

# Spring home

MARCH 1, 2013  
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TO THE

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HERALD**



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# Using *bold* paint colors



Paint is one of the least expensive and most versatile means of changing the look of a room. According to the experts from "This Old House," 60 percent of the colors of a home that visitors perceive come from the paint on the walls. Choosing a color scheme can be challenging, which is why so many people stick with neutrals like beige and white. For those who are ready to add a spark of color, there are a few guidelines to consider.

Color theory is a science and there are rules

of using color that are taught as early as a child's first foray into art class. We know there are primary, secondary and complementary colors on the color wheel. Even novice home decorators can do well with color if they use the color wheel as their guideline.

**According to HGTV, color should flow throughout a house. Every room need not be painted the same color. However, colors should be complementary enough**

that they flow into one another. Don't paint one room in child's basic primary colors, while painting other rooms in jewel tones and pastels. Stick with one theme and carry it through the house.

Once you have decided to use a bold color, first find your color inspiration. Color combinations that appear in nature are more readily accepted by people, so look for an item in nature, such as a seashell or a flowering plant that you can base your color choices on. Others pull inspiration from a particular design item. For instance, maybe an area rug strikes your fancy. Use colors that appear in the rug in the room.

Keep in mind that using bold color doesn't mean you have to paint every wall from ceiling to floor in that color. Rather, if you're just starting out with bold colors, select one wall to serve as an accent wall. Use that wall as your bold canvas and paint it with your chosen hue.

Some people like to experiment with a more flashy color in a smaller space. If you're nervous about beginning in the living room or kitchen, how about trying out bold color in a smaller space, such as a powder room? A more intimate space might seem less overwhelming when painted in a bold color. Go for a deep purple or another jeweled tone. However, try to avoid greens in the bathroom, as they may reflect off of the mirror and cast a hue onto your face that makes you look unwell. Pinks and peaches will shed a rosy glow.

If you will be incorporating complementary colors into the room, use the paint color swatch as your guide. Most paint manufacturers use three or four different shades on one sample card. When selecting a complementary shade, be sure to pick from the same tone on the card. That means if you're choosing the darkest of color #1 from a card, you'll want to choose the darkest from color #2.

Another idea is to leave walls neutral and use bold color on design accents. For example, designers at marthastewart.com recommend painting the inside of niches, shelves or cabinets with glass doors in bright tones and the outside white to create an eye-catching space without going overboard. Put a bold color on moulding or use an appliance or a fixture in a bright color as your splash of boldness.

Remember to have balance. If you will be painting an entire room in a bold color, think about having the other decor items in neutral colors. Sofas and rugs should be neutral colors, or consider toning down a vibrant color with the use of white molding or baseboards.

All it may take is a little inspiration to get started on fun, inviting color schemes in the home. Furniture store Raymour & Flanigan offers a handy design tool for incorporating different colors into a space. Find ideas at [www.raymourflanigan.com/Design-Center/Color-Story.aspx](http://www.raymourflanigan.com/Design-Center/Color-Story.aspx).

## Herald's Cabin Fever Auction, Home Show set

By Samantha Pidde  
Herald Staff Writer

CLINTON — For the first time, the *Clinton Herald's* Home & Outdoor Show and the Cabin Fever Auction will be held together.

"It's two events for the price of one," *Clinton Herald* Advertising Account Representative Marsha Luedtke-Cackett said about the programs scheduled for Saturday.

*Clinton Herald* Advertising Account Representative Kathy Huizenga agreed it is really a "win-win." She added that people can begin their day with the auction and then check out the home show.

Both events will be held in the Wild Rose Casino & Resort event center, 777 Wild Rose Drive. The Cabin Fever "instant buys" will run from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m., with the live auction beginning at 10 a.m. The home show, which is also sponsored by Turner Appliance, will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. They are both free to the public. Door prizes are available.

Huizenga said the Cabin Fever Auction has a retail value of \$27,000 among its 560 instant buy items and 38 auction items.

A list of the live auction items ran in an advertisement in Wednesday's *Clinton Herald*.

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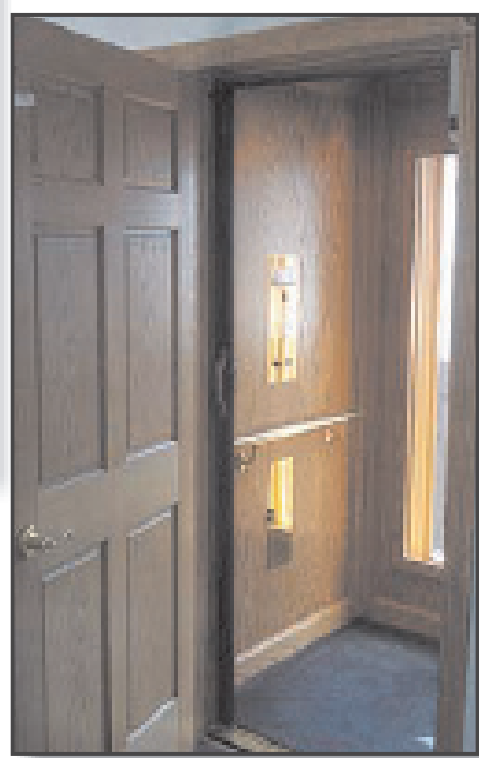
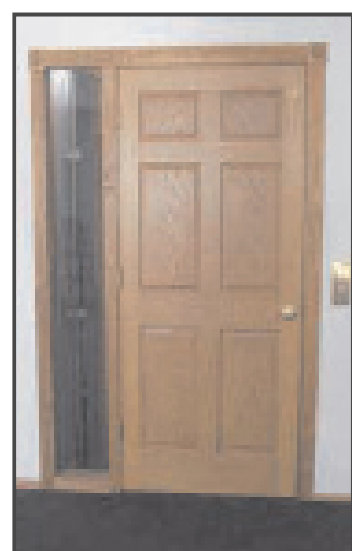
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## Pros and cons of open floor plans

Open floor plans have evolved to be the floor plan of choice in new homes and current home renovations. Turn on a home renovation show, and you're likely to see eager homeowners knocking down walls to open the kitchen to the family room. Walls have become anathema to homeowners.

