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keeping your trees healthy
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Spring! HOME IMPROVEMENT

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selection from major brands such as, Electrolux, Frigidaire, Kitchenaid, Whirlpool, Maytag, LG, GE, Bosch, Viking, Fisher Paykel, Wolf, SubZero, Asko and others.

Whether you are building a new home, remodeling or replacing one item, a sales specialist from Stewart's will help you from start to finish. This wide selection and personal service keeps customers returning. Stewart's also offers 0% financing, free delivery, haul away on appliance purchases over \$499 within a limited area, as well as appliance repair on them.

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Tips to improve WiFi around the house

Speedy, reliable internet is something people have quickly grown accustomed to. That's no doubt why dropped WiFi signals can be so frustrating.

strategies that consumers can try to improve the Wi-Fi in their homes.

- Upgrade your router. Many people rent their routers from their internet service providers, but it may surprise some to learn that they can buy their own. Buying your own router can be beneficial in various ways, not the least of which is it can save money. Router rental fees

Various things can contribute to slow or interrupted Wi-Fi. As a result, there's no one-size-fits-all solution to address underperforming Wi-Fi. But that's good news, as it means there's an assortment of



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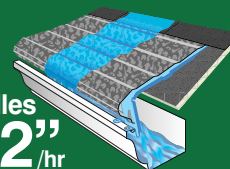
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Purposeful Ways to Style a Multi-Purpose Room

(Family Features)

Whether you call it a laundry room, mudroom or something else entirely, that multi-purpose space is likely a hub of activity in your home. For homeowners creating this utility space from scratch, the sky is the limit, but even if you're updating an existing room, there are plenty of ways to add purposeful style and function.

Homeowners are often looking for ways to use the rooms in their homes in multiple ways. With some thoughtful planning and the right materials, even a modest utility area can become a multi-functional space for the entire family.

Take a utilitarian approach. When planning your space, put function front and center. There are plenty of clever ways to enhance the aesthetics, so focus first on how you want to use the space. It may be hard to conceive at first, but it's possible to create a space that serves not only your basic laundry essentials, but also provides space for you to care for four-legged friends or enjoy a hobby. For example, you might add pet washing and grooming features, along with an oversized sink that doubles as a gardening and potting area.

In a multi-use room, it's also important to be conscious of details like lighting and cabinetry inserts that can help bring organization and order to the space. Puck lighting and LED strips illuminate select areas while dividers, sliding shelves and custom pull-out cabinets ensure your items are stored out of sight but within easy reach.

Be color conscious. In a high-traffic space that sees a fair share of dirt and grime, color is an attractive way to cleverly disguise what lurks in between cleanings. Gray tones are at the core of many contemporary interior schemes, and a mid-tone gray color palette is ideal to hide dirt and hair while providing a crisp and clean foundation for a cohesive look. For example, Wellborn Cabinet's Shaker-style Hanover door offers clean, fuss-free lines ideal for a utilitarian space. Choose maple and finish the cabinetry with Ash stain, a trending mid-tone gray that emphasizes the detail of the wood grain.

You can also bring additional character and personality to the space with accent color. For example, earthy green walls and tiling that complements the paint and cabinetry offer a subtle blend of colors that enhance the overarching contemporary feel.

Focus on ergonomics. A utility room is a place for working, so you'll want to make accommodations to make those moments more enjoyable. For example, a raised large basin tile sink offers a spine-friendly alternative to bending over or squatting while washing a pet or potting plants. For a larger dog you can't heft into a sink, you might consider a washing station with tiled steps, a frameless glass enclosure and low-mounted, hand-held showerhead.

Find more ideas and inspiration for creating a multi-purpose room that fits your lifestyle at wellborn.com.



PAMPERED PETS

With a pet-friendly multi-purpose room, you can make the less glamorous tasks of pet ownership more enjoyable while you shower your pooch with special attention.

