

Fall HOME IMPROVEMENT

2024



SEPTEMBER 2024

A Special Supplement to

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How to make a home more cozy

The meaning of the term “cozy” varies as it pertains to home decor. For some, cozy may mean intimate spaces with lots of quilts and throws. For others, cozy could indicate bright and airy spaces enhanced by plenty of fresh foliage.

Regardless of how they define cozy, homeowners typically want their homes to be inviting and comfortable. With that in mind, the following are some ways to impart a cozy vibe to any living space.

- Make use of a fireplace. Flames lapping wood (or faux wood in the event of gas-powered fireplaces) can put anyone in a tranquil state of mind. Fireplaces add instant ambiance and make great places for people to congregate and engage in conversation. During warmer months when the fire isn't blazing, decorative candles can be lit to mimic the same feel.

- Add texture in the design. Texture can be anything from a raised pattern on wallpaper to a knotty area rug to a mosaic piece of artwork. A home with texture tends to create cozier impressions than one with all sleek and smooth surfaces.

- Enjoy a soft rug. Although many design experts say hardwood floors or laminate options are easier for allergies and keeping a home clean, a soft rug underfoot can be wel-

coming. Rather than wall-to-wall carpeting, place area rugs in spots that can use some cozying up, such as beneath beds and even under the dining table.

- Light candles. The warm, flickering light of candles adds cozy vibes in spades. According to The Spruce and Paula Boston, a visual merchandiser for Festive Lights, candles can be used throughout a home to create instant atmosphere. Exercise caution with candles and fully extinguish them before retiring for the evening.

- Update bedding for the season. Crisp and light cotton and linen are cozy materials when the weather is warm. But when the temperature starts to dip, flannel or jersey bedding makes a bed that much more inviting, says Real Simple.

- Invest in lots of pillows. Pillows can instantly make a spot more cozy, whether it's the living room sofa or an outdoor lounging nook. Look for materials that are durable for the space in which they're being used.

- Think about warm lighting. The transition from incandescent light bulbs to halogen and LED is beneficial from an environmental standpoint. However, LEDs illuminate with a more stark, blue light that can seem clinical in home spaces. Look for bulbs where the “temperature” can be customized. The more



the color spectrum leans toward warm light, the more cozy a space will feel. This can be enhanced by putting some lights on dimmer switches, and toning down the brightness as needed.

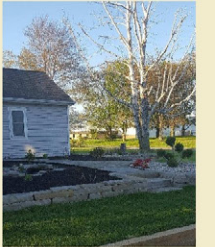
- Install a bookshelf. Even for those who are strict devotees of e-readers, a shelf full of actual books interspersed with some well-

placed knickknacks can make a room feel more cozy. Books add texture, the feel of hal- lowed halls and libraries, and visual appeal.

Making a home more cozy doesn't have to be complicated. A few easy modifications can improve interior spaces.



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How to prepare a fireplace for the winter

As hours of daylight shorten and fall gives way to winter, thoughts shift from fall foliage to spending time cuddling under warm blankets and being cozy indoors. A fireplace can improve the ambiance of any room and help to create a warm and welcoming gathering spot.

Home fireplaces typically are wood-burning or gas. Though maintenance for these fireplaces differs, certain preparatory steps must be taken to prepare a fireplace for winter.

Clear the clutter

Items can accumulate in areas that are not in use, and a fireplace is no exception. Take a few hours to remove any belongings from in front of the fireplace and clean the mantle thoroughly.

Have the chimney cleaned

Hire a professional chimney cleaning company to inspect the chimney and clean it thoroughly before winter. According to BobVila.com, a chimney should be cleaned once a year, or after about every 80 fires. The National Fire Protection Association says failure to properly clean chimneys is one of the leading contributors to home fires. That's due to creosote, a highly flam-

mable residue that builds up in the flue that lines the chimney.

Inspect the interior

The interior of a wood-burning fireplace is likely lined with fire bricks. Check for cracks and loose joints. Hire a professional mason to make any repairs, as special materials are needed to withstand the heat of fires.

