



fall September 2018 | A Special Supplement to
the Oneida Daily Dispatch

HOME & GARDEN

Raise *the* Bar

How to build your home bar

Caring for kitchen countertops

proper maintenance
insures the longest life

Winter is Coming

How to prepare
your lawn and
garden for winter

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the Oneida Daily Dispatch

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Did you know?

According to Energy Star, the U.S. Department of Energy and Consumer Reports, homeowners who want to curb their energy consumption can consider upgrading, repairing or replacing the biggest energy consumers in their homes. The following appliances tend to consume the most energy in a typical home.

Heating & cooling unit: Nearly half of all energy used in a home is consumed by HVAC systems. Regularly inspecting and servicing the system can conserve energy and save money.



Water heater: Energy Star suggests replacing water heaters that are more than 10 years old. Also, washing clothes in cold water can reduce energy consumption.

Kitchen/laundry appliances: Trade in old appliances for new models, which are more energy-efficient. For example, an Energy Star-rated refrigerator uses 50 percent less energy to run than a refrigerator manufactured 15 years ago. Innovations in laundry appliances also help make units more efficient without compromising on performance.



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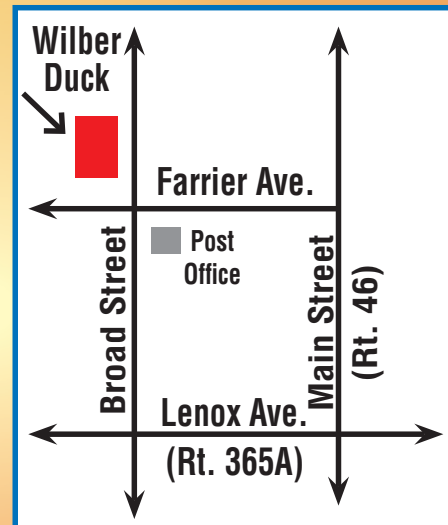
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How to build your home bar



Many people enjoy opening their homes to friends or family. In fact, according to the National Eating Trends survey and custom research by the NPD group, in 2016 the average person ate 38 meals at other people's homes.

Knowing how to cook, set the mood and entertain is increasingly important for many homeowners. Installing and outfitting a home bar can provide guests with the features of a night out, only without the crowds or bar tabs that come at the end of the night. A home bar is a place where hosts and their guests can gather and enjoy great conversation. Such a spot also can serve as a neighborhood hangout — a smart choice for those who want to indulge safely and not have to drive home afterward.

Creating a home bar need not be a difficult project. By investing in basic equipment, stocking up on preferred liquors and gaining some mixology expertise, hosts can impress and entertain their guests.

Establish a bar setup

Home bars can range from rolling carts to built-in wet bars to a single tray of items. Space in a home will dictate the kind of bar homeowners can have. Rolling bar carts are popular and versatile, and they can be kept stationary or rolled in and out of a room as needed. If a bar cart is open, organization is key, as you don't want it to look unkempt.

A full-blown wet bar will require more construction, including plumbing and electricity if you need outlets for plugging in appliances. Wet bars are ideal in dens, renovated garages and finished basements.

Stock up on equipment

A new home bar requires barware and glassware. Various drinks are best served in requisite glassware and prepared with the right equipment. A home bar will benefit from a muddler, jigger, cocktail shaker, strainer, ice cube trays, and bar spoon. Glassware can include short glasses, tall glasses and wine glasses with stems. Martini glasses provide a chic look and are practical for those who prefer cosmopolitans and martinis.



Fill it with spirits

No bar is complete without alcohol and mixers. Homeowners can buy the types of spirits they love and complete their bars with the basics for mixing. When stocking a bar, keep in mind that everything does not have to be top-shelf. Vodka, gin, tequila, rum, and whiskey are some of the more popular spirits. Simple syrup, fresh fruit, club soda, cola, and bitters are examples of versatile mixers.

Entertaining guru Martha Stewart says to have enough supplies on hand for guests. Expect each person to have three drinks (requiring three glasses), use a pound of ice, and three cocktail napkins per two-hour party. Don't forget to also have nonalcoholic items on hand for those who don't imbibe.



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Caring *for kitchen countertops*



Kitchen remodels are a popular home improvement project that help homeowners recoup large percentages of their initial investments at resale. A kitchen remodel can invigorate a home and make the most popular room in the house more functional.

According to HomeAdvisor, a home-improvement informational guide, homeowners spend an average of \$22,000 on kitchen remodels. However, lavish projects can cost more than \$50,000. Protecting such investments is important and requires that homeowners understand how to properly maintain kitchen features so they have the longest life possible.