There are many supporters of the open floor plan, particularly those who entertain frequently or like to keep an eye on children throughout the house. Although open floor plans are touted, there are plenty of people who have never been enamored with having all of their rooms flowing into one. There also

are some people who prefer a different style.

For those who are not fans of the open floor plan, blame the excess of the 1980s for their inception. In homes built in the 1960s and 1970s, rooms were compartmentalized and isolated for specific activities. During the 1980s, an era of "bigger is better," when entertaining was widely popular among homeowners, designers noticed that many homeowners preferred an open floor plan in which rooms merged into one another, creating the illusion of more space. These floor plans also enable people to be in separate rooms and still interact with one another

across the space.

A home's floor plan largely depends on the preference of the homeowner. There are many advantages to having an open floor plan versus one that is more compartmentalized. Here is a look at some of the pros and cons.

**Pro** Open floor plans can be safer for parents of young children. If the home opens up with the living spaces branching off from the kitchen, parents can keep an eye on children while the parents prepare dinner. It also eliminates the number of places that kids can hide and get into mischief.

**Con** Privacy is reduced in a home with few walls. Much in the way that an open floor plan enables children to be seen from every angle, it also enables you to be seen — and all of your belongings as well. There's also no place to retreat to if you need a minute to collect yourself when entertaining. You're on display unless you retreat to the bathroom.

**Pro** Entertaining can be easier in a home with an open floor plan because hosts and hostesses are not separated from their guests or holed up in the kitchen the entire time. An open space enables everyone to mingle and conversations to flow.

**Con** Those who like to host events without showing guests all of their dirty dishes or secrets of the kitchen may dislike an open floor plan.

**Pro** Light can flow effectively through an open space, minimizing dark rooms and reducing the need to install more windows. Light in and of itself can help a home feel more spacious.

**Con** While light can flow easily, so can sound. Noises through the house may be amplified. A student doing homework in the dining room may be disturbed by the television blaring in the family room. Talking on the phone or even finding a quiet nook to read a book may be challenging.

**Pro** Open floor plans allow for more family time together in one space than a home with a more compartmentalized layout.

**Con** People who are collectors or who have a lot of furniture or accent items may find that open floor plans do not work well with this type of design mantra.

**Pro** Because several rooms run into one another, color choices for walls and furnishings in a home with an open floor plan can be limited and cohesive, making choices easier.

**Con** On the flip side, those who want to incorporate different color schemes and eclectic styles may have difficulty deciding on where to "end" rooms or how to co-mingle furniture.



## Advantages of two-stage heating systems

from another can help consumers make the best possible decision.

One factor that will come up as you browse for furnaces is whether to choose a single-stage furnace or a two- or dual-staged furnace. There are many

advantages to the latter, which makes them a favorite of HVAC contractors.

**Two-stage furnaces** are designed to change the way British Thermal Units (BTUs) of heat are delivered to the home. In a single-stage system, when the thermostat registers a drop in home temperature that requires the heat to turn on, the furnace will produce one level of heat output until the desired temperature is reached. This furnace is

designed to heat your home on the coldest days for your climate. In a two-stage system, the furnace provides gradual heat production. In the first stage, which usually operates at around 70 percent of the system's heating capacity, the system will try to warm the space. On mild winter days or chilly autumn days, the first stage may be all that's needed. If the home requires additional heating, the furnace will kick into the second stage, increasing the heating power. Some two-stage furnaces not only offer two BTU offerings, but two blower speeds as well.

One of the advantages to these furnaces are that the two-stage system eliminates drastic temperature swings, which are common among single-stage furnaces. This can mean the home is more comfortable over a longer period of time.

Another benefit is that because the system starts in the lower stage

and may operate at that stage more so than in the second stage, the furnace is generally quieter than traditional furnaces. This greatly reduces the initial noise of turning on the furnace at full power.

Two-stage furnaces will burn fuel more efficiently and may actually burn less fuel if they spend the majority of the time in the first stage of operation. If they have a variable speed blower, they may even save you money in electricity costs.

Two-stage furnaces may cost more money initially because they tend to be more expensive than traditional furnaces. But over time two-stage systems might pay for themselves in efficiency, noise reduction and comfort in a home.

Purchasing a new heating and cooling system could be in your future. Selecting the right furnace for your home requires understanding the various products available. A two-stage heating system is preferred by many HVAC contractors and could be the right fit in your renovation.

Choosing a new furnace and heating components can be difficult. The business has its own terminology, and there are scores of different equipment manufacturers all claiming that their brand is the best. Buying a new heating system is also expensive, making the process more stressful. Not everyone has an unlimited budget or the ability to simply select the top-of-the-line model. Therefore, understanding which features make one furnace stand out

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## Who is responsible for repairs during a home sale?