Install a chimney cap and screen

According to Family Handyman, a chimney cap is a protective covering that goes over the top of the chimney. It is made of steel or copper mesh with a cap on top. This protects the chimney from rain and downdrafts and keeps animals and debris from getting into the chimney.

Prune overhanging branches

If there are trees close to the home and the chimney, cut them back, as they can be a fire hazard. Branches and leaves also can restrict the proper draft of the chimney.

Assess the outdoor vent

Gas fireplaces typically emit exhaust through a vent in the home. Remove any blockages from the vent, including leaves, cobwebs and debris.

Check glass or other coverings

The glass or face of the fireplace helps regulate carbon monoxide exposure and protects people from the flames. Be sure the glass covering is intact.

Clean ceramic logs

Gas fireplaces use ceramic logs, rocks or beads that can become dusty. Clean them prior to use. Dirty ceramic logs can be a fire hazard and produce an unpleasant burning smell.

Check the blower and pilot

If the fireplace has an electric blower, clean and dust it so it doesn't become clogged. Inspect the pilot light for any wear and tear that includes wiring or structural issues.



It takes several steps to prepare fireplaces for cold weather seasons when they're most likely to be used with frequency. Assess the outdoor vent

Gas fireplaces typically emit exhaust through a vent in the home. Remove any blockages from the vent, including leaves, cobwebs and debris.



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What to know about kitchen countertop materials

Kitchens are the busiest rooms in most homes. Kitchens have become more than just places to prepare meals, with many functioning as gathering spaces and even go-to dining spots in homes that do not feature formal dining rooms.

So much time spent in the kitchen makes it worthwhile to invest in these popular spaces. Kitchen renovations are high on many homeowners' to-do lists, and there's many decisions to make once they commit to redoing the room. When renovating a kitchen, homeowners will have to choose which countertop material they want to install, and the following rundown of popular options can help simplify that decision.

Quartz

Quartz is considered a low-maintenance and durable countertop material. The home improvement experts at This Old House note that quartz countertops are typically 94 percent ground quartz and now come with an honed, sandblasted or embossed treatment, which makes them appealing to homeowners with varying ideas on the ideal look of a kitchen countertop. Quartz can crack if it's not handled properly, and edges and corners can

chip over time. Rounded edges can minimize the risk of chipping. Costs vary by location and product availability, but quartz typically costs about the same as natural stone.

Granite

Consumer Reports notes that no two slabs of granite are the same, and that uniqueness has long appealed to homeowners. Tests run by Consumer Reports found that heat, cuts and scratches did not harm granite, though this material, like quartz, can crack around edges and corners. Granite is a durable material that, if properly maintained, can last several decades. Granite also is nonporous, which makes it resistant to bacteria.

Laminate

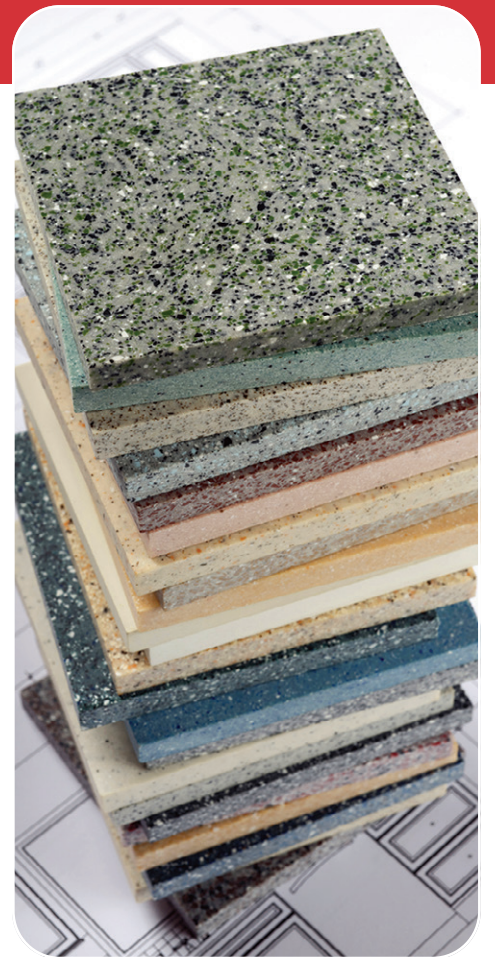
Laminate countertops appeal to budget-friendly homeowners and Consumer Reports notes that they're easy to install. Home Depot also notes that laminate countertops come in a wide range of colors, textures and designs. Laminate countertops also are durable, which helps budget-conscious homeowners stretch their dollars even further. Laminate countertops are easily maintained, though it's also easy to permanently damage them with knives, so Consumer Reports recommends