This includes the new countertops that make the kitchen look complete. Countertops come in various materials, not all of which should be

treated the same way. Quartz, granite, marble, laminate, and tile countertops require different types of maintenance.

Quartz

Engineered quartz countertops are popular. Quartz countertops are nearly maintenance-free and resistant to stains, scratches and even heat. Quartz will not need to be sealed like natural stone and can be cleaned using just a damp cloth with a mild, nonabrasive soap.

Granite

Polished or honed granite countertops offer a high-end look that adds instant value to a kitchen. Natural variations in granite give each kitchen a custom look. To keep granite countertops clean, avoid abrasive cleansers that can scratch, and opt for warm, soapy water instead. Stains are possible, but can be remedied with a baking soda paste left to sit for a couple of hours, advises Angie's List. Wipe up oils, acids and soda promptly to avoid stains, and follow advised sealing routines.

Marble

Marble is a natural stone that is porous and will need to be resealed periodically. Because marble has high levels of the mineral calcite, it can be reactive when acids come in contact with it, and etch marks may appear.

Promptly wipe away tomato juice, lemon juice, perfume, or toothpaste. Marble is softer than granite and will wear at a faster rate. Avoid scratching and exercise caution when using knives or sharp objects around marble.

Laminate

One of the more budget-friendly materials, laminate countertops can be fabricated to mimic the look of natural stone, wood or even quartz. Laminate is less resistant to damage than other materials and will need a gentle touch. Formica® says to never use abrasive cleansers, scouring pads or steel wool when cleaning laminate countertops. For tough stains, an all-purpose cleaner should suffice when applied with a nylon-bristled brush. Test any cleanser in a discreet area first.

Tile

Cleaning tile countertops requires getting into crevices along the grout lines. A toothbrush and a mildew-fighting cleaner or bleach diluted with water is advised. Also, unglazed tiles need to be sealed yearly. Some soap may leave residue, which can be removed with a solution of vinegar and water. Check with the manufacturer or installer of the countertops to learn more about the ways to clean and maintain new counters.



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Design

a more functional pantry



Some homeowners need to move storage pantries into the garage, the basement or a mud/laundry room. Various factors should be considered before placing a pantry outside a kitchen. What is the climate? Will food spoil? Is there a possibility that vermin or insects can infiltrate the room and access food? These factors will dictate whether to have closed cabinets, airtight bins or open shelves or if other modifications must be made to the room prior to building.

Choose the type of pantry

Accessibility is essential in a pantry. Everything should be easily reached and grabbed as needed without having to move too many things. Ideally, foods should be arranged in a single layer so that all items can be viewed at a glance. Shelves of various depths and heights can accommodate items of different sizes. Adjustable shelves are ideal because they can be modified as foods change. Sliding drawers can improve reach in cabinets.

In smaller spaces, French door-style reach-in cabinets are convenient and flexible. In complete kitchen remodels or new constructions, walk-in pantries offer the most space and flexibility.

Must-have features

Pantries serve different functions in different homes. For the bulk shopper, a pantry with plenty of room for large items will be needed. Lighting can be beneficial in all pantries. Lights can improve visibility when trying to locate items. Others prefer an outlet for charging hand-held vacuums or other small appliances. Counter space in the pantry enables homeowners to unload groceries directly onto pantry shelves. For pantries located outside of the kitchen, built-in freezers can maximize storage possibilities, especially for those who freeze-and-eat after bulk shopping ventures.

Many homeowners wish they had more storage space, and kitchens are one area where people seemingly can always use more storage. Despite a desire for more kitchen space, until recently, kitchen pantries fell out of favor. Builders and architects may have thought that close proximity to supermarkets as well as multi-use cabinets in kitchens would offset the need for pantries. But according to a recent survey from the National Association of Home Builders, a kitchen pantry is the most desirable kitchen feature for buyers in the market for a new home. According to a 2016 survey from ReportLinker, 98 percent of Americans say cooking at home is their preferred way to prepare a meal. And despite the wide array of restaurants, prepared meals and fast food options nearby, more than one-third of people cook at home daily, with nearly 50 percent cooking between three and six days a week. In order to accommodate for spending more time in the kitchen, homeowners are directing additional attention to kitchen preparation and storage features. In fact, one recent trend in kitchen renovations is creating custom-designed pantries.

Locate the appropriate space
 Ideally, pantries should be in or adjacent to the kitchen. But not every home layout allows for this setup.

