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Craftsman home renovation ideas

Craftsman homes trace their roots to the late 19th century. An architectural style inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement that flourished in Europe and North America for roughly 40 years between 1880 and 1920, the American Craftsman home has endured into the 21st century thanks to its beauty and the unique feel its homes inspire.

Many craftsman homes were built nearly a century ago if not even earlier. That means these homes may be in need of some renovations that make them more functional in modern times without sacrificing their historic beauty.

- **Siding:** Craftsman homes are instantly recognizable from the street. Homeowners who want to maintain that authentic craftsman feel must carefully consider their choice of material when replacing the siding on their homes. The siding manufacturer Allura notes that fiber cement siding can be a great option for homeowners who want to replicate the original design of craftsman homes built with sported board-and-batten siding. Fiber cement siding gives the appearance of wood when installed and does not

fade quickly or require significant maintenance.

- **Exterior color:** Homeowners need not feel beholden to certain colors when replacing siding or repainting their homes' exteriors. Nautical color schemes featuring navy blue exteriors with white accents can highlight features that are unique to craftsman homes, but more understated colors and tones can work just as well.

- **Porches:** An expansive, welcoming front porch that makes for the perfect place to relax and read when the outdoors beckons is a telltale feature of craftsman homes. Furniture options abound when homeowners are looking to upgrade the living spaces just outside the front door of their craftsman homes. Adirondack chairs can make a porch a relaxing place to enjoy a morning coffee or post-dinner digestif, while wicker furniture can help homeowners establish a relaxing vibe for summer. A porch swing or hammock can make that relaxing vibe resonate even more.

- **Real wood cabinets:** Cabinets are a popular avenue homeowners look to when they want to give their kitchens a new look without breaking the bank. When upgrading cabinets in a craftsman home, the home renovation experts at HGTV note that craftsman-style kitchen cabinets often feature straight lines and minimal ornamentation. Cabinets are typically made from heavy woods like quartersawn oak, hickory, cherry, or maple. HGTV notes that updating the cabinets in a craftsman home often requires custom cabinet-makers, so the project may be more expensive than it would be if

replacing the cabinets in a different style of home.

Craftsman homes are instantly recognizable thanks to many of their unique features. There are various ways to renovate craftsman homes yet still maintain their authentic feel.



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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 recom-

mends 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 farmhouse 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.



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Safety first when clearing land

New homeowners often see their homes as blank canvases. Looking at a home as a blank canvas is typically associated with its interior, but it also can apply to landscaping.

Homes are empty of furniture and decorative items like photos and art on the walls when new homeowners move in. That makes it easy to see the interior of a home as a blank canvas. But that's not always so easy in the garden or the yard, where brush, overgrown plants or trees and other eyesores might have been left behind by the previous owners. A landscape must be cleared out before it can be seen as a blank canvas. Though clearing land may seem like a straightforward process, no one knows what lies beneath overgrowth or neglected areas of a yard or garden. Do-it-yourselfers can typically clear land on their own, but some safe-

ty strategies should be kept in mind to ensure the process goes smoothly.

- Wear appropriate PPE. Personal protective equipment should be worn when clearing land. The appropriate PPE when clearing land includes attire and other gear that many homeowners likely already have on hand. A long-sleeve shirt, puncture proof pants and gloves and slip-resistant work boots should be worn when clearing land. Homeowners also may want to invest in a hard hat if they will be cutting branches off of trees or cutting trees down. A face shield also may be a good bet depending on the scale and potential dangers of the project.

- Contact your utility company. Overhead power and telephone lines are visible to the naked eye, and homeowners should be conscious of those lines as they cut any high

branches. But underground lines are not visible, and that can make clearing land dangerous. Homeowners are urged to contact their utility companies before they begin to clear any land so they can determine if any underground lines are beneath areas they intend to clear out.