Home buyers may be able to negotiate that sellers repair major structural issues, such as a leaky roof. If not, negotiate a lower sale price.



Many questions arise during the home-buying process. Buyers looking at homes that require a good deal of TLC may wonder who is responsible for the home's repairs, particularly if such repairs are needed to secure a certificate of occupancy. Depending on the situation, there is no clear-cut answer.

There is no perfect home, and things that are

acceptable to the current owner may not be acceptable to the buyer who is looking to become the next owner. The home-buying process is typically a careful cooperation between buyer and seller to find a middle ground. The buyer may have to make some concessions, as will the seller. Ultimately, it is this cooperation that often determines if the sale goes through or is terminated.

Before any negotiations can begin regarding repairs, it is advisable for a buyer to have an independent inspector come out and look over the home and property. Most real estate agents will suggest this be done as a first priority — even before a contract is entered on the home. An inspection will unveil any potential problems in a home and indicate things that the buyer may not be aware of, including items that do not meet with code or could be unsafe. An inspector also may point out problems that could cause a mortgage lender to give pause. This may mean the lender will deem problems unsafe and refuse to fund the mortgage until repairs are made.

A copy of this inspection report should be sent to the home seller to review with his or her attorney and real estate agent. The buyer working with his own real estate attorney and agent can petition for certain repairs to be made. Many sellers will make such repairs to ensure the purchase goes through, or they will accept a lower purchase price to compensate for the needed repairs, which the buyer will then make. Buyers might want to hire a good real estate attorney to write clauses into the contract to protect their interests. This allows the buyer to forfeit the sale and walk away from the contract should an issue arise.

The rules often change when buying a home that is a short sale or in foreclosure. A home that is in distress is typically in this situation because the current owners cannot afford to pay their mortgage, and thusly, are not able to afford repairs. According to Think Glink, a money-management Web site, buyers may try to negotiate repairs with the seller, but they shouldn't assume that sellers (or lenders in the event of a bank-owned home) are responsible for the repairs. Generally

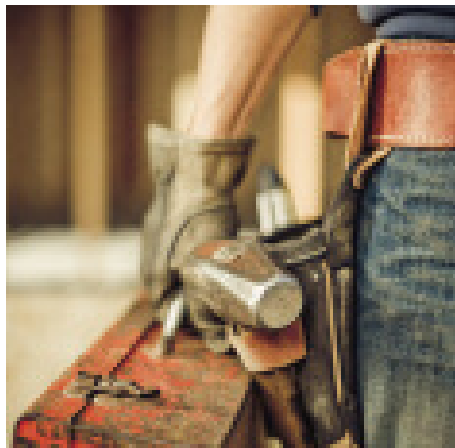
speaking, most short sales and foreclosures are sold "as is" and may even specify that repairs and requirements for the certificate of occupancy are the buyer's responsibility. A buyer also can ask to have the home price reduced to cover the repairs. But foreclosures are often already deeply discounted.

**Buyers should know that, for a home that is not in foreclosure, there are some repairs that should ultimately be the responsibility of the seller. If these repairs are not made, a buyer should think strongly about walking away from the deal, according to Why6Percent.com, a real estate marketing site. Such repairs include:**

- lender-required repairs that could impact home safety
- leaky pipes
- water penetration issues, including a bad roof
- unsafe decking or handrails
- wet basements or crawl spaces
- insecure foundations or obvious structural damage
- poorly functioning sewer lines or septic system

It is always advisable for buyers to speak with a reliable real estate attorney and a trusted real estate agent to guide them through the process of buying a home. These people can help buyers navigate the important decisions that can affect the home they'll be living in for the next several years.

## The dos and don'ts of basement finishing



command and secure permits while having all work inspected.

**DON'T** overlook adequate lighting in your refinishing plan. A basement is likely one area of the house that has limited natural light pouring in. With traditionally small windows, or no windows at all, a basement needs ample lighting in its design scheme. This may include a combination of overhead and task lighting. Ample lighting will help the room feel like part of the house and not just a forgotten storage area.

**DO** take into consideration moisture issues in the basement. Many basements are plagued by moisture issues ranging from water seepage to condensation forming on walls. These situations may vary depending on the weather throughout the year. Certain materials may need to be used to mitigate water issues before finishing can take place. The installation of water-barrier systems, drainage, sump pumps, or encapsulation products could drive up the cost of a basement renovation. It is essential to have a professional assess the basement water issues prior to starting any finishing work.

**DON'T** simply cover up potential hazards, such as mold or mildew. Have them treated instead. Otherwise, you could have a breeding ground behind drywall that could lead to unsafe conditions in the home.

**DO** have a radon test. Radon is a hidden killer that can cause lung cancer. Because it occurs naturally in the soil and water surrounding a home and is impossible to detect without a specialized test, many people are unaware of the presence of radon until it is too late. Radon may be more concentrated in the basement, where the foundation is touching the soil. Therefore, rule out radon before considering renovation of a basement area.

**DON'T** limit furniture choices to one type. You may need to be flexible in your furniture choices, even selecting modular pieces, like sectionals, because entryways to basements may have small doorways or obstructions that make adding furniture more challenging.

**DO** keep the possibility of flooding in the back of your head. Homes that are near waterways or at low elevation may be at risk of flooding. Basements are especially susceptible to flood damage. Therefore, think about the practicality of finishing a basement if you are prone to flooding. If you decide to move ahead, take certain precautionary measures, such as keeping electrical wiring up higher and using a more water-resistant flooring material, like tile or vinyl. House important electronics and items on shelves so they are not at ground-level.

