

Spring Home IMPROVEMENT

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On-Trend Home Design



Make sensational style the focus of your home makeover

(Family Features) If a home makeover is on your horizon, it's the perfect time to take note of design trends that may help shape your project. Today's hottest looks leave plenty of room for personal interpretation, so it's easier than ever to incorporate the latest looks for a home that seamlessly blends your personality with on-trend decor and design elements.

Eye-catching detail

Understated elegance, a look that many designers have favored in the past, is losing ground to more prominent design features that make no bones about attracting attention. Colorful woodwork in the kitchen, vibrant patterns such as marble countertops,

jewel-toned textiles and bold details like nail-head patterns on furnishings are all evidence of a bolder style. The trick is to blend elements carefully and avoid competing pieces that create more of a mish-mash than a stylish statement.

Bright colors once reserved for subtle accessorizing are now fair game for larger palettes - even walls. Many experts agree: among this season's top picks are shades of green, ranging from soft, subtle tones to vibrant, luxurious hues. Similarly, much as the clothing fashion world has embraced the idea of combining patterns for a cohesive look, the same applies to home decor. Far from looking disjointed, this approach can actually make for an on-point style statement.

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SENSATIONAL STYLE FROM PAGE 2

The “fifth wall”

The least noticed aspect in every room - the ceiling - can actually be more than a surface for tired old ceiling fans. Recognizing this under-utilized element as an unexpected design space with a direct connection to the great wide open, some designers are exploring ways to extend design to that “fifth wall.”

The ceiling represents an untapped design opportunity with the power to completely transform spaces from top to bottom. Incorporating the fifth wall into your design allows you to set your sights higher than the average wall. Current interior design trends show an increased use of vibrant colors, creative wallpapers and even wood cladding on ceilings, aiming to make a statement that places the fifth wall at the center of a room’s overall decor.

Another must-have for a stunning fifth wall design is skylights, which provide a connection to nature, whether it’s a view of the sky on a sunny day, treetops, a passing rain storm or a starry

night sky. Skylights provide balanced, natural light that can make colors appear truer while enhancing interior decor. In addition, strategically introducing natural light from above can free up wall space for cabinetry or artwork and make small rooms feel larger.

“Skylights bring much more than natural light into a space. They give occupants the feeling of being outdoors with elements like a sky view, gentle breezes and the smell of fresh air,” said Ross Vandermark, national product manager for Velux America. “By fully incorporating the fifth wall into a room’s decor, homeowners can create beautifully designed rooms that engage all of the senses.”

Beyond the aesthetic benefits, special features can enhance the practical use of skylights. For example, for added flare and light control, homeowners can add blinds to Velux Skylights, choosing from more than 100 colors and styles for a pop of color on the ceiling that echoes accent colors below. Many models also offer remote control operation for



convenience in raising and lowering the blinds and even opening skylights to let in some fresh air. Learn more about making skylights the focal point of your fifth wall design at whyskylights.com.

A fresh way to shine

When it comes to metallic design elements, the ultra-sleek and modern look of stainless steel and brushed nickel is becoming quickly outdated. The warmth that bronze and brass bring to the overall aesthetic makes these popular choices in the kitchen and bathroom alike. For the latest take on this look, avoid blingy, shiny finishes and instead opt for a softer brushed look.

Considering shine from another perspective, lighting is an area where homeowners can make easy upgrades for a trendy new look. Forget bulky overhead lighting and instead give your room a boost with a series of funky task lights. Skip traditional bases and look for fun shapes and colors that lend some visual interest to the space.

Texture, texture, texture

With everything from wallpaper to

linens to artwork, texture brings added dimensions to the room. As with color and patterns, don’t be afraid to mix and match for a unique look that blends different tactile elements for a space that is as pleasing to the fingertips as it is to the eye.

If you’re not sure where to begin, start with textiles such as the window treatments or bedding. Look for options that take texture beyond a traditional cotton weave and integrate different materials or construction for a distinct look and feel. More daring choices include furnishings, such as a satiny armchair or a velvet-covered settee.

Smart enhancements

No modern home makeover is complete without the consideration of technology. Smart features and devices bring added enjoyment and convenience to nearly every aspect of modern living. Be sure to consider which electronic features can be integrated into your smart home network, so once the renovating is done you can simply flip a switch and sit back to enjoy the stunning results of your effort.

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Smart Kitchen Upgrade Ideas to Help You Save Time

(StatePoint) Most home cooks want the flexibility of preparing complicated meals with ease and convenience. However, even those with a deft culinary hand may be limited by their tools, space and appliances.

Smartly outfitting your kitchen can help you jump meal preparation hurdles, particularly if you are someone who is inclined to prepare multi-course meals. Consider space-saving appliances with versatile functionality that can do more than one job at a time. Just as you can multitask, so should your kitchen appliances.