Built-in kennel: Using cabinetry, along with sturdy chicken wire mesh in place of panels on the door frames, you can build a stylish kennel right into the room. A simple drip tray protects the wood surface and makes cleanup easy.

Toe-kick feeder: Maximize every inch of space with clever solutions like a feeder that hides away under the cabinets. With built-in wells for food and water dishes, this convenient unit appears with a gentle nudge then easily slides back under the cabinet to make the space clean and neat again.

Pet feeding center: Organizing your pet supplies keeps the area extra tidy, so make use of hidden storage with a pullout cabinet that holds pet food and other accessories out of sight.



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5 Tips to Spring Clean Your Home Inside and Out

(Family Features)

Spring cleaning isn't just about purging dirt and grime. It's also the perfect opportunity to take inventory of items around your home. As you tackle this season's cleaning, look for ways to improve your overall living space, from getting rid of things you no longer need to adding items that can work harder for you.

Consider these five ways to tackle your home inside and out this spring.

Make organizing easier. As you clean each space, look for easy ways to reduce unsightly messes and improve organization. If your entryway always becomes a jumbled pile of shoes and coats, consider adding a storage bench and hooks to bring some order to the area. If the kids' toys always accumulate in the living room, add a storage chest or large baskets to store them when not in use. If tools and equipment make

the garage unusable, install shelving units to keep everything in place.

Eliminate the excess. Spring cleaning is also an opportunity to declutter and make way for something new, either by donating or selling unused things. Whether it's last season's fashion and accessories or unused tech and fitness gear, that item you never used - or haven't used in a while - may be exactly what someone else is looking for. Online platforms can make the process easy and be a way to earn extra cash or help fund other home upgrades. Look for marketplaces that help you maximize your return; eBay, for example, is giving sellers 200 free listings every month, meaning you only pay after your items sell.

Reimagine your living space. If one area is becoming too crowded or doesn't serve your family's needs, consider items you can repurpose for another part of the home. For

example, move an unused chair in your living room into a bedroom to create a reading nook. Keep your focus on function as you make changes that accommodate your lifestyle.

Make smart additions. Once you've cleared your space, and sold things you no longer need, you can convert that extra cash into reliable home appliances and tech. For example, purchase or upgrade items like vacuums, lawn mowers, power washers, drills and more to help take your spring cleaning to the next level. You can make your money go further by choosing certified refurbished prod-

ucts; some marketplaces like eBay offer inventory that has been professionally inspected by the manufacturer, or a manufacturer-approved vendor, to look, feel and work like new.

Commit to revisiting regularly. It's easy to let clutter and disorganization slide when you get busy with life's demands. Once your spring cleaning and reorganizing is complete, commit to reassessing your home on a monthly or quarterly basis so you can make small adjustments along the way, rather than face a major project every year.



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How to add shade to a deck or patio

Homeowners eagerly await the arrival of the warm weather so they can cast off the remnants of cabin fever and bask in the sunshine. However, as summer nears its dog days, the same sun homeowners once coveted can contribute to uncomfortable conditions in outdoor entertaining spaces.

Meteorologists at WHAS11 in Kentucky took to their neighborhoods in July 2020 to test just how hot surfaces can get in the sun during peak daytime temperatures.

Concrete sitting in the sun almost all day reached a temperature of 134.7 F, while the same concrete in the shade clocked in at just under 80 F. When air temperatures are around 90 F, unshaded concrete and asphalt can be 125 F and 140 F, respectively. While wood decking may not be as hot as asphalt and concrete, it still can get steamy underfoot.

Homeowners who want to be able to enjoy their outdoor spaces in an array of temperatures can think

ADD SHADE FROM PAGE 6

about investing in shade solutions. Sun-blocking ideas like awnings, shade trees and large umbrellas can help people enjoy their yards all day long.

