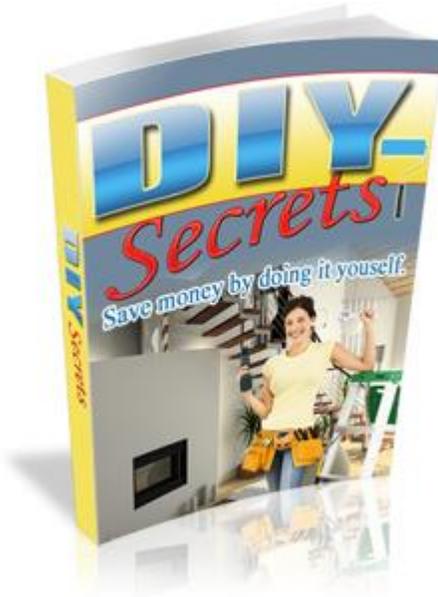


# DIY Secrets



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## Secrets to Installing Laminate Flooring

If you're going to install a laminate floor – and you're not an expert – there are a couple of things you need to, and several of them are not all that obvious. First off, it is not the sort of task to take on yourself – get at least one or two people to help you. Most rooms are a good size, and even a small room is going to require two to three planks in a row. Well, all of the joints have to be supported while you lock the new row into the old (previous) one. There is no way to do that by yourself!

Next, depending on the quality of the laminate, the tongue and grooves on each board might be nothing more than fibreboard, which is nothing more than pressed cardboard. You can avoid this by buying good quality laminate. Ask the clerk at the store you shop at as to what the laminates they have available are made from. These days, you can get them made of bamboo, which is a very durable material, yet not at all expensive. Now, if you do end up with the inexpensive laminate – that is, the ones with the fibreboard tongue and groove – know this: you can only reposition each board about five to six times before the tongue and groove start to give out. This may seem like a lot of chances to get the boards in the right position, but – for the inexperienced installer (amateur) – you can burn through those options quicker than you know. If you have a situation where a board just isn't connecting with the others – toss it aside (for later use, to be explained below). It's better to try again with a fresh board than end up with a floor that looks shoddy.

However, here is another priceless little tip – just because a board has its tongue torn off, that does not mean you have to throw it away. Now, if the groove is badly damaged, there really is not much you can do with it, unless the damaged area is small enough to cut away. In that event, you may end up with a short length of plank to use on an end or corner. In the case of the tongue, you can use food glue and try to re-attach it to the board. At the very least, set the plank(s) aside and let it (them) dry for about 24 hours. If, after that, they feel good and solid, you can use them again.

Finally, there is the underlayment fabric you place between the bare floor and the laminate you put down. Technically, you are supposed to completely cover the floor, but if you run short, there is an option you can use to avoid having to buy an entire roll for just a small space. You can just substitute some folded up newspaper. Place several pages together and fold them until they are the same thickness of the under layer. Just make sure that you don't use newspaper to cover a large area – something a few inches wide is all.

## So you want to do a Textured Ceiling!

You have owned your home for quite a few years and have done some DIY around the ol' homestead. You one day look at your ceilings and discover that they are perfectly fine except for the water marks left from when your kid played sailor Sam in the tub last month. You decide

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after discussing it with the “little Mrs.” that it is time for a textured look for the living room. Checking with various contractors, you find that the price to have it done is a bit out of the ballpark for you, and you decide to do-it-yourself.

So, off you go to the local large department store type chain hardware store with your ideas and questions. You learn it can be done by the DIY'er simply and easily and for a fraction of the cost of the contractor's price. And then there is the satisfaction of doing the job yourself and living to tell about it! The sales person stops you in mid sentence with “are you spraying it on?” You look at him like he just stomped on your cat and say...“what?” With that he looks at you strangely and guides you to the line of sprayers they have made just for --- you guessed, it spraying on a textured ceiling! Until just this moment you thought they were all done by hand!

He politely explains about the different types of texture hopper sprayers. He simplest has a container (the hopper) mounted on top of the spray gun that you load the texture mix into and then spray it on the ceiling.

You mix the material into a thick texture, usually like a biscuit batter, load it in the hopper and spray away.

There are some safety precautions and things that will keep your job easier too, like a short scaffolding to reduce the distance between you and the ceiling, goggles to keep the spray out of your eyes and a mask to keep it out of your lungs. You also should work in a well-ventilated area. You aren't sure if you want to do more than the one room in the house, so the sales person advises you to rent the equipment rather than buy it and only use it once. Not very cost effective. Or you could buy it and let your neighbor borrow it. Then you might get it back should you need it again.

So, you get everything together, the texturizing material, plastic for the floor, scaffolding and your protective safety equipment and a video to watch while you wait for the weather to be the optimal above 70 and low humidity. In the meantime, you prep the ceiling making sure there is no dirt or loose paint that needs to be removed before you texture it. It just wouldn't be right for a loose chunk to fall in your coffee when the textured weight hits a weak area and it eventually comes down and once again, proves that gravity does work.

