

# Fall home improvement



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## Clear the Bathroom Clutter

(Family Features) Due to their small size and heavy usage, bathrooms can become messy, cluttered areas for many families.

For those with smaller bathrooms, storage solutions can be even harder to find. Consider these organization tips to make your bathroom a clean and functional space for every member of the family:

**Assess the mess:** Go through all the cabinets and drawers to clear out unused makeup, health care products and medications. Make sure the items you keep are used on a regular basis. Items used sparingly should be placed in an alternate location.

**Go vertical:** Medicine cabinets can quickly get stuffed when combs, toothpaste and other toiletries are stored horizontally. Use organizer cups with suction adhesives to contain items vertically and save space.

**Hang up in style:** Old coat racks and ladders make perfect solutions for larger families to hang multiple towels. Snag an old one from a thrift store and paint it a bright hue, like red or turquoise, for a stylish bathroom accent piece.

**Avoid spills and squirts:** Hair products, such as gels, mousses or hair-sprays, can create sticky, tough-to-clean messes if liquid escapes the container in a drawer or cabinet. Avoid such mishaps by placing these types of items in plastic tubs instead of directly in the drawer or on a shelf.

**Divide and conquer:** Bathroom drawers can become unruly if not organized. To keep items separate and tidy, insert dividers, such as those used for kitchen utensils. These often come in fun materials, such as bamboo or stainless steel, to add a fresh look.

**Assign cabinets or drawers:** Try to use a large enough cabinet so each member of the family has his or her own space or drawer. This can help limit the amount of items high-maintenance family members can bring into the small area. Plus, it makes it easier for everyone to find their things.

Find more tips to transform your bathroom into a clean, organized environment, regardless of its size, at [eLivingtoday.com](http://eLivingtoday.com).

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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

SEE PAGE 7



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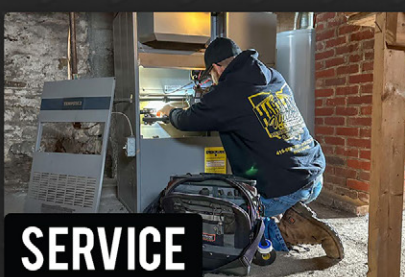
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## How to Improve Your Home's Look with Wallpaper

(Family Features)

To understand the mood of a room, look no further than its walls. Wallpaper can add instant texture and flair, and today's DIY-friendly options make it easy to create inspired spaces with little fuss.

The key to successful wall-papering is in the preparation. Clean, dry walls are a must, and any holes or cracks should be filled and sanded. To avoid paste that absorbs into porous surfaces, take time to apply a light, even coat of primer before beginning.

Choose a corner or space behind a door as your starting point. Mark your starting point using a level to draw a vertical line from floor to ceiling. Next, cut a length of wallpaper several inches longer than the height of your wall from the baseboard to ceiling.

Apply paste or activate the adhesive according to the manufacturer's directions. Be sure to fully cover or dampen the paper surface; dry spots may result in unsightly bubbles.

Begin smoothing the paper onto the wall using the vertical line as a guide. Begin at the ceiling and smooth using a brush or plastic smoothing tool. If you encounter wrinkles or bubbles, gently lift the paper and smooth, relaying the paper as you go.

With each strip, you should end with several inches above the ceiling joint and below the baseboard line. Ensure the paper has firmly adhered top to bottom then trim using a sharp blade. Smooth each seam as you go.

Continue this process around the room, aligning your paper pattern as needed.

If it isn't possible to completely match the pattern, focus on the middle third of the wall, which is most likely to be at eye level.

To maneuver corners, cut a slit in the paper overhanging the ceiling and floor. This allows the paper to lay flat for a smoother finish.

When you round back to your starting point, overlap your original strip of paper with the final strip. Make a single cut for a clean, crisp seam. Gently wipe away excess adhesive from the trim and seams.

To prevent rips and ripples, allow paper to dry completely - at least overnight - before replacing furniture and hanging artwork to complete your space.

Find more easy home improvement tips and ideas at [eLivingtoday.com](http://eLivingtoday.com).



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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.