- Get a lay of the land. Carefully inspect the area to be cleared prior to starting the project. Inspections can reveal the density of any vegetation that may need to be removed and reveal if there are any harmful plants like poison ivy growing. Many DIYers can remove small trees on their own, but a professional tree service may be necessary for large trees or those located close to the house. Homeowners won't want to cut down a tree, even a small one, if it can potentially fall onto the house. In addition, homeowners who are unfamiliar with chippers or stump grinders may be better off hiring a tree service to clear trees.

- Don't go it alone. No one should clear land alone. Even small projects are best tackled by at least

two people. Should someone get injured during the project, the presence of another person ensures someone can immediately call for help. In addition, clearing land can be more difficult than it appears, and having at least two people to pull old shrubs or carry tree branches reduces the risk of injury.

Safety should be the utmost priority as homeowners prepare to clear land on their properties.



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How to help houseplants survive a long winter

As fall gradually gives way to winter, gardeners expend ample energy preparing their flowers and plants for the months ahead. Plants may be pruned to increase the likelihood that they will return in full bloom come the spring, while lawns may be aerated so cool-season grasses can get the nutrients, water and oxygen they need when the temperatures dip. But what about houseplants?

Do indoor houseplants need the same type of pre-winter TLC that outdoor plants need before winter arrives?

As the seasons change, so, too, do the conditions outside. And those conditions affect indoor houseplants much like they do lawns, gardens and trees. So it's vital that people with houseplants do not overlook the need to keep houseplants going strong as fall gives way to winter.

Location

Hours of daylight shorten in winter, which means some houseplants won't get as much sun as they were accustomed to over the last several months. That means plants may need to be relocated closer to windows where they can make the most of each day's sunlight. However, it's important that there's ample distance between the plant and the window, especially when winter temperatures get especially cold. If the plants are too close to a window on cold days, they could freeze. Keep them close enough to the windows to get ample sunlight but far enough away so they don't get too cold. In addition, keep plants away from drafty windows as well as heating vents, as extreme tempera-

tures are not conducive to healthy houseplants.

Watering

Watering needs also may change when the temperatures drop. The indoor plant experts at Pistils Nursery in Oregon note that all houseplants need less water in winter. In fact, overwatering in winter can be especially harmful to indoor plants. Plant owners can try decreasing the frequency of their watering by half each winter and see how the plants respond.

Cleaning

Cleaning plants is another way to help them survive a long winter. Dust settles in many homes in winter, when windows tend to remain closed for months on end and fresh air isn't circulating around the house as much as it is in spring and summer. Pistil's Nursery notes that dust inhibits a plant's ability to photosynthesize, thus compromising its ability to make it through a winter unscathed. Better Homes & Gardens recommends using a soft-bristle paintbrush, a toothbrush or pipe cleaner to remove dust from African violets and other fuzzy-leaved plants. Gently washing plants with a paper

towel or cloth that's been moistened with water can remove the dust. Oils and polishes should not be used to make leaves shine, as these substances can block pores on the plant.

Houseplants may need some extra attention in winter as hours of daylight dwindle and indoor conditions make it hard for plants to survive.



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Pre-winter perennial pruning pointers

Foliage and football might be two things people instantly associate with fall, but there's more to this beloved season than brightly colored leaves and action on the gridiron.

Gardeners know that spring is an ideal time to plan and plant their favorite flowers and most flavorful fruits and vegetables. However, seasoned gardeners know that gardening is a year-round commitment. Pruning is one of the keys to keeping perennials coming back for years to come, and fall is an ideal time to take on this important task.

Pruning perennials in the fall is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor. According to the Old Farmer's Almanac, some perennials can be cut down after the first killing frost, while others can be left to benefit wildlife, including birds and insects. Understanding pruning and when to do it this fall can help gardeners lay a strong foundation for their gardens that will benefit them next spring.

Why should some perennials be pruned?

The College of Agricultural Sciences at Pennsylvania State University notes that perennials that have become diseased or infested with insects are pruned to prevent those problems from resurfacing in the spring. In addition, according to the Old Farmer's Almanac, many herbaceous perennials have old foliage and dying stems after several hard frosts. If dead foliage or dying stems aren't pruned, disease, slugs and other pests can overwinter in the plants. Cutting these plants down to the ground after several hard frosts allows the base of the plant to remain dormant over the winter but makes the plant less hospitable to disease and insects.