Finally the weather is right, and you send the wife and son off for the day to the zoo so you can work un interrupted. You head for the hardware rental center in the big store and rent your equipment, get a last minute coaching from the sales person, and, off you go to spray up a ceiling.

After a final check for loose paint and covering the floor with sheet plastic you assemble the scaffolding, then mix the texture material to it's dough consistency, load the hopper, put on your goggles and mask and you're good to go!

## **Copper Bathroom Sinks Add an Easy Elegant Touch**

Copper bathroom sinks are becoming increasingly popular because they are not only beautiful but very functional too. They are not cheap, so they would not be within everyone's budget, but if you can, there are several reasons why you might go for copper bathroom sinks.

### **Low Maintenance and Cleaner Sinks**

Built to last you have to do very little to copper sinks once they are installed. Sure, they tarnish with age and the copper takes on a unique patina, if left alone to oxidize naturally. It slowly turns a wonderful bronze color. Soap and water is all the cleaning it needs, no harsh cleaners. They can, if you want, be treated to retain their original coloring, or at least close to it. Made from thick sheets of copper, they absorb noise, so you don't have to worry about feeling you're inside a bell if you drop your tooth mug into the basin!

Copper bathroom sinks offer a high standard of sanitation. Its naturally antibacterial surface means that bacteria do not live for long on its surface – a few hours, as opposed to a few days, which is the life expectancy of bacteria on stainless steel.

### **Added Elegance**

Copper bathroom sinks add an extra air of elegance to any room, no matter how small or how large. Most are made exclusively by hand, which is why they don't come cheap, but it means they can be found in styles to fit virtually every bathroom décor. The fact that they come on different treated finishes to give a variety in color helps with that. Hammered finishes can also be found, which add a real touch of artwork to the most utilitarian of household appliances: the sink. Because copper is hammered into shape anyway, and these unique marks are all part of its charm, you don't have to be such a perfectionist. A few knocks and scrapes only add to the beauty of copper bathroom sinks. They are strong enough to last a lifetime.

### **A Few Words of Warning**

Copper bathroom sinks are quite a big investment. You need to make sure you are buying one that is of high quality. Less expensive copper sinks are made from recycled copper and may be only ninety per cent copper, which is perhaps not what you thought you were buying at all. They may also not last as long as the real deal in copper bathroom sinks so they will end up costing you more in repair and replacement in the long run.

So, there are real practical and health and hygiene advantages to having bathroom copper sinks; if you can afford them, you are getting a really beautiful addition to any bathroom. No matter what the style, you can buy or have made, just the right copper bathroom sinks for your needs.

## **Do It Yourself Home Sprinkler System**

### **About home sprinkler systems**

There are several different "do it yourself" home sprinkler systems that are available and that you can install for your gardening or your lawn care needs. They will vary from the very complicated PVC pipe with all the digging to install below the frost line in places where the

ground freezes, and the elbows at every turn since the pipe doesn't bend.

You have to go through the process of digging out the trenches to put all the pipes and fittings in, then attaching the sprinkler units at intervals along the pipe. Then comes the joy of filling in the trenches, leveling it all out and re-seeding the area. After two or three days you will have the system in and hopefully functioning when you turn it on. Now this system will need careful and proper routine maintenance to keep it working properly and effectively; if the water in it freezes you will have blown pipe and this means it will all have to be dug up and replaced, meaning more digging, and re seeding again.

### **Simpler home sprinkler systems**

Simpler set ups that are basically maintenance free, almost dig free, and inexpensive are also available. The system consists of a flexible hose like invention that takes the place of the PVC piping and digging. It installs just below the sod line instead of three or four feet down and is supposed to be maintenance free. This system comes in several configurations for different areas like lawn, garden and flower beds. Having some type of system is good for water conservation because you can set it to turn on and off if you have a timer set up. With this system you can most likely dig the trench for it with a hoe since it only needs to be a few inches down so the sprinklers are even with the ground.

### **Hose and sprinkler**

The easiest of all is the old-fashioned hose and sprinkler. You have to run out the hose and attach a sprinkler of your choice, or perhaps a soaker hose, which delivers a heavy mist instead of a sprinkler. Any of the above will get you to the same conclusion: watering the yard and the garden making it easier for you to care for your garden and plants. What you want to pay and the effort you want to put into it are up to you. I would recommend checking out a video on "how to" before you begin either of the first two though. The last method, though not an installation as such, does perform the same function it is just there is not the esthetic example the other two have. Some housing developments even have rules that require the use of hidden sprinklers so definitely look into the DIY if you live in one of them for a hidden system.

## **Easy Installation of Vinyl Replacement Windows**

When installing vinyl replacement windows you want to first determine which windows you want to use. There are so many on the market it can become confusing which one is better and which will add the most value or save the most money. You can decide by choosing which one will make your house look like the home you want it to be.