Experts point out that it all boils down to the capabilities of your oven range. When pressed for time, you may have compromised on cooking times or temperature, leaving dishes to suffer through over- or under-cooking. Home chefs with this problem should consider upgrading to a double oven range, which would allow you to cook multiple dishes at separate temperatures. Consider the flexibility of being able to bake cookies in convection mode at 350 degrees while simultaneously broiling chicken, all in one unit.

If you do plan to make this upgrade, consider your needs and options. For example, if an electric connection is the only option for cooking, consider Verona's 36 inch fully electric double oven range, which offers cooking performance one might not expect from a fully electric range. Also available in dual fuel and all gas options, the Verona double oven ranges are fully equipped with two easily programmed multi-function ovens and provide multiple cooking modes, including baking, defrosting and broiling.

When form is just as important as function, consider ILVE's larger double oven range options in 40, 48 and 60 inch sizes. All sizes feature two multi-function ovens and added multi-tasking tools such as a rotisserie and warming drawer. Cooktop options



such as a French top and removable griddle give even more flexibility to ambitious home cooks.

With a dual oven range, you may find that a separate built-in oven becomes unnecessary, freeing up valuable cabinet space and valuable dollars for other

useful chef's tools and supplies. Additionally, upgrading your most important appliances can help you work smarter, not harder.

Love cooking? Give yourself the tools that allow you to get more done.

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Showcase your wardrobe in style with ClosetMaid SpaceCreations.

Save Time with a Dream Closet

(Family Features) If you're one of the 57 percent of women who believes having an organized closet would make finding what you want easier and faster, there's no time like the present to stop dreaming about having a beautiful and organized closet. Take charge and start the project now.

Having a disorganized closet is a problem for at least one in four women, according to a recent ClosetMaid survey. Some women (1 in 10) are even depressed when they open their closet doors. What's more, some research suggests the average American wastes as much as 55 minutes a day (roughly 12 days a year) searching for things they can't find.

Introducing some organization is a simple way to alleviate these worries. Whether you reside in an apartment in the city or a home in the suburbs, your best starting point is to create a plan of attack. Professional organizer Barbara Reich of Resourceful Consultants offers these tips for getting started:

Assess your needs. Ask questions like: Do you have a walk-in closet or a reach-in? Need to create one within a room? Do you prefer more shelves over hanging space? Is shoe storage important? Do you prefer a flexible system, like wire, that can adapt to your changing needs or do you prefer something with a designer look? Are you a DIYer or do you require professional assistance?

Define your taste and style. Do you prefer modern or traditional? Or are you more eclectic?

Identify the product that works best for your needs and your budget. One option to consider is ClosetMaid SpaceCreations, a designer-inspired, DIY-acquired option that provides customizable storage inside and outside of closets. Available in Classic White or Premier Dark Java, it's easy to install and is extremely versatile with different accessories and options like shoe shelves, drawers and acrylic dividers

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7 Ways to Add Functional Style to Your Closet

Shine the light. A trendy light fixture can add fun and bling while providing adequate lighting to illuminate all the treasures your closet has to offer. Diffused lighting is a good way to chase away shadows and ensure none of your favorite garments and accessories get left in the dark.

Organize by color. When you're ready to hang clothes in your newly designed space, sort garments by style; group dressy tops, casual pants and so on. Then take your organization another step further by hanging like colors together. The streamlined color palette is pleasing to the eye, but it also makes it easier to select the right combinations and avoid overlooking any options.

Hang clothes with care. Give your clothes some TLC and make the switch to high-quality hangers. Not only do uniform hangers make your closet appear more organized, they help keep your wardrobe in tip-top shape by preventing stretching. Slim velvet hangers are optimal for saving space, but if you have the room, a heavier wooden version is even better.

Add some special flair. It's not just the structure that affects the overall mood of your closet. One easy way to add some personal charm is with colorful and patterned fabric drawers. They provide a home to hide and consolidate more personal belongings and add pops of color and style to your shelves.

Make creative use of wall space. If you have some unused wall space, this is the perfect place for a dream board. A simple cork surface is all you need. Add pictures of your favorite outfits so you can remember pairings that made you feel great. You can also use the space for inspiration and add wish list items from magazines or photos of looks you'd like to try.

Dedicate a container for capturing rejects. Avoid hanging on to unwanted items by designat-

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4 Tips to Flip the Switch to a More Beautiful Home

(StatePoint) The average home has 45 light sockets which means you probably have more light bulbs than just about any home product, and yet the lighting aisle can still be a daunting place. With the right knowledge, you can save money, protect the environment and bring the best features of your home to life.

Here are four quick tips to get you started:

- **Opt for LED.** By 2020, half of all residential sockets will have converted to LEDs, which is good news, as LEDs can last over 10 years and use up to 85 percent less energy than the traditional lighting you may use today. Available in a variety of shapes, sizes, wattages and color temperatures, they are becoming increasingly affordable, too. Just a few years ago, LEDs topped \$40, but today you can find a high-quality LED for less than \$5.