always using a cutting board when preparing meals on laminate.

Butcher Block

Butcher block countertops are among the more unique options homeowners may consider. Sometimes referred to as "wood countertops," butcher block countertops are made from wooden strips that are fused together. The home improvement experts at BobVila.com note that butcher block is among the more affordable materials, but the final cost will be dictated by location and availability. BobVila.com notes that butcher block countertops are highly sensitive to liquid, so exposure to moisture should be limited. Sealing butcher block countertops immediately after installation can help protect against bacteria and warping. Though butcher blocks can be high maintenance, many homeowners find the unique look is well worth the extra elbow grease.

Kitchen countertops can define how the room looks, and homeowners have many options to choose from when designing a new kitchen.



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How homeowners can turn attics into livable spaces

Houses typically feature various areas that are traditionally designed for storage, such as garages, basements and attics. However, with some renovation, these spaces can be transformed into livable areas.

Homeowners who would like to convert attics into livable spaces need to take certain things into consideration before

starting an improvement project. While the attic may seem like it has plenty of room and is structurally sound enough to walk in, that's not necessarily so. To be converted into usable living space, an attic must be brought up to the standards of modern building codes, according to the design experts at Board & Vellum. Retrofitting beams and insulation can

eat up available space in an attic. Thus, it is best to consult an expert to see if an attic can be converted.

Furthermore, an attic that was not initially designed as a room when the house was built can add extra "load" upstairs if it is converted. That could present certain structural problems. That means a structural engineer also must be consulted to see if adding beams, flooring and drywall will necessitate other changes elsewhere in the home to accommodate the extra load.

In order to have a functional attic room, building codes will dictate that it needs to be accessible by a full-size staircase. Also, it will need to have another exit in case of an emergency so that will likely be an accessible window, according to the home information site The Fill. Homeowners' budgets and renovation plans will need to factor into these considerations. Homeowners also are advised to check local permits to determine what else may be required to go forward. It is best to follow the rules. Lack of a permit for work can affect the ability to sell a home down the line.

Individuals also should plan for heating and cooling upgrades as the home will need

to have ductwork installed in the attic, or at the least, a stand-alone heating and cooling unit. As heat rises, it can get quite warm in an attic, so ventilation and comfort should be considered. The attic will need to be wired for electricity for lighting and other needs. Air sealing and additional insulation can the attic space more comfortable as well. Consult with a qualified electrician and an HVAC technician and have an energy audit done to discuss needs.

Attic renovations can give homeowners more space in their homes, which can be used as offices, bedrooms or cozy corners. This is no small undertaking and all of the right steps need to be followed to ensure a legal, safe and successful renovation.



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Design ideas that can create a peaceful feel

Homes are often characterized as sanctuaries for their residents. A calm place to come home to after a busy day at work or school is often just what people need to unwind.

Certain design components can help individuals turn their homes into relaxing respites from the daily grind. With that goal in mind, individuals can consider these ideas to create a peaceful feel inside their homes.

- Paint with neutral colors. Wall colors can define the mood in a given room, and neutral colors have long been linked to a calming effect. Subtle shades like beige, taupe and light gray are known to create a relaxed vibe in a room, so these colors can be a go-to choice. Some people consider neutral colors a tad boring, so individuals concerned by that impression can limit neutral colors to rooms designated as sanctuaries, like a reading room, a spa bathroom or a bedroom.