- **Canopy:** A patio canopy is typically a freestanding unit that can be installed over a patio or a deck. Some people prefer to bolt it down so it will not be knocked over in windy conditions. The fabric on the canopy can be removed during the offseason, helping to improve its longevity.

- **Awning:** Awnings may be stationary or retractable. Many are installed directly onto a home and can cast shade on specific areas of outdoor entertaining spaces.

- **Shade sail:** Similar to an awning but a bit less structurally rigid, shade sails are large pieces of triangular fabric installed over areas of a patio, pool or landscape, according to The Family Handyman. Shade sails are light and airy and can be customized.

- **Trees:** A natural way to increase shade in a yard is to plant more shade trees. If sun glare is an issue all year long, and it's not just the heat of the sun that is troublesome, think about planting evergreen trees. Deciduous cousins will drop



their leaves in fall and only be effective during the warm weather.

- **Patio umbrellas:** Many umbrellas start at around \$25. Umbrellas can be paired with patio tables, while stationary cantilever umbrellas sit out of the way on their own heavy-duty stands. A cantilever umbrella tends to provide more shade than patio table umbrellas.

- **Curtains:** Homeowners can block sunlight outdoors the way they do inside, offers MSN. Hang curtains from the sides of canopies or between posts on a deck to provide shade and cozy spaces.

Shade is in high demand when the sun is hot. Options abound for making outdoor areas more comfortable.

WIFI FROM PAGE 2

vary, but they typically cost between \$10 and \$15 per month. Consumers will save money in the long run by buying their own router rather than renting one from their ISP. When buying their own routers, consumers also can pick from a host of options, including routers with strong performance ratings that may contribute to better WiFi performance.

- **Set up automatic firmware updates.** It's easy to forget a router after it's been plugged in and internet service starts working. However, manufacturers routinely issue firmware updates to improve router performance. Turning on automatic updates may improve WiFi performance, and such updates also can provide a host of additional benefits, including added security measures.

- **Relocate the router.** PCMag.com notes that the location of the router can affect WiFi performance. If possible, locate the router in the center of the home so it can easily reach all parts of the house. Locating wireless routers away from walls and other obstructions also may improve performance.

- **Switch frequencies.** Switching frequencies can help wireless consumers whose service might be adversely affected by congestion. Con-



THERE'S AN ASSORTMENT OF STRATEGIES THAT CONSUMERS CAN TRY TO IMPROVE THE WI-FI IN THEIR HOMES.

sumer Reports notes that wireless congestion can affect WiFi performance in apartment buildings and densely populated neighborhoods. In such instances, consumers can check their routers to see if they're running on the 2.4 GHz frequency band. If so, switching them to the 5 GHz band, which has more channels and is likely to be less congested, may improve WiFi performance.

Slow and/or interrupted WiFi signals can be very frustrating. Thankfully, various strategies can help consumers quickly remedy such issues.



SHOP SMARTER

Considering refurbished products for your shopping list can expand your options and make it easier to purchase top-of-the-line brands without going over budget. From tech and small kitchen appliances to outdoor power equipment, you can discover a breadth of items often in like-new condition.

Shop for Multi-Purpose Items: When upgrading your arsenal of gadgets, tools and small appliances, look for items that can serve multiple purposes. For example, many vacuums can transform into steamers or include mop attachments and some pressure cookers can also be used as air fryers.

Feel Confident in Your Purchase: Sometimes upgrading means investing in a premium product you can count on to last longer than entry-level models. With eBay's Certified Refurbished program, you can find popular, professionally inspected name brands at up to 50% off, all of which are backed by industry-leading two-year warranties for peace of mind.

Keep Sustainability in Mind: Keeping functionality in mind and buying like-new items not only saves you money now and in the future but can also help protect the planet by extending the life of products and reducing unnecessary waste.

Learn more about buying refurbished at [eBay.com/CertifiedRefurbishedHub](https://www.ebay.com/CertifiedRefurbishedHub).



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