advise which permits homeowners will need to go forward with the project. In addition, professionals will know the local laws regarding building and excavation. For example, homeowners may be unfamiliar with the concept of lateral support, which refers to landowners' right to have their land physically supported in its natural state by adjoining land and underground structures. This is an important concept to understand during an excavation project, and professionals can advise homeowners if a project they want to undertake will violate lateral support laws.

- Experience: Perhaps the best reason to work with excavation professionals is their experience. A lack of excavation experience can result in damage to a homeowner's property and surrounding properties, which can prove costly. DIYers may not know the type of soil they have on their property nor recognize the different types of challenges each type of soil can present during an excavation project. Such knowledge comes with experience and is often invaluable.

Skilled DIYers can tackle many home improvement projects on their own. However, the complex nature of excavation makes these types of projects the kind that are best left to skilled professionals. FH218165

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Design ideas to give your home a farmhouse feel

Farmhouse style homes are having a moment. A 2020 survey from Homes.com asked more than 5,000 adults across the United States about their favorite house style from a list that included bohemian craftsman, mid-century modern ranch, French chateau, and Tudor, among others. Modern farmhouse was the runaway winner, as participants in 42 of the 50 states indicated this simple, cozy style was their favorite.

Home renovation projects can help homeowners put their own unique stamp on their homes, and such projects can be both aesthetic and functional in nature. The following are some farmhouse design elements homeowners can consider as they look to transform their home interiors with this popular style in mind.

- Exposed beams: Exposed beams instantly evoke images of a farmhouse. The home improvement experts at BobVila.com note that this rustic renovation project can utilize real wood or faux beams that look like the real thing. Decorative beams that have nothing to do with a home's structural integrity can be installed by skilled do-it-yourselfers. However, even faux beams are heavy, and BobVila.com recommends homeowners have an engineer assess their existing structure prior to installation.
- Distressed wood finishes: Distressing is designed to make something look less than perfect. Distressed wood finishes can be found throughout many farmhouse style homes. Furniture and picture frames can provide the distressed look fans are looking for. This is a relatively inexpensive project that many homeowners can tackle on their own after watching some online tutorials that recommend the right tools and



techniques to get the job done right.

- Kitchen sink: Many components combine to create a truly classic farmhouse kitchen. But perhaps no component is more essential than the classic farmhouse sink. The renovation experts at HGTV note that a classic farmhouse sink features a deep, wide basin. Farmhouse sinks are large enough to handle all the dishes that come after a big family meal. Old-fashioned porcelain sinks are worth consideration by homeowners who want their kitchen sinks to evoke a traditional farmhouse feel.
- Countertops: HGTV recommends butcher block countertops for homeowners who favor European farmhouse style. Homeowners overhauling their kitchens to create a farmhouse feel should consider installing a large island with a walnut butcher block countertop for an authentic farmhouse feel.

Farmhouse style homes are wildly popular. Some simple renovations can help homeowners with a fondness for farmhouse style bring this classic look into their homes. FH218159



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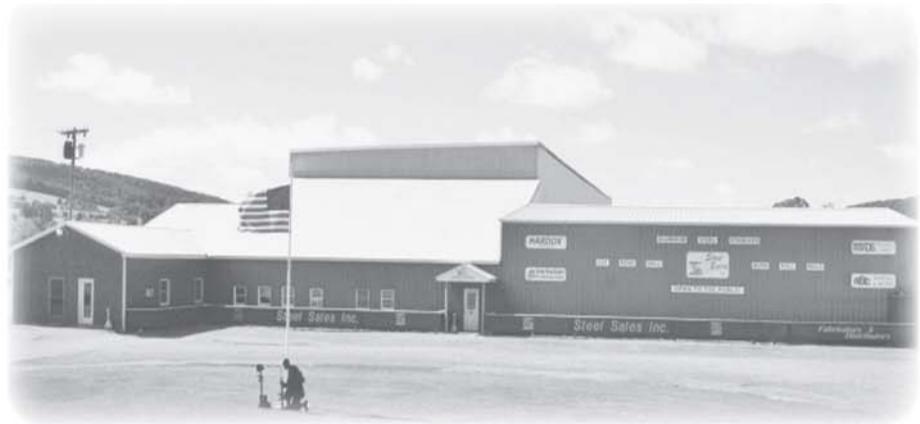
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