- Employ natural light. Natural light also can help to establish a serene setting at home. Large windows that let daylight in can improve anyone's mood. A 2022 study from researchers at the University of Chile in Santiago found that the more natural light that entered a home, the happier people said they

felt. Study authors even noted that the largest uptick in well-being was found among participants who lived in homes in which windows covered at least 40 percent of the dwelling's wall space. Opening blinds or curtains and, if possible, installing larger windows in a home can help to establish the relaxing, happy vibe individuals are aiming for.

- Utilize plants to set a peaceful tone. The United Kingdom-based Royal Horticultural Society notes that research has found that indoor plants can benefit psychological well-being. The RHS notes that improved mood and reduced stress levels are two benefits that indoor plants can provide. A good mood and less stress can help individuals establish the peaceful feel they're aiming for at home.

- Keep devices out of bedrooms. Watching television while lying in bed, scanning a smartphone before turning off a nightstand light and retiring for the night, or reading an e-reader instead of a print book at night can transform a bedroom from a serene setting into one that's overrun with stimuli. According to the Sleep Foundation, technology stimulates the mind, which can make it harder to

fall asleep. In addition, blue light emitted by devices disrupts the natural production of melatonin, a hormone that makes it easier to fall asleep. That can negate any efforts individuals have undertaken to make their bedrooms as peaceful as possible. Designate bedrooms in the house as technology-free zones to ensure the peaceful vibe continues uninterrupted until everyone goes to bed.

A peaceful home makes for the perfect respite at the end of a busy day. Various design choices can help individuals establish a serene vibe throughout their homes.



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Did you know?

Homeowners with an eye on home improvement projects should know that kitchens and bathrooms tend to be the most costly rooms to renovate. An affiliate of the National Kitchen and Bath Association told Architectural Digest in 2023 that kitchens and bathrooms require the most labor-intensive renovations, which contributes significantly to the high costs of such projects. Labor is indeed a significant cost when renovating a home, as the Construction Labor Market Analyzer indicates labor cost percentages in construction are between 20 and 40 percent of the total budget of a given project. The final

cost of any renovation project will depend on a host of variables unique to each home, including the square footage of the room being remodeled and the materials homeowners choose. However, homeowners looking for less costly renovations may want to consider revamping their dining rooms and closets, each of which are projects that can make a difference and tend to require a less significant financial commitment than projects like kitchen and bath remodels.



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FAQ about garage remodels

Homeowners tend to want to maximize all of the space they have in their homes. For some this may involve turning a garage from a utilitarian space into one that serves multiple purposes.

According to The Mortgage Reports, a home-buying and improvement resource, garage renovations can increase the value of a home and add living space. Garage remodels can create additional storage space, provide an area for a home gym or even create room for a home office. Prior to beginning a garage remodel, homeowners may have some common questions about the process.

How much does the renovation cost?

Several factors will ultimately determine the final price of a garage remodel, but HomeAdvisor says the national average for a garage remodel falls between \$6,000 and \$26,000. Most homeowners come in at around \$15,000 for a total garage conversion.

Will I recoup the investment?

A garage conversion adds value to a home if it creates new and usable living space. The firm Cottage, which pulled together a team of builders, architects and technologists, advises the average garage conversion provides an 80 percent return on investment. That ROI varies depending on location.

How can I upgrade the flooring?

Garages traditionally feature concrete floors. Although durable, concrete floors can feel damp, hard and cold underfoot. Both vinyl plank and epoxy flooring options can elevate the design and functionality of the garage.

Can I have the best of both worlds?

Sometimes a garage needs to serve many purposes. Lofting the garage means a homeowner can still park cars or utilize the lower space as a living area, all the while items are stored overhead. Some flip this design scenario and have the loft area as a bedroom or finished living space, while the lower portion remains a traditional garage area. Another thought is to finish only a portion of the garage. This works well for two- or three-car garages where there will be room to park a car and the remainder will serve another purpose.

What are other ways to improve the garage?