Basement

remodeling tips

Certain structural and other issues should be addressed prior to a basement remodel.

A basement remodeling project can add valuable and usable space to a home. For many years, homeowners overlooked the potential of a basement remodel, perhaps thinking it would not be a smart return on investment. But that's no longer the case.

The latest "Cost vs. Value" report from Remodeling magazine says the average basement remodel can cost around \$61,000 with a 70.3 percent recoup rate. In addition, HGTV says architects and contractors indicate the cost of redoing a basement is roughly one-third to one-half less than the price of putting an addition on a home.

Before remodeling a basement, homeowners should think about how they want to use the space. Homeowners also must focus on some potential obstacles in a basement that will need to be addressed so that the area can be as functional as possible. Basements can be chilly and damp. That means moisture issues and heating and cooling needs must be addressed prior to any construction. Homeowners may have to consider the installation of a dehumidifier and run venting through the basement to allow for proper climate control. If a basement takes on water, either through the walls or a concrete slab, a professional waterproofing company can come in and fix these issues so they will not damage drywall and flooring afterwards.

The presence of insects and pests also must be addressed. Exterminators can help homeowners figure out which insects are in their basements and how to make the space less hospitable to these unwelcome guests so that the room will become comfortable for human occupants.

Space is often at a premium in basements, which may contain HVAC units, water heaters, filtration devices, ductwork, pipes, and the other appliances. Qualified contractors can suggest solutions for cordoning

off appliances and camouflaging pipes and wires so they won't detract from the finished product. However, building access panels into the design will make it easier to service or repair features as necessary. Homeowners also may want to wrap pipes before drywall is installed to quiet noisy drainage pipes.

Uneven basement flooring will need to be smoothed out and flattened before carpeting or tile can be laid down. A self-leveling underlayment can be applied to fill in gullies, while larger crack and holes will need to be patched.

Once the structure of the basement is addressed, then the design work can begin. Many professionals advise against drop ceilings, which can take

away from ceiling height and look cheap. Basements can be dark, so the addition of plenty of lighting can help brighten the room. Small basement windows can be replaced with larger ones to add more light as well. Homeowners can mimic built-ins and architectural details from elsewhere in the home so the basement is aesthetically cohesive and doesn't seem like an addition. Bookcases and shelving can add valuable storage space as well. Decorate the basement with bright, neutral colors so they make the space feel more inviting. With some effort and financial investment, basements can be as beautiful and functional as other rooms in a home.



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Autumn

is prime time to tend lawns and gardens

Autumn is gardening season. That statement may not seem right to those who think of the spring as the peak time to care for lawns and gardens. However, autumn is an ideal time to get into the garden and ensure that flowers, trees and garden beds will over-winter successfully. A number of things make autumn a prime gardening season. The cooler days of fall enable gardeners to spend ample time outdoors without the threat of blazing heat. In addition,

soil harbors a lot of residual warmth in autumn. Also, the colder temperatures haven't yet arrived in autumn, nor have the leaves completely fallen, making fall a prime time to assess what's already in the landscape, what needs pruning back and where to address planting for next year. Gardening enthusiasts can focus their attention on these areas this fall. **Pamper perennials.** As annuals and perennials start to fall back, mark the spots where perennials are located so they can be easily identified later

on. This way, when planning spots for spring bulbs or other spring layouts for next year, perennials won't be overlooked or covered over. **Prune shrubs.** Look at shrubs and trees and cut out dead or diseased wood. **Clean up borders.** Weed and tidy up borders and lawn edging. **Install pavers or rock wall.** Embrace the cooler temperatures to work on labor-intensive projects, such as putting in a garden bed, retaining wall or walkway.

Remove spent summer veggies. Take out vegetable garden plants that have already bloomed and borne fruit. Tidy up vegetable gardens and start to sow cooler weather plants, such as onions, garlic, beans, and sweet peas. **Rake and compost.** Rake the leaves and gather grass clippings to add to the compost pile. **Plant spring bulbs.** Get tulips and other spring bulbs ready for planting so they'll burst with color next year. **Dig up herbs.** Relocate herbs like parsley or basil to indoor gardens. Otherwise, strip all leaves and freeze for storage during winter. **Consider mums.** Chrysanthemum plants are perennials. While they look beautiful in pots, if planted, maintained and winterized, they can bloom every fall. **Fertilize the lawn.** Fertilizing in autumn helps ensure grass will stay healthy throughout the winter. **Add mulch and compost to the garden.** Replenish spent soil with mulch and compost so garden beds will be revitalized for spring planting. **Prune hedges.** Tidy up hedges, as they won't be growing much more this year. **Clean and store equipment.** Clean, sharpen and oil all equipment, storing lawn and garden tools properly so they are ready for spring and not lying out all winter. Autumn may not seem like gardening season, but there are plenty of lawn and garden tasks to tend to during this time of year.