Finishing a basement is a job that can add a lot of usable space to a home. Go about the project in the right way to keep within budget and have a room that is safe and functional.

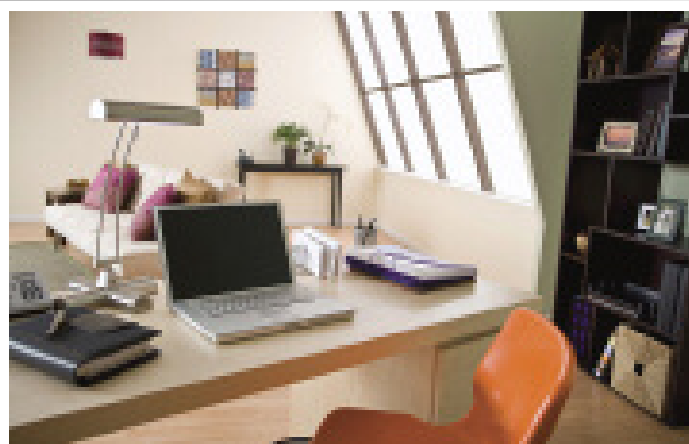
Remodeling a basement is a popular home improvement project. A finished basement makes the space more functional and, when done correctly, can add a considerable amount of living space to a home.

Finishing a basement pays dividends in additional space in a home that doesn't require the same level of investment as putting an addition on the house. Also, the groundwork for a finished room is already there, as most basements are already set up with a poured concrete floor and some walls, usually cinder blocks. Some electrical components, plumbing and the creature comforts of drywall and a more inviting floor might be all that's necessary to finish a basement. The process can be labor-intensive, and many people prefer to leave it to a professional contractor. Whatever finishing method is chosen, homeowners should follow the proper procedures when doing the work.

**DO** start with a detailed plan. Measure out the basement and mark any items that cannot be moved, such as a furnace, water heater or pipes. Create a design board that showcases the materials you plan to use on the project. Think about ways you plan to arrange furniture and consider all of the possible uses for the room. Will it be a home theater? Will someone be sleeping down there? Each scenario will require certain amenities and safety requirements.

**DON'T** plan to finish the entire basement. Doing so will leave you without a storage or utility area where you house holiday decorations, tools, luggage and similar items.

**DO** get the scoop on building codes. Knowing what the municipality allows in basement remodeling will help you to customize a plan that is functional, safe and legal. No one wants to be slapped with fines for failing to follow the rules. Plus, failure to meet building codes could mean the work that has been done must be torn out and redone. It pays to follow the chain of



## Home offices in tight spaces

A home office is a necessity for many adults these days. While some people have entire rooms available to house a home office, others have to make do with less space, and that can mean fitting an office into a tight space. The first step in establishing a small home office is figuring out the space you have and any limitations that may accompany it. For example, maybe you have an unused corner in the living room but don't want to have wires and equipment out in the open. An armoire-type desk that

can be closed when not in use is a viable option in such a situation. Perhaps there is an unused closet in a bedroom. A wall-mounted desk surface, such as a piece of custom-cut countertop material, complete with foldaway mouse and keyboard tray can easily turn the space into a compact nook. Maybe there is an entryway with a small table that would be large enough for a laptop. A stool or ottoman that can be tucked under it can serve as a desk chair and extra seating for company.

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# Discover the ways to fireproof a home



A house fire can engulf and destroy a home in a matter of minutes. Even with the fast-acting response of firefighters, a home that has caught fire may be irreparably damaged by flames, soot and water. Fire is no laughing matter, and it behooves homeowners to take precautions to fireproof their homes as much as possible.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention state that although death and injuries caused by residential fires have declined gradually during the past several decades, fire-related deaths continue to pose a significant health hazard. **In 2010, it is estimated that someone died in a fire every 169 minutes in the United States alone.** A person was injured by fire every 30 minutes, according to the National Fire Protection Association, Fire Analysis and Research Division. The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs estimates an average of 375 people die every year from fires in Canada, mostly from smoke inhalation.

Most fires are largely preventable. The following are a few fireproofing measures for safety-conscious homeowners.

• **Install smoke detectors and check the batteries regularly.** Smoke inhalation causes many fire-related deaths. A smoke detector should be installed outside of every bedroom and on every level of the house. Don't install a smoke detector near a window, door or forced-air register, where drafts could interfere with the detector's operation. Be sure to routinely check that every smoke detector is working properly.

• **Have a fire extinguisher in an easily accessible location.** Ideally, there should be a fire extinguisher in every room of the home, but at the least keep one wherever fire is used regularly, such as a kitchen or by a fireplace. Ensure the fire extinguisher is charged and that you understand how to operate it.

• **Remove combustibles from around the house.** Do not allow old clothing, rags, newspapers, or cardboard boxes to accumulate around the house. Discard newspapers and magazines as quickly as possible and be careful to avoid storing anything too close to heaters, furnaces or electrical equipment.

• **Adhere to the recommended wattage in lamps and lighting fixtures.** Do not exceed the recommended bulb wattage for lights around the house. There may be overheating or shorting that can lead to fire.

• **Look for fireproof interior décor items.** Nowadays, carpeting and furniture can be coated with fireproof chemicals. The added investment may be worth it in the long run.

• **Do not leave candles unattended.** Many people like the look and aroma that candles provide. Candles also provide emergency illumination in the event of a power outage. Candles can be easily knocked over and start a fire. In fact, candles are one of the top causes of house fires. Never leave a candle unattended, even for a short amount of time. And certainly never go to sleep without extinguishing a candle.