Installing more windows or improving on the lighting in the garage can be important. The garage improvement experts at Danley's say window installation enables people to circulate air in the garage without having to open the garage door. Improving the lighting means the garage can still be enjoyed or utilized after dark. Spread out lighting in the



garage, and use a combination of overhead and task lighting just as one would in the home itself.

How do I deter bugs or other pests from entering?

Insects often want to hunker down in garages, and they may find it easy to get inside a garage. Keeping the garage clean and organized is the best way to deter pests and to spot infestations before they become problematic, indicates Mosquito Joe pest con-

trol company. Reducing water and humidity in the space, weatherproofing at the base of the garage door and other entry spots and utilizing insect repellents to make the garage less hospitable also can decrease the risk of insect infestation.

Remodeling a garage can add value and plenty of usable space to a home. Whether a garage houses cars or hosts neighborhood game night, a garage renovation can be well worth the investment.

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How to make renovation projects go smoothly

Homeowners are spending big bucks on home renovations. According to the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University, home improvement project spending continues to increase. It's predicted to go from \$472 billion spent in 2022 to \$485 billion in 2024.

Those targeting a specific home renovation likely know there is much that goes into the process from start to finish. Patience is a requisite virtue with any remodel, as even a thoroughly conceptualized plan can encounter a few bumps along the way. Although there is no way to completely remove renovation-related obstacles, there are ways to make projects go more smoothly.

- Establish a clear plan from the beginning. Now is not the time to be on the fence about details. A vision for the renovation is essential, and should include details about layout, materials, colors, and design.

- Manage your expectations. Again, this speaks to a need for patience with a project but also involves flexibility. Being too rigid when choosing materials can require waiting for back-ordered supplies to come in. Wanting contractors to bend to your schedule can delay the project even further. Creativity and flexibility are key.

- Establish a budget. It can be easy to spend beyond one's means, especially when

issues crop up. Black House Real Estate stresses the importance of creating a budget before starting a renovation, which may involve working with a local professional to help. Houzz advises preparing for worst-case scenarios by adding anywhere from 1 percent to 20 percent to the budget. Commit to sticking to the budget no matter what comes down the pike.

- Assemble a good team. Thoroughly research all contractors who will be involved with the renovation. These include designers, architects, builders, and more. Be sure they come highly recommended and research online reviews. A good team removes some stress from the project because you'll know the work is in experienced hands.

- Prepare the space for the remodel. Any work you can do will help save on labor costs and make it easier for the team to get started on the project. Clear out clutter and personal items. Ask if it would be helpful for you to handle some demolition, whether that's pulling up old tile, removing drywall or another task.

- Have an escape hatch at the ready. Home renovations can cause upheaval to daily life, and that can mean stress on top of already chaotic schedules. If money and situation allow, plan a getaway during a



particularly tough stretch of the project so the noise, mess, and disruptions will not induce headaches. Consider spending a few nights at a hotel or a friend or relative's house to escape the constant grind of the project.

Home renovation projects add value and functionality to homes. Such undertakings can go more smoothly with some sound planning.

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A group of approximately ten people, including men and women of various ages, are standing in front of a large sign for Adams & Son, Inc. The sign features the company name in large red letters, the text 'Heating and Cooling' in a script font, and the phone number '269-927-3766'. A license plate with the number '1465' is visible on the sign. The background shows a building and several white service vans parked in a lot.

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How DIY can be bad for homeowners' bottom lines

Homeowners know it can be tempting to go the do-it-yourself (DIY) route when starting a home improvement project. Home repairs and renovations can be costly, and the notion of saving money on such projects compels many homeowners to try their hand at home improvements. However, the DIY approach can be costly as well, and if things go awry, homeowners may end up with empty pockets and unfinished projects.

Online tutorials and advertisements for home improvement retailers can make DIY seem like a snap. However, there are potential pitfalls to consider that could make the ostensibly less expensive DIY route far more detrimental to the bottom line than homeowners may recognize.