Which perennials should I prune?

The first step to pruning perennials is to recognize which need to be pruned and which can be left intact for the winter. The Old Farmer's Almanac notes that bee balm and phlox are prone to powdery mildew and should be cut back once they're gone. Hostas harbor slug eggs, so they, too, should be

pruned after a hard frost. Hosta leaves that have fallen on the ground should be removed as well. There's no need to cut back certain perennials if they're healthy. For example, hardy geraniums do not require pruning in the fall, and Penn State Extension notes that hardy perennials like garden mums are more likely to survive a cold winter if they're left intact. That's because the tops of such plants will collect leaves and snow for insulation and moisture over the course of winter. Gardeners who are unsure about fall pruning can speak with their local gardening center for additional advice regarding which plants to cut back before winter.

When to prune perennials

Gardeners need not rush to prune perennials in the fall. Diseased or infested plants can be pruned at the first sight of disease or infestation, but gardeners can wait until sev-

eral hard frosts have occurred before they prune healthy perennials. In gardening parlance, a hard frost refers to when temperatures drop below 28 F. Several hard frosts kill the uppermost growth of most perennials, making this an ideal time to prune them.

Pruning perennials in fall can be the first step toward creating an awe-inspiring spring garden.



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Plants that can keep bugs away from outdoor living spaces

Outdoor living spaces have become increasingly popular among homeowners in recent years, and that popularity grew even more over the last year. As social distancing guidelines issued in response to the COVID-19 pandemic encouraged people to stay home as much as possible, a desire for accessible, enjoyable outdoor spaces grew. A 2020 study of Google trends data from the home decor retailer Living Spaces found that searches for items such as patio daybeds and small-space outdoor furniture grew by more than 200 percent between the early part of 2020 and the middle of the year.

If outdoor living spaces are in demand, so, too, are ways to make those spaces as comfortable as possible. There's much homeowners can do to make the most of their outdoor spaces, but they might feel helpless against some unwanted, often relentless guests: insects. Insects can turn relaxing days on the patio into wars of attrition with hungry bugs like mosquitoes. Thankfully, there are ways to fight back against insects while simultaneously adding a little aesthetic appeal to the backyard. The Farmer's Almanac notes that planting these insect-repelling plants around the patio or backyard can help homeowners successfully repel unwanted insects, including mosquitoes.

- **Lavender:** Lavender is a fragrant plant that adds a pop of purple and has been known

to repel mosquitoes, fleas, flies, and moths.

- **Basil:** Basil can provide the best of both worlds, as it's been found to repel flies and moths and also makes for a tasty addition to pasta sauces and other dishes.

- **Thyme:** Also a valuable ingredient to keep in the kitchen, thyme can help keep hungry mosquitoes at bay.

- **Mint:** The Farmer's Almanac warns that it's easy to overplant mint, so homeowners should only plant with care and make a concerted effort to prevent overgrowth. Also great in the kitchen, mint has long been considered an effective mosquito repellent.

- **Alliums:** Like lavender, alliums can add a burst of purple to your patio. And though they aren't believed to repel mosquitoes, alliums have been found to be helpful against cabbage worms, aphids, carrot flies, and slugs.

- **Chrysanthemums:** If ants are drawing homeowners' ire, chrysanthemums may do the trick. These eye-catching flowers also are believed to repel fleas and roaches, among other insects.

- **Marigolds:** The scent of this awe-inspiring plant is known to repel mosquitoes and other pests. Marigolds also attract insects like ladybugs that are known to consume aphids, which are minute bugs that reproduce rapidly and feed by sucking sap from plants.

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Popular renovation projects during the pandemic

Spending so much time at home during the pandemic led many homeowners to spruce up their homes. According to HomeAdvisor's 2021 State of Home Spending report, spending on home improvements increased by an average of \$745 per household in 2020.