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Protect your home (and more) from winter's freeze



Freezing temperatures may be good for ice skating or building snowmen, but sub-freezing temperatures can be dangerous for the average person and his or her home. Cold weather often leaves people scurrying to do whatever is necessary to safeguard themselves from the big chill. But it's important homeowners also protect their homes in cold weather.

Plumbing

Plumbing and pipes may be vulnerable to cold weather. Frozen pipes may burst and cause substantial damage to a home, potentially causing flooding and structural damage. Homeowners should disconnect and drain garden hoses before winter arrives. Water to outdoor hose bibs should be turned off, though the valves on these outdoor faucets should be left open to drain. Also, outdoor faucets can be covered with insulating foam covers. The Red Cross says pipes that freeze most frequently include pipes in unheated areas, such as basements, attics, garages, and crawl spaces. Close vents to the outside in areas like attics and basements to limit the amount of cold air that gets indoors. Think about insulating unheated

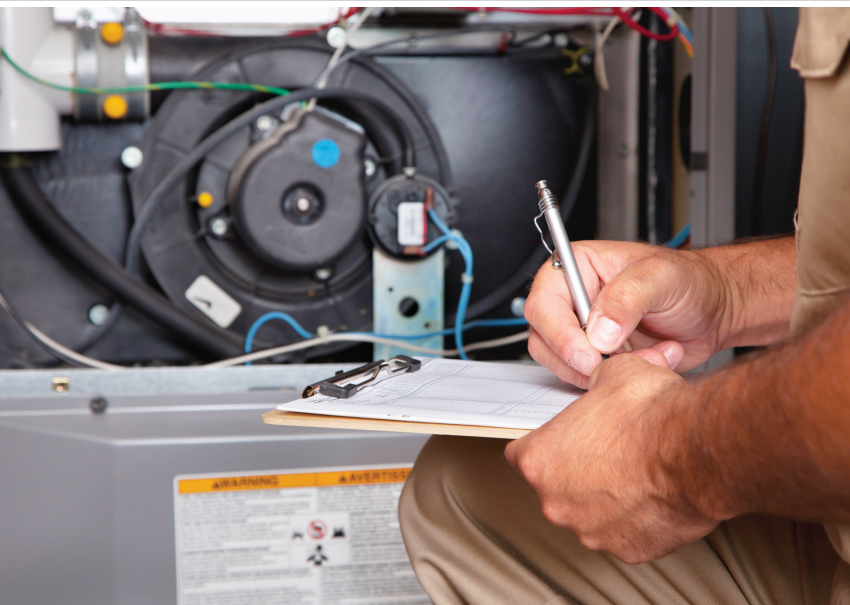
areas, as well as using pipe sleeves, heat tape or wraps on exposed pipes. By opening kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors, homeowners can allow warm air from a home to reach pipes under the sink. During extreme freezes, keep cold water dripping from a sink to prevent pipes from freezing.

Service HVAC systems

It's important to ensure that heating systems are working properly prior to the cold-weather season. It may only take hours for the interior of a home to reach dangerously low temperatures without adequate heat. Homeowners should schedule annual checkups of furnaces and hot water heaters. Inspect the heat exchanger for cracks, install a clean air filter and make sure all thermostats are working properly.

Have fuel ready

Homeowners who heat their homes with oil, wood or coal should make sure they have plenty of fuel on hand in advance of winter. Shortages can occur, and it may take some time for new fuel to arrive in the midst of a cold snap. As a precaution, homeowners can rely on portable space heaters to fill in the heating gaps during freezing temperatures. Exercise extreme



caution with these devices, turning them off when leaving the room and remembering to avoid overloading outlets.

Protect outside

Drain birdbaths, clean out downspouts and remove water from other items where water can freeze and cause damage. Inspect roofing prior to the

snowy season, but stay off roofs during freezing weather. Remove snow shovels and other winter gear from storage and make sure the items are easily accessible during snowstorms. Winter's bite can be severe. Homeowners can protect themselves and their properties when the freeze sets in.