- **Permits:** Permits ensure work is done in accordance with local codes, which are designed to ensure the safety of residents and their neighbors. Licensed contractors know which permits are necessary for projects they're hired to work on, and many even procure permits for their clients (homeowners are urged to read estimates and contracts to determine who will be responsible for acquiring the appropriate permits). DIYers may not know about local permits, and therefore go ahead with projects without procuring any.

That can be harmful in the short- and long-term. In the short-term, a failure to procure the appropriate permits can make a home less safe and potentially lead to costly fines and necessitate a complete do-over of the project. In the long-term, homeowners who did not secure the appropriate permits may not be given a certificate of occupancy (CO) when putting their homes on the market, which can make it very difficult to sell the home.

- **Ancillary costs:** The ancillary costs of DIY are not often noted in online tutorials. However, such costs can dramatically increase the amount of money DIYers shell out in order to complete projects on their own. Ancillary costs include but are not limited to the price of tools and equipment; disposal fees for materials that will need to be discarded; and the cost of permits. These costs are often included in estimates provided by contractors, but they're easily overlooked by novice DIYers.

- **Repairs:** Even experienced contractors make mistakes, so DIYers, particularly novices, can anticipate making a few errors along the way. Minor mistakes may not prove too costly, but more significant mishaps can quickly negate any cost savings associated with DIY renovations. The cost to fix DIY mistakes varies



depending on the project, but a 2019 survey from Porch.com found that the average DIY mistake cost homeowners \$310 and added five and a half hours to the overall time spent to complete a project. It's worth noting the Porch.com survey was conducted prior to the dramatic increase in materials costs related to inflation in recent years. So it's reasonable to

assume that fixing DIY mistakes in 2024 could end up costing considerably more than a few hundred dollars.

Before diving in to DIY, homeowners may want to consider the real costs associated with forgoing professional experience in the potentially misplaced hopes of saving a few dollars.

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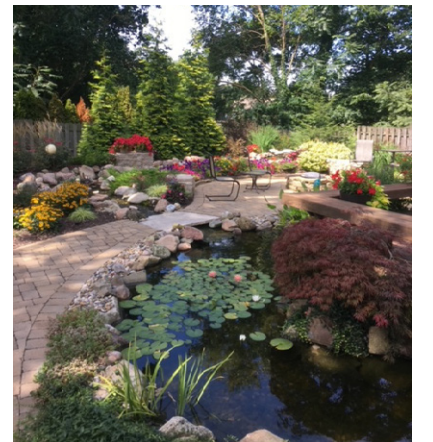


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The most popular rooms to remodel

Home improvement trends come and go. In a testament to that reality, the wildly popular open floor plan concepts that have dominated homeowners' desires over the last decade-plus could be falling out of favor, a shift that Rachel Stults of Realtor.com linked to the COVID-19 pandemic in a 2023 interview with Business Insider. Stults noted open floor plans will likely exhibit some measure of staying power, but linked the shift toward more traditional layouts to COVID lockdowns and the desire for more privacy among residents.

The shift away from open floor plans is a testament to the fleeting nature of home renovation trends. But trends still deserve a place at the table among real estate investors and homeowners who want to renovate their homes with an eye on projects that could be most appealing to prospective buyers. As homeowners balance their own preferences with those that might help them sell their homes down the road, they can

consider this list of the most popular rooms to renovate, courtesy of the "2024 U.S. Houzz & Home Study" from Houzz Research.

1. Kitchen
2. Guest bathroom
3. Primary bathroom
4. Living room
5. Guest bedroom
6. Primary bedroom
7. Laundry room
8. Closet
9. Dining room
10. Home office

When considering renovating these or other rooms, homeowners should know that Houzz researchers found that the median spend increased for most interior room upgrades compared to the previous year. However, the median cost to upgrade living rooms and home offices remained unchanged.



A promotional graphic for Sunset Coast Lawns. The logo is an oval with a sunset background and the text "Sunset Coast LAWNS" and "SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN". To the right are two blue banners: "40 YEARS EXPERIENCE" and "EXPERT LAWN CARE". At the bottom is a white box with the text "Aeration/Overseeding/Fertilization this Fall, Beautiful Lawn Next Spring!". To the right of the box is a starburst graphic with the text "GET YOUR FREE ESTIMATE (269) 925-1300 SUNSETCOASTLAWNS.COM".