• **Keep the chimney clean.** Inspect the chimney flue regularly and have it cleaned to prevent an abundance of residual burnt material from accumulating. This creosote can catch fire itself.

• **Use a fire-resistant roofing material.** A roof should be made from metal, clay or asphalt tiles. Trim any overhanging branches or vegetation to reduce the amount of combustible material nearby.

• **Have a fire-safe wall behind wood heaters.** A brick wall or another fireproof

material should be used on any walls that house a wood- or gas-burning appliance for added safety.

• **Verify electrical safety.** Extension cords and power strips should be kept to a minimum, and the outlets should not be overloaded. Replace fuses properly and don't be afraid to call a certified electrician to verify you are correctly set up.

By making a few tweaks in and around the house, a homeowner can decrease the likelihood of a fire.

## Operate garage doors safely

A garage door is an oft-overlooked part of a home. Some are rarely opened, while others are used on a daily basis. Though they might be overlooked, garage doors play a role in thousands of injuries every year.

**Roughly 20,000 people each year are treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries related to garage doors, says the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, Canadian hospitals report that roughly 60 percent of all garage door injuries are cut fingers or hands. The majority of injuries happen at a person's own home.**

Although children are more susceptible to garage door injuries, these injuries can happen to people of all ages. That is why it is wise for all members of the family to familiarize themselves with how to prevent garage door injuries.

### Crushing concerns

Safety experts from many organizations, including

CPSC, estimate the average garage door weighs more than 400 pounds. A door of that weight can break bones and crush adults and children alike. There are many reasons a door can fall, including lost tension, improper installation or a faulty track or springs. A garage door may become faulty if it was hit by an automobile and not mended correctly.

Many different manufacturers have created safety features that can be installed on garage doors to control the speed of descent and also automatically stop a garage door should it be involved in a free fall. There also are features that retract the door should it meet with an obstacle on the ground when the door is closing.

### Unsafe ride-along

Some children and teenagers think it is entertaining to ride on the garage door when it is automatically being opened. The kids let go before the door reaches the header of the garage. Unfortunately, many children are not as lucky and can become trapped between the garage door and the small space at the ceiling of the garage.

Others may have hands or feet become stuck between the folding panel joints of the door, resulting in breaks or amputations.

Children should be advised never to ride on an opening garage door. Some automatic garage door opener manufacturers have begun developing safety systems that shut down the operation of the door if a sensor measures extra weight on the garage door.

### Sharp edges

Tracks on standard garage doors are frequently made of sharp-edged metal and have numerous open holes in the construction that are tempting for little fingers. Cuts have occurred to both children and adults in and

around tracks. Look for garage doors that have rounded-out edges on the track and a closed design that does not enable fingers to be trapped between rolling mechanisms and the garage door track.

### Open joints in door

Most standard garage doors are made by fitting several panels together to create a solid door. This allows for the bending motion of the door when it is retracted. Gaps between these panels, called joints, can trap fingers or toes, resulting in anything from pinching to amputations. Shoppers may want to consider a door that guards against open joints with protective features that do not allow finger entry between joints.

### Other safety precautions

• Do not leave the garage door partially open. When it is reactivated, it first may travel downward before retracting back upward.

• Test the auto-reversing feature of the garage door monthly by placing a roll of paper towels beneath the door. If the door does not reverse upon contact with the towels, have the door repaired or replaced.

• Make sure that no snow or ice is blocking the door during cold weather. In addition, check for other obstructions that could make the door work incorrectly.

• Do not let young children play in the garage unattended. Not only can a

garage door be a hazard, but also carbon monoxide poisoning in the garage is another serious concern.

• Regularly clean the working parts of the garage door to ensure safe operation.

• Do not try to fix garage door problems on your own. Serious injuries can ensue when the torque on springs and other mechanisms are adjusted improperly on high-tension parts. Hire a professional to get the job done right.

• Educate children and other family members of all the dangers associated with garage doors so they will know how to use them safely.

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## Debunking common myths about carpeting

Carpeting has long been a reliable flooring option to keep rooms looking good and feeling comfortable underfoot. There's something to be said about having a plush, warm cushion on the floors of a home. Carpeting can help buffer sounds and minimize injuries from falls. Walking around on a padded surface may minimize back and joint pain as well as feel more comfortable when going barefoot. Despite all of the advantages to carpeting, some people continue to avoid it for a variety of reasons, many of which are rooted in myth. The following are a few of the more common myths associated with carpeting.

**Myth:** Carpeting contributes to allergens constantly circulating throughout the home.

**Fact:** Carpeting is actually better at trapping allergens and dust in its fibers than smooth-surface floors. That means that with carpeting there are fewer particles airborne and circulating. Regular vacuuming can remove trapped allergens.

**Myth:** Carpet is a source of indoor air quality problems.

**Fact:** Regular cleaning and vacuuming of carpet reduces the number of allergens contained within, which makes carpet no more likely to contribute to air quality issues than any other type of flooring.

**Myth:** Thicker carpeting will wear longer and better.

**Fact:** It is not the thickness or plushness of the carpeting but the density of the fibers that will be a telling clue of durability. This means a relatively thin carpet that is woven densely will likely last quite a while.

**Myth:** Carpeting is made from a host of chemical products.

**Fact:** Carpeting is made largely from nylon, wool, polypropylene and polyester. These are the same materials used in clothing, which spends hours resting up against the skin. Polypropylene is one of the safer plastics that does not contain BPA and is even used in some baby bottles.