## Health problems linked to mold exposure

Mold is a natural part of the environment and can be found growing just about anywhere that moisture and oxygen are present, advises the Environmental Protection Agency. Mold is a fungus that can be helpful because it breaks down dead organic matter. But mold growth indoors can prove problematic, not only to personal living spaces but to one's health.

When mold grows outdoors in the fresh air, exposure to it can be minimal. However, mold growing indoors can cause concentrated conditions that adversely affect indoor air quality and overall health. The Rhode Island Department of Health says exposure to a large number of mold spores may cause symptoms associated with allergies, such as runny nose, watery eyes, headache, fatigue, and sneezing, among others. Exposure to certain molds, such as *Stachybotrys* and *Aspergillus*, can cause more serious illness because of the mycotoxins these molds produce. *Aspergillo*sis is a fungal lung infection with emerging antimicrobial resistance, says the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The World Health Organization, the National Academy of Medicine and the National Toxicology Program report that occupants of damp, moldy buildings have an increased risk of respiratory problems. Repeated exposure to mold can lead to asthma, which is a chronic airway disease character-

ized by inflammation, states the National Institutes of Health. Individuals can experience shortness of breath and airway obstruction from the overproduction of mucus.

Additional conditions also can be attributed to mold. For example, valley fever is linked to the fungus *Coccidioides*, which lives in soil in some areas of the southwestern United States. Mucormycosis is a severe but rare fungal infection caused by a group of molds known as mucormycetes, says the CDC. It affects the sinuses or the lungs of people with weakened immune systems.

Though some people who come in contact with mold will not develop any adverse symptoms, it is still best to address indoor mold problems promptly. These steps can help.

- Use dehumidifiers in damp areas.
- Ventilate bathrooms, kitchens and laundry areas.
- Fix any leaks in pipes, walls or windows promptly.
- Use mold-resistant paint.
- Make sure that clothes dryers and exhaust fans vent to the outdoors rather than an attic.
- Remove mold with mold-killing products. The CDC says mold can be cleaned from hard surfaces with soap and water or a bleach solution of no more than one cup of household bleach to one gallon of water.



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## Water Leaks Can Cost You Thousands. Here's What to Know

(StatePoint)

A leaky faucet, pipe or toilet is more than just a nuisance, it can lead to unhealthy mold growth and cause costly damage to your home. Such issues are more common than you may think. In fact, two out of five homeowners have experienced water damage.

Fortunately, it's easier than ever to detect a leak. Beyond the typical warning signs, such as higher than usual water bills and unexplained damp spots on walls and ceilings, new products can help you detect

and address water leaks right away. The Flo Smart Water Monitor and Shutoff from Moen, for example, is a game-changing smart water device that offers 24/7 leak detection. If the system detects a leak, your smart water valve will automatically turn off your water to prevent flooding.

Water damage can have potentially devastating impacts. By being vigilant and relying on innovative solutions, you can protect your home, your health and your wallet.

## Don't Let a Water Leak Leave You Sinking

Water damage is more common than most people think, with 2 out of 5 homeowners having experienced it.

**\$12,500**

The average cost to fix a catastrophic water leak



**24%**

The number of all insurance claims related to water damage



WATER DAMAGE IS CLAIMED

**6x**  
MORE  
THAN FIRE



**8x**  
MORE  
THAN THEFT



**10,000**  
GALLONS

The amount of water an average home wastes each year.



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Sources: Moen 2024 Flo Awareness Survey. Data provided to Flo Technologies by Smart Water Shutoff owners. <https://www.epa.gov/watersense/fix-leak-week#>

## 3 TIPS TO PREVENT WATER DAMAGE

**INSPECT** pipes, faucets and toilets periodically

**INSULATE** pipes in attics and crawl spaces to prevent freezing

**INSTALL** smart leak detection products such as the Flo Smart Water Monitor and Shutoff

• 60% of the people who have adopted the device since its launch discovered a leak they didn't know they had within 30 days

• The Flo Smart Water Monitor and Shutoff can reduce more than 90% of annual household water waste

Don't let your wallet feel the drip!



For more information on how to prevent water damage, visit [moen.com/flo](https://moen.com/flo)

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## GARAGE REMODELS FROM PAGE 3

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 control 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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