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Did you know?

Planning plays an integral role in the home improvement process, and it's perhaps a more time-consuming component of renovations than homeowners realize. According to the "2024 U.S. Houzz & Home Study" from Houzz Research, homeowners spent almost twice as much time planning their kitchen renovations in 2023 as it took for the projects to be completed. The researchers behind the report found that the average time spent planning a kitchen renovation in 2023 was 9.6 months, while the building took 5.1 months. Additional projects featured a similar disparity between the time to plan and the time to build. For example, homeowners spent 8.1 months planning living room renovations, which then took an additional 4.1 months to complete. Even smaller projects like closet renovations required ample planning (6.5 months) that more than doubled the time required to complete the project (3.1 months).



At the height of the pandemic, many homeowners diverted funds earmarked for vacations and other recreational expenses into home renovations. More time at home gave homeowners ideas about which areas were in need of improvement. However, rising interest in remodeling coupled with supply chain issues and material shortages rapidly drove up costs on building materials. According to Angi's True Cost Reports, in 2020, closets, cabinetry, and additions saw the biggest price increases, going up 38 percent, 30 percent and 49 percent, respectively. Lumber, particularly softwood lumber, used throughout renovations like framing and decking, rose to record-setting prices. Not only were lumber mills slowing down production due to worker shortages,

but the housing and renovation markets also were heating up. The National Association of Homebuilders says prices on wood finally started to fall in June 2021 and have since returned to more reasonable ranges. A 2022 first quarter Producer Price Index report released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics said prices of goods used in residential construction rose 1.4 percent in March, compared to 2.2 percent in February and 4.1 percent in January. This marked an 8 percent jump in building material prices since the start of 2022. Material prices have increased 20.4 percent year over year and have risen 33 percent since the start of the pandemic, indicates the PPI.

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Elevate your backyard experience

Chances are no one wants to replicate the side effects of the global pandemic anytime soon. Despite all of the upheaval it brought to so many people's lives, there was at least one silver lining to the pandemic: a newfound appreciation for backyards and other outdoor living areas. Back in 2021, OnePoll, on behalf of the landscaping company TruGreen, found survey participants reported spending 14 hours outside every week, which marked a three-hour increase than before the pandemic hit.

Outdoor spaces like patios, decks, yards, and even front porches remain popular places for homeowners and their loved ones to congregate. Various studies have shown that those who spend more time outside in nature have lower levels of stress, anxiety and depression. Being outside is strongly associated with improved mental and physical health. Homeowners who want to maximize the potential of their outdoor spaces can look to these ideas to take backyards up a notch or two.

Establish a gathering spot

A well-designed yard has one or more dedicated gathering spots, particularly areas that enable comfort underfoot. Homeowners

can give consideration to hardscape that enables individuals to spend time outdoors without standing in soggy or buggy situations. Whether they're traditional decks, platform decks, concrete or paver patios, or areas separated from the lawn with pea gravel or another type of rock, homeowners can make the yard more useable through these spaces.

Invest in an outdoor cooking area

Grilling, smoking and even making brick oven pizzas outdoors is a major component of backyard entertaining. Outdoor kitchens can increase the convenience of prepping, cooking and serving food outdoors. Grills and other cooking gear can be built into weather-resistant counters and cabinetry.

Install a pergola

A pergola or another structure is the perfect way to add privacy to a gathering spot and create more shade and weather protection when Mother Nature does not want to cooperate.

Think beyond the summer season

When making backyard improvements, homeowners can incorporate ideas that make the yard more functional during different seasons. For example, a fire pit or outdoor fireplace can be a spot for making



summer s'mores or sipping mulled cider in the fall. An enclosed three-season room offers the opportunity to see nature and enjoy it without bearing the full brunt of chilly temperatures.

There are many ways homeowners can enhance the functionality and appeal of their backyards.

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