**Myth:** Mold grows regularly on carpeting.

**Fact:** Unless you have a flood or a leak that is keeping carpeting saturated, mold will not grow during regular use. Elevated humidity levels in a home also may contribute to mold growth. Mold is typically a result of a moisture issue. Remove the moisture and you remove the mold.

**Myth:** Carpets pose significant health risks.

**Fact:** Extensive toxicological assessments of the components of carpet have been studied through the years. There has been no conclusive evidence that carpets present any health risk, particularly of a carcinogenic nature.

**Myth:** Carpet has formaldehyde in it.

**Fact:** Formaldehyde was removed from the carpet-manufacturing process in 1978. It is unlikely anyone still has original carpeting from 35 years ago, and even if that is the case, the formaldehyde would have dissipated by now.

**Myth:** Carpeting can never be truly clean.

**Fact:** No surface can be 100 percent free from dirt. But with proper cleaning, carpeting can be just as clean as other flooring materials.

Many people would like to have carpeting in their homes but are deterred by a handful of enduring myths. Knowing the facts can help homeowners make more informed decisions regarding flooring materials.



## Modernize your bathroom with a frameless glass shower enclosure

More homeowners are looking to transform their bathrooms into luxurious, relaxing retreats that feature the looks and amenities of an upscale spa. One way to upgrade the appearance of a bath — and to lessen the burden of maintaining it — is to install a frameless shower enclosure with CLARVISTA® glass by PPG, a shower glass that features fused-on coating to keep its showroom looks longer than more traditional clear shower glass.

The biggest advantage associated with frameless shower enclosures is that they can add to the overall value of your home if they're done right. Here are some additional reasons to consider a frameless shower for your new or remodeled bath.

**• They're fashionable.** Frameless shower enclosures open a world of possibilities because they perfectly complement durable, high-style surfaces used in the bath such as tile, marble and granite. They also provide a great way to show off distinctive shower heads, faucets and fixtures. Finally, because of their openness and transparency, frameless shower enclosures can make your bath feel bigger than it really is.

**• They're versatile.** Frameless doors can be designed to fit any space, making them ideal for bathrooms large and small. And they don't have to be boxy — frameless shower enclosures can be circular, oval or triangular. Even standard square or rectangular enclosures can be dressed up with an artfully bowed, patterned or etched glass door.

**• They're durable.** Frameless shower enclosures look elegant, but one of their most redeeming qualities is toughness. Standard shower glasses can range in thickness from 3/8 inch to 1/2 inch, which makes them sturdy, structurally sound and safe. Watertight seals prevent leakage, and because there is little to no metal used in frameless enclosures, homeowners never have to worry about replacing corroded parts.

**• They're easy to live with.** Let's face it: we all want to live in our homes for as long as we can. Frameless shower enclosures are a great way to let your home age with you

because the entry can be leveled with the floor to create easy access as you become older and less mobile. And frameless glass shower enclosures don't become passé — they offer a great way to meld timeless style with ageless accommodation.

**• They're easy to clean.** With frameless shower enclosures, there are fewer nooks and crannies where dirt and grime can accumulate, making them easier to clean than other shower styles. For an added level of clarity and sparkle, homeowners should request Clarvista glass by PPG, the coating of which is fused to the glass, which makes the surface



almost impervious to corrosion from water deposits, humidity, soap scum and household cleaners. Simply wipe the wet glass every few days with a dry towel or squeegee, and your shower enclosure can look as new as the first day you had it installed.

## Kitchen work triangle



The kitchen is arguably the most-used room in the house during waking hours. Having a kitchen that is laid out in an efficient manner can improve productivity and make for a more enjoyable experience. Designers often stress having an effective work triangle in the kitchen. The phrase "kitchen work triangle" started with the Building Research Council (formerly the Small Homes Council) at the University of Illinois. The idea came from studies of space usage and the search for efficient kitchen designs. What the triangle essentially means is positioning three key items of the kitchen for efficiency. **The stove, sink and refrigerator represent the three main points of the triangle. Having these items spaced accordingly can make work easier.** Having them too close together can create a cramped, ineffective room. The placement of the triangle points alone does not make a successful layout. According to the University of Missouri Extension, the triangle space should also be measured accordingly. Put 4 to 7 feet between the refrigerator and sink, 4 to 6 feet between the sink and stove and 4 to 9 feet between the stove and refrigerator, with the ideal size resulting in a work triangle where the three sides total between 15 and 22 feet.

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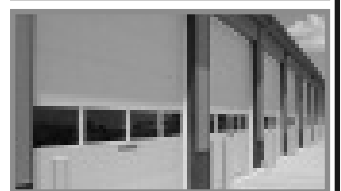
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## Does time of year affect roofing jobs?



There comes a time in many homeowners' lives when they're faced with the reality that a roof replacement is necessary. A roof can last between 15 and 30 years, and a person who owns an older home may find the lease has expired on the current roof. Is there a particular time of year that is better for having a roof installed? It depends on different factors, including the availability of a roofing contractor.