- **Pay attention to color temperatures, wattages, shapes and quality of light.** A few lighting facts can help you make useful purchases. For example, an average 60-watt replacement bulb would require about 800 lumens. The higher this number is, the brighter the light will be. And remember: when you invest in an LED that's expected to last more than a decade, you want one that's going to reliably live up to your expectations, so brands that have been around for a while and have proven their commitment to quality truly matter in this space.

- **Identify how you use each room and the mood** you'd like to create. Use comfortable, soft white light in cozy places like bedrooms, family rooms and dining rooms. Active spaces like laundry rooms and playrooms can benefit from an energetic daylight bulb. Feature pure, clean lights in kitchens, bathrooms and craft and hobby spaces that tend to benefit from light that delivers exceptional color contrast and brightness. Today, select manufacturers such as GE, are taking the guesswork out of the equation by listing whether each bulb has a warm or cool tone and by offering room and use recommendations on the packaging. A warm white light will have a lower K (Kelvin) number, while a cool daylight will have a higher K number.

- **Put your home in its best light.** Even with the right colors, perfect accessories and trendy furniture, a home can look lackluster. Look for new options, such as GE's High Definition LED light bulbs which are engineered with a higher color rendering index for greater color contrast and boldness over an average bulb. This means the colors and features in each room can look even better.

Just imagine a room makeover in five minutes simply by changing your light bulbs. With today's advanced options, there's no better time than now to shed some new light in every room in your house.

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Remedy landscape drainage problems



sloping land, water can pool regardless of how well the gutter system is working. Determine where the problem is and speak with a landscaper to see if there are any plants that thrive in moist conditions. The roots of these plants can protect against soil erosion and may absorb enough water to guard against puddling. In addition, amending the soil with organic matter, pea gravel or another coarse aggregate can prevent water pooling.

Consider a drainage system

When confronted with drainage issues that cannot be remedied by other methods, homeowners may need to install drainage systems. Such systems often employ French drains that are built through or around the perimeter of a property. French drains are typically a trench that contains perforated plastic pipe and is back-filled with gravel. Water runs into these channels and gets swept away by the piping. Do-it-yourselfers may want to try installing drainage systems themselves. However, because excavation is necessary, it's often best to have the property inspected and marked for utilities, then have the drainage system installed by professionals.

Landscaping does not need to be derailed by drainage issues. Explore the remedies that can easily fix the problems.

Homeowners understand that reaping the rewards of beautiful lawns and gardens requires hard work. But sometimes even hard work won't be enough to prevent problems in a lawn or garden.

Drought can be very harmful to lawns and gardens, but so, too, can excessive amounts of water and precipitation. Soggy properties can make it difficult for lawns and gardens to thrive. According to Lowes, in addition to killing lawn and other plants, standing water on a property can be a health hazard. That's because standing water makes a prime breeding ground for mosquito larvae and other pests.

While homeowners cannot control precipitation, they can affect the impact that rainwater has on their properties.

Replace/repair downspouts

Gutters and downspouts are designed to move rainwater away from the home. Too often, however, gutters and downspouts become clogged or do not work effectively. Overflowing gutters will transfer rainwater down the side of a home, where it can puddle at the foundation. This water can ultimately suffocate a lawn, and it may cause interior damage to the home as well.

First, inspect and clean all gutters. Leaves, nests, sticks, and even dead animals can block the flow of water in a gutter. Test downspouts by running hose water from the top of the gutter.

Downspouts should be pointed away from the home and may need to be extended so they direct water away from the dwelling.

Plant water-loving trees or shrubs

In some instances, whether it's a byproduct of poor property grade or



DREAM CLOSET FROM PAGE 5

to provide a completely personalized look. As an added bonus, this storage option can be adapted for a nursery, mudroom or pantry. A handy online design tool or a complimentary professional designer can assist you with the layout and design.

Let the organizing fun begin. Before you restock your new closet, scrutinize your wardrobe and accessories, and get rid of items you won't ever wear or use again.

Once you've got everything neatly in place, enjoy your newfound organization, but be vigilant about keeping your closet in order. Dedicate 15 minutes each week to keep it looking as good as new.

Find more creative closet solutions at ClosetMaid.com.

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FUNCTIONAL STYLE FROM PAGE 5

ing a container to capture clothing destined for donation. When the bin is full, transfer to a cardboard box and drop off at a local charitable organization. A similar approach can be used for items that need repair; when a few items have accumulated, either haul out the sewing machine or head to the nearest seamstress for professional assistance.

Don't forget the floor. While much is made about the wall space, the floor is an important element of your closet, too. For carpeted rooms a rug may be more ornamental, but if you have hardwood floors, an area rug can be a safety feature that keeps you from slipping in your hurry to get dressed and out the door.



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