In the face of travel restrictions and social distancing guidelines, many homeowners pivoted in 2020 and spent money they initially intended to use for vacations on home improvements. Though many such projects required the services of a professional contractor, others, including the most popular project among the 5,000 homeowners who participated in the HomeAdvisor report, were do-it-yourself endeavors. That not only gave homeowners' homes a new look, but also gave them something to do during quarantine. The following are the five most popular home improvement projects of 2020 according to the HomeAdvisor report.

1. Interior painting: Just under 35 percent of participants reported taking on an interior painting project in 2020. Interior painting projects can be perfect for DIYers, but homeowners also can trust this task to skilled professionals.

2. Bathroom renovations: Real estate professionals routinely report how much prospective buyers love updated bathrooms, so it's no surprise that roughly 31 percent of homeowners who took part in the HomeAdvisor report indicated they renovated their bathrooms in 2020.

3. Flooring: Floors took on a lot of extra traffic during the pandemic, so it shouldn't be too surprising that flooring projects were popular in 2020. More than one-fourth of participants told HomeAdvisor their homes were updated with a new floor during the pandemic.

4. Landscaping: With nowhere else to go to escape the daily grind in 2020, many homeowners took to their yards. Twenty-four percent of those homeowners reported making their backyard retreats more appealing by repairing or upgrading the landscaping outside their homes. In fact, the average homeowner reported completing 3.4 landscaping projects in 2020.

5. Kitchen: Another project that makes sense given the circumstances, kitchen renovations were the fifth most popular home improvement project in 2020. Restaurant closures and social distancing guidelines led many people to dine in more often than they

otherwise would, and just under 23 percent of homeowners reported renovating their kitchens in 2020.

As the world gradually emerges from the pandemic, many homeowners who caught the renovation bug while in quarantine also will be emerging with what feels like an entirely new home.



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How to pick paint for home interiors

Many components combine to define a home's interior. Some homeowners may be partial to certain styles, such as ultra modern or farmhouse, while others may opt for a more traditional look that cannot necessarily be categorized as one style or another. Though many homeowners may spend considerable time and devote a lot of energy to making their home embody a certain style, those who aren't willing to commit to a particular look can lean on one component to make a stylish statement all their own: paint.

Color can be a part of every homeowner's design arsenal. Bold colors can be used to create a stunning accent wall, while homes with open concepts often utilize color to define rooms. Homeowners who want to revitalize their home interiors can do so with paint, and this approach doesn't require homeowners to commit to a whole new design style.

Though paint may seem simple to novices, homeowners who have painted home interiors in the past recognize how complicated the process of picking paint can be. Paint retailers have a seemingly endless

swatch of paint colors to choose from, and before long homeowners heads may be spinning as they try to narrow down their options. The following tips can help homeowners pick the perfect paint for their home interiors.

- Take stock, and photographs, of your current furnishings. Many interior designers rely on a simple technique when recommending color schemes to their clients. Choose a standout color from existing furnishings, such as the dominant color from a patterned decorative pillow or piece of furniture, and then look for the same shade to paint the walls. A photograph of the item can be handy when visiting the paint store.

- Lighten colors as you go up. The home renovation and design experts at HGTV recommend picking darker color values for the floor, medium color values for the walls and light values for the ceiling. This approach mimics the look of the great outdoors, where the ground tends to be darker than the trees, and the trees are darker than the blue sky.

- Utilize paint to create the vibe you want. The home renovation experts at This

Old House note that colors evoke an emotional response. Cool colors like blue and green give off a relaxing vibe, which makes them ideal for bedrooms and bathrooms. Red is an intense color that can up the energy ante in any room, which can make it an option for homeowners who want to spark debate around their dinner tables.

- Give personal preference its place at the table. Though interior designers may have years of experience picking paint colors for a home and researchers may have determined how certain colors can be utilized to create a desired ambiance in a given room, ultimately homeowners are the ones who will be living in the home. So it's important that homeowners pick colors they like for their home interiors.