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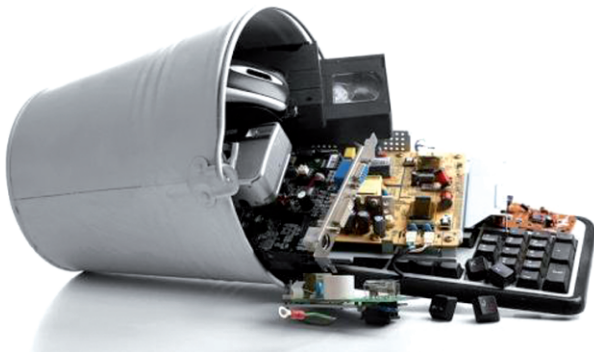
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Let locations *inspire design*

Homeowners looking to add flair to their homes can find inspiration anywhere. Style can even be tailored to reflect places homeowners have visited. Whether they call to mind the narrow streets of London, the sand-bleached beaches of a Caribbean island or the urban buzz of New York City, designs can reflect one's travels and evoke some of the same feelings homeowners got when visiting their favorite places. Professional interior designers often pull inspiration from unique places, and so can homeowners who love to travel. Those who want to illustrate their wanderlust through their home's decor can consider these tips.

Work with colors

Think about the colors that signify a particular locale and bring those hues into the space. The color palettes of the beach, for example, include grays, beiges, blues, and greens. The popularity of gray-tone neutrals allows homeowners to bring in these colors as a neutral backdrop, and then add a splash of whimsy with a few decorative accents.

Try natural materials

Vacation hotspots like Hawaii, Southern California and other areas of the Pacific tend to put heavy emphasis on natural materials. Items like bamboo, sea grass, stones, and woven baskets can invite the outdoors into a home.

Embrace the vibe

Urban centers are awash in energy and color. This spirit can be reflected with modern architecture, bold prints, metallic accents, and innovative lighting.

Pick an inspiration piece

Homeowners can direct their focus to one particular memento from a vacation or excursion. A vivid piece of artwork, a piece of furniture, a sculpture, or even a wardrobe element can serve as a catalyst for an entire room. Use this piece to match colors and textures. Remember, to evoke the spirit of an area when decorating, keep it subtle. Too many details or over-the-top replication might seem like one is dressing a stage set rather than his or her home.

Questions to ask *before embracing DIY*



to complete. Homeowners whose time is already stretched thin with commitments to work and/or family may not be able to complete projects within a reasonable amount of time. That's fine if working on a part of the home that won't affect daily life, but can prove stressful or problematic if the project is in a room, such as a kitchen or bathroom, that residents of the home use each day. Novice DIYers should be especially honest with themselves about the time they have available to work on the project, as such homeowners are bound to experience a few time-consuming missteps along the way.

Can I afford it?

While DIY might seem more affordable than hiring a contractor, that's not necessarily true. Novice DIYers may need to buy or rent tools, costs that can add up. Contractors already have the tools necessary to begin and complete projects, so the cost savings of DIY might not be as significant as homeowners think. Before going the DIY route, homeowners should solicit estimates from contractors, comparing the estimates to how much a project will cost if homeowners do it themselves.

Can I go it alone?

Many home improvement projects require more than one set of hands, and it's risky and even foolish for first-time DIYers to assume they can begin a project and see it through to completion entirely on their own. Homeowners whose spouses, partners, friends, or relatives are willing to chip in may think that's enough. However, the DIY skills of those who volunteer may be a mystery until the project begins. Novice DIYers should enlist the help of a friend or family member with home improvement experience. If no such person is available, it may be wise to hire a contractor instead.

Home improvement projects may seem simple on television. But prospective do-it-yourselfers must make honest assessments of their skills, time and budgets before taking on a DIY project.

Home improvement projects are as popular as ever. In its 2017 True Cost Survey, the home improvement site HomeAdvisor found that, between February 2016 and February 2017, homeowners spent an average of just over \$5,000 on home projects. That marked a nearly \$1,900 increase from the year prior, indicating that homeowners are increasingly opening their wallets to transform their homes.

In addition to spending money to improve their homes, many homeowners are spending their time on projects as well. While DIY projects can provide a sense of fulfillment and personal attachment to one's home, prospective do-it-yourselfers should ask themselves some questions before picking up their hammers and getting to work.

Do I have any physical limitations?

No matter how much home improvement television shows may simplify projects, prospective DIYers should know that such undertakings are typically very difficult and oftentimes physically demanding. Homeowners with existing health conditions or other physical limitations may not be capable of performing certain tasks or may need to take frequent breaks, which can delay projects.

Do I have the time?

Many home improvement projects require a significant amount of time

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