According to the site, **The Average Cost of Things, courtesy of the Home Buying Institute, across the country one can expect to spend \$18,000 on average to replace a roof with asphalt shingles.** Use of other materials, like tile or metal will cost more than this. In general, those living in big cities tend to pay more than those in rural areas. Because a roof replacement is expensive, it is something that some homeowners prefer to put off until it is absolutely necessary. Others are interested in finding the best rate around and hiring reliable roofers for the job. It's important to note that there really is no season where roof replacements are off-limits. Most roofers can do the job effectively unless the temperature is below freezing or

if there is significant rain in the forecast. In fact, planning a roofing job for the middle of the winter actually may work to a homeowner's advantage. This is typically a slow time of year for some roofers, and they may be anxious to get work this time of year and be willing to negotiate on price. There's also a good chance that the roofer will not be bogged down with other jobs, enabling the company to start on a home right away. Some roofers prefer working in the colder weather to sizzling up on a roof under the hot sun at another time of year.

Naturally the spring is a prime time of year for roofing projects. After the rainy season, the weather is generally comfortable and homeowners are thinking about the projects they will commence. A busy time of year for home improvement all around, homeowners may find that they have to compete with others for a good date to have a roof installed. They also may be paying top dollar for the work and materials that are in high demand. Another thing to consider during the busy season is that a project may be rushed along in order to move on to the next job or one being worked on concurrently. This may lead to corners being cut or less attention to detail.

A person may be limited in their choices of

roof installation during the summer. Extreme temperatures can make working on the roof hazardous and uncomfortable for workers. For those who live in a climate where the temperatures generally cause the mercury to soar, choose a cooler time of year.

Many homeowners opt to have a roof replacement in the autumn. The crisp weather and the decline in home-renovation projects overall can make this a prime time to contract with a quality roofer. If the roof is very much damaged, replacing it before the harsh, winter weather sets in can be advantageous.

Some homeowners find they can get a discount on a roof installation if they bundle different renovations together. A contractor may offer a special on siding and roofing together. For those who have the funds, this may be the opportunity to get two jobs done at once.

A roofing project is no small undertaking, and homeowners are wise to get several referrals and investigate a variety of companies before settling on one. Review sites, such as Angie's List, or simply word-of-mouth appraisals from friends and family members can help make choosing a roofer an easier decision.

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# Designing a laundry room

When purchasing a home, buyers often look at the kitchen space and how many bedrooms there are, while largely ignoring other rooms, including the laundry room. Oftentimes, the washer and dryer are relegated to a dark corner of the basement or garage, and homeowners simply accept their laundry lot.

More and more manufacturers now produce washers and dryers that are both functional and aesthetically appealing. As a result, homeowners and renters need not feel they have to hide laundry rooms like they did in the past. Having the laundry nearby the family action — and paying attention to laundry room design — can make the work of keeping clothes tidy that much easier.

Many designers would agree that you need not sacrifice style for function in a laundry room. As with any other area of the house, impart design elements into the room and make it a room in which you want to spend time.

**• First and foremost, select appliances that offer the features you need and want.** Also, find appliances that fit the space you have. Front-loading appliances have become the latest must-have, but some units may be too big or expensive for your space. Those with a limited area for laundry can invest in a stackable set, in which the washer and dryer are combined into one vertical unit. For those who want to add a pop of color, select among the variety of colored washers and dryers that are turning up in store showrooms. You're no longer limited to white, black and beige.

**• Consider cabinetry in your laundry space.** Cabinets and drawers are not just for the kitchen. They can hide cleaning products, detergent, dryer sheets and so much more. Fill drawers with stain-removal sticks and items to mend clothes that may be missing a button or have a small hole that

needs tending.

**• A laundry area also can be much more than just a place to wash and fold clothes.** Many people like to turn this spot into a multipurpose zone. By including some shelving and a refrigerator in the laundry room, you can create a food-storage pantry. A large countertop normally used to fold clothes can also double as a gift-wrapping station. Think about merging a laundry room with a craft room where sewing or scrapbooking can take place.

**• Remember to leave room for the soiled clothing.** Raising hamper bins off of the floor to be suspended from a rod above the washer frees up valuable floor space. Otherwise, keep the hamper behind a curtain or tucked into a cabinet to ensure the laundry room always looks neat, even when you haven't yet gotten to the newest pile of dirty clothes.

**• Don't be afraid of adding color and artwork to the laundry space.** In fact, embrace it. Here's an out-of-the-way area of the home where you can explore your creativity and have a little fun. Try an eye-



opening color, such as apple green or bright yellow to add a sunny disposition to the room.

**• You don't have to spend a fortune on a laundry room re-do.** Shop in salvage stores or antique shops for custom pieces to add character to the space. You can probably find cabinetry or shelving for a fraction of the cost of new items, and these older items may add more character to the space.

**• Save space by installing a counter just above the dryer so you will have a place to fold and stack clothing.**

**• The bulk of dirty clothes will be generated in the bedrooms and bathroom of the house.** But who wants to carry clothes down to a laundry area on a lower

level? See if you can tuck a laundry room into an upstairs closet or nook to make doing laundry more practical.

Although a laundry room is often an afterthought, taking time to organize and plan the space can make it both functional and inviting.

## How to treat a termite problem

Termites are houseguests few homeowners want to experience. With their reputation for voracity and the damage they can inflict on a home, termites are something most people want to avoid at all costs. If termites are already a problem or something homeowners simply want to prevent, there are effective ways to banish these unwelcome guests or keep them from ever entering a home.

### What is a termite?

Termites are small social insects that have the capability to destroy wood. Sometimes they are mistaken for ants, but the two insects are quite different. Termites are actually close relatives to the cockroach. Many termites appear as white or light-colored and may

seem translucent. Winged termites are darker in color. Termites have a grub-shaped body but, unlike ants, no discernable hourglass-shaped waist. Also, their antennae are straight and look beaded, like a string of pearls, while ants have elbowed antennae. Another way to differentiate ants from termites is that termite eyes are very small or nonexistent, while ants' eyes are clearly visible.