Paint is an inexpensive way to transform a room. Homeowners can rely on a combination of color strategies and their personal preferences as they try to decide which colors they want on their interior walls.



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Should I DIY?: 3 questions to determine if it's best to renovate on your own

A do-it-yourself mentality has taken hold in millions of households across the globe. Popular television channels like HGTV and DIY Network as well as accessible home improvement content on apps like YouTube has inspired many homeowners to tackle renovation projects around their homes. Taking such initiative is admirable, though it also can prove costly if homeowners end up biting off more than they can chew.

Home improvement videos and television shows have a tendency to oversimplify renovation projects, potentially giving homeowners a false sense of confidence in their DIY abilities. A concerted effort on the part of homeowners to determine if it's best to renovate on their own or hire a professional should always be the first step of any renovation project. No two homeowners are the same, but the following three questions can help homeowners determine if DIY is their best option.

1. Can I afford to DIY?

Professional home improvement projects are costly for a variety of reasons. Materials can be costly, but so are the tools and

labor necessary to do the job right. Homeowners may not have the tools necessary to complete complicated projects. Specialty tools can be expensive to purchase or even rent, and the cost of acquiring such tools should be included in any DIY project cost estimates. Labor also factors heavily into professional projects, and for good reason. Talented contractors have unique skills that have been developed and perfected over many years. Those skills can ensure projects are completed quickly and correctly. Labor may seem costly, but such costs may ultimately prove to be a bargain compared to the cost of fixing DIY mistakes. Projects that are minor in scope and don't require the use of potentially costly specialty tools may be better suited for weekend warriors than more complicated renovations.

2. Do I have the time?

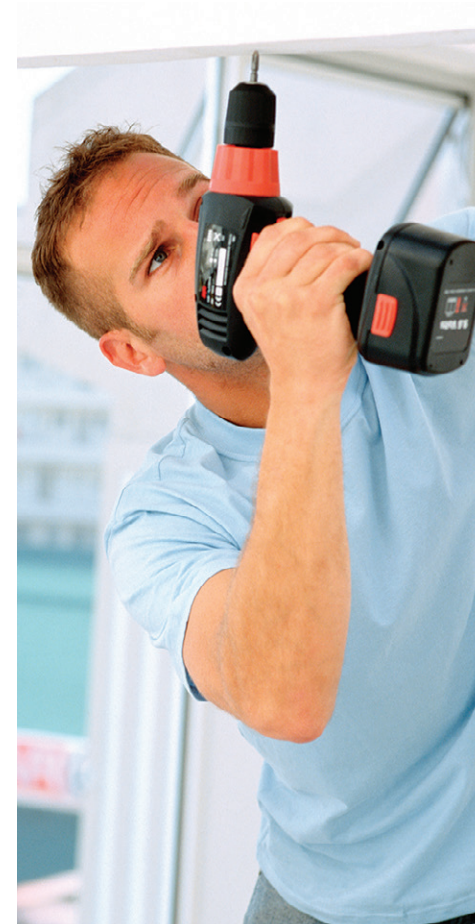
Homeowners must determine how much time they have to complete a project before deciding to do it themselves. No one wants to spend months staring at an unfinished renovation project. Homeowners who are already pressed for time may not be able to complete projects in a timely fashion,

which can make homes less comfortable and even less safe.

3. Can I pull this off?

DIY projects can instill homeowners with a sense of pride in their homes, but it's imperative that homeowners considering the DIY option conduct an honest assessment of their skills. A lack of renovation experience does not necessarily mean a homeowner cannot successfully complete a DIY project. But in such instances, it may be best to start with small, straightforward projects and then gradually move up to bigger, more complicated projects as skills are fine tuned. And homeowners who have never been at their best with a hammer in hand should not be ashamed to leave the work to the professionals.

Television shows and online tutorials can make renovations appear easier than they actually are. Homeowners considering DIY renovations can ask themselves a handful of questions to determine if they're ready for the challenge of renovating their homes on their own.





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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 features can lend a classic vibe to a space. However, free-

standing 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 aes-

thetic 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.



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