Termites live in a nest or colony in large numbers. Their primary food source is plant fiber, known as cellulose. Most termites are rarely seen unless they are swarming or if their nest or a portion of wood has been opened revealing the insects inside.

### Treating termites

Many people do not even know

they have a termite problem until that problem has escalated. Because they remain hidden most of the time, termites can be difficult to detect. Incidences of soft wood or visual recognition of swarming termites that occur in the spring can indicate that termites could be residing in a structure or nearby. There are different types of termites, and proper identification is necessary to find the correct treatment option.

Unlike other pests, termites are pests whose detection and removal is best left to a professional who can recognize the subtle signs. He or she will identify certain signs of an infestation, such as mud-looking material on wooden surfaces, discarded wings from a swarm, piles of sawdust, termite

tubes running outdoors from the soil to a home, buckling paint, and other indications.

There are different ways to prevent or treat a termite infestation. To prevent termites, there are applications of termiticides that are put into the soil surrounding a home or structure. Also, removal of moisture in and around the house is key because termites need moist conditions for survival. Poisoning of nests is also a treatment option.

If termites already have infiltrated a home, fumigation may be necessary to remedy that problem. However, fumigation is not always effective at killing eggs and all of the

termites. Most exterminators will use a combination of treatments to rid a home of termites.

If extreme wood damage has occurred, portions of the structure may have to be removed and rebuilt. This also may help alleviate some of the scent trails termites use to travel to and from nests and food sources.

### Other termite prevention tips

There are other tactics to prevent a termite problem.

- Don't store firewood in contact with the ground.
- Use chemically treated wood for building structures.
- Disguise wood by painting it

or using a shellac or varnish. Termites may not like the taste of treated wood.

- Prevent hidden entry points where termites can go unseen.
- Remove cardboard, newspaper, cotton materials and any other cellulose from the floor.
- Vent kitchens and baths so that they will not trap moisture.
- Fix any and all water leaks.
- Don't plant gardens or put soil directly against a home's exterior walls.

Some simple precautions and a routine inspection can prevent termites from becoming a problem.

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# Prepare a deck or patio for entertaining

Few things are better than having a functional and beautiful outdoor space to entertain guests. Having a great outdoor space enables a person to host parties or intimate gatherings all year long. Establishing an entertaining space and maintaining that space are essential when planning another year of fun in the sun.

There are many things homeowners can do to ensure their entertaining space is safe and functional. As the season approaches, include some landscaping and decorating components to your preparatory plans to make the space as comfortable and aesthetically appealing as possible.

Here are a few key tips for readying your yard for entertaining possibilities. Expand on these basics to customize an area for your unique needs.

- **Check the area for any needed repairs.** Prior to your first entertaining session, look over the deck or patio to take note of any flaws that may present safety hazards. Are there any loose railings? Are all screws and nails flush so they do not cause tripping? Are there any cracks in concrete or loose patio blocks? Be sure to remedy all of the repairs needed to ensure guests will be safe. If you are unsure of any structural deficits, consult with a contractor.
- **Hire a reputable contractor.** If you are just laying the groundwork for a new patio or deck, it is important to get the necessary permits and then hire a person who has been properly vetted. Check qualifications and licensing before hiring a contractor and ask to view a portfolio of his or her previous work. Word-of-mouth recommendations from trusted friends and family members are good, and you can also double-check qualifications by contacting the Better Business Bureau to see if any complaints have been lodged or use a service such as Angie's List to read reviews of his or her work.
- **Think about closing in a portion of a deck or patio.** The use of a canopy, netting or even greenery to protect an entertaining space can help minimize weather-related damage to outdoor furniture. Netting will keep a good number of biting insects at bay when the weather is warm and humid. Having a bit of concealment also means you can create a private space that isn't easily viewed by neighbors or passersby.
- **Plan well-defined areas.** Just as rooms serve different purposes inside of the home, outdoor areas can be separated according to usage. Establish a sitting nook



where guests can gather and talk. Have a bar or serving area where refreshments are made and served. Make sure there is a shaded area for when the sun is too uncomfortable to make sitting outside enjoyable. Similarly, have a sunny area where people can soak up a few rays or dry off after a dip in the spa or pool. Don't forget to establish a spot for the kids to converge with scaled-down amenities.

• **Consider a fireplace or fire pit.** For centuries man (and woman) has gathered around fire for socialization and a means to warming up. Having a backyard fireplace, pit or chiminea is a conversation-starter, a decorative focal point, and a functional tool to extend the number of seasons in which outdoor entertaining can take place. Place the fire wisely and with concern for safety. It should be out of the way of foot traffic, but central enough so that it can be a gathering point.

• **Invest in quality outdoor furniture.** Today's yards are extensions of a home's interior. Guests no longer want to sit on uncomfortable metal or plastic furniture. There are many different outdoor sofas and chairs that are as stylish as they are comfortable. These pieces can be matched to the décor inside your home for a cohesive look.

• **Accessorize.** Consider the creature comforts of indoors and mimic that outdoors. Don't shy away from hanging artwork on an exterior wall or using urns or pottery to decorate the space. Weather-



resistant materials ensure everything from clocks to televisions can be used outdoors. Think about having an entire set of serving dishes and other entertaining items for the outdoors.

When refurbishing outdoor entertaining areas, emphasize comfort, safety and functionality.

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