## **Features**

Once you have decided on which windows, the next step to installing vinyl replacement windows is to know the features of the windows. This will allow you to choose exactly what you want from the manufacturer. From windows which allow full streams of bright sunlight to windows which filter the light to allow a gentle glow come in, you need to understand the U-factor and the R-factor of windows. You need to know how to measure for energy efficiency. You can not just go buy a window and stick it in. Well, you could but you might not like the results. Research a little about windows to make certain you are getting exactly what you want in the window.

## **Measure your Windows Accurately**

When you have educated yourself on windows, you must now take measurements. Before installing vinyl replacement windows, you have to know how big the window is. When you order your windows, you may want to have this step professionally done. Usually the vinyl replacement windows are not able to be returned as they are all custom ordered to fit your window measurements. If you are even  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch off you can find there to be trouble when installing the vinyl replacement windows. By allowing someone to come in and measure you are assured of getting the proper size window for the opening. It is always better to be more safe than sorry.

## **Installation**

After you have chosen the windows and determined the size, you are now ready for installing the vinyl replacement windows. This is actually the fun part of the whole procedure. By removing the old sash and the stops, you now have the opening ready for the new window. Make sure it is clear of any debris. When you set the new window in, you should find that it fits snug in the opening. Once you have the window in the exact spot you want it to be, then screw four of the support screws into place. Check to make sure you are exactly on your mark for the window. By only setting two or four screws it makes it easier if you find you have to move the window. When you are satisfied the window is where it should be, then go ahead and finish the installation according to the manufacturer's instructions. It is not hard installing vinyl replacement windows. Actually, it is a fun project to do. The benefits are worth the time spent installing vinyl replacement windows.

## **Installing a Drop Ceiling**

Drop ceilings are also called a suspended ceiling, and they can give you room to easily access wirings or overhead pipes. They have a real advantage over a drywall ceiling, in that you can easily install them with typical household tools. Also, a drop ceiling is great for providing good sound proofing.

## Parts

The parts to a drop ceiling are some different metal brackets, which are attached to the walls or sometimes suspended with wires from the ceiling. The L-shaped brackets attach to the walls with screws or nails, and then the main runners (also known as T-shaped brackets) attach at four feet intervals along the entire space of the room. As a little tip: you generally want to place the main runners perpendicular (at right angles) to the existing trusses of the ceiling. Then the cross tees are installed at a 90-degree angle to the main runners, and go into the T-shaped brackets at 24" intervals. The plates then rest between the main runners, and thus the major part of the drop ceiling is formed.

## Preparing to Install

When getting ready to install a drop ceiling, the first step is to get a piece of graph paper, carefully measure the dimension of the room you want to add the drop ceiling, and then sketch it out on the paper. By using graph paper, you can create an accurate representation of the area. Then show the sketch to a clerk or distributor at a local hardware store, and he can provide you with all of the parts and components you'll need. Next, you need to figure out the height you want for the ceiling. On the one hand, you want at least four feet from the lowest point of the old ceiling truss to the new ceiling, but you also want at least seven feet from the floor up to the ceiling. Any less and you're going to create a space that feels cramped. If you're installing lights, you want enough space for the fixtures. Use chalk and a level to mark the preferred height, or a laser level. After you establish the perimeter, connect the metal studs all the way around the room, and then connect the brackets to it. It's important that you make the inside corners overlap, and that the outside ones are cut at a 45-degree angle.

## Installation

After that, you're ready to install the main runners. They're placed at four feet intervals, and must be positioned in the centre of the room so that the partial panel ends up along the room's edges. Use a string to measure the height of the perimeter brackets, so that the runners can be at the same length. You suspended the runners with sixteen-gauge wire attached to the ceiling trusses. Attach the wires to every third or fourth truss and hang each down to about twelve inches below the ceiling's height. Then connect the runner to the bracket, and attach it to the wires – the added length to the wires gives you enough length to properly secure the runner. Then snap the cross tees into the runners. If you're going to install lights, this is when you do it. Finally, place the panels into the openings, and you're done.

## Hang an Oval Bathroom Mirror

Putting an oval mirror in a bathroom is a great way to dress up the room and give it a touch of class. Yet, hanging one is a bit different from a standard rectangular one. So, let's go through it one step at a time. Once done, you will see just what a great decorative aspect it adds to the room.

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First, check out the oval mirrors available at your local home decorating and/or hardware stores. Places like Home Depot and Lowe's often have them at great prices. Often times, large oval mirrors are very heavy. So, if you are at all worried about it falling, go with a smaller one – especially if this is your first time hanging one.

Next, examine the back of the mirror; you want to make sure that it has two good, solid eye screws in it. In the case of a mirror that does not come with these screws attached, either buy them or check the packaging to see if it comes with them. Important tip here: the screws need to be placed about a third of the way down from the top. If they're placed too low, the mirror will be in danger of flipping forward; if they're too high, they'll be so close together that the mirror will be prone to flop around.

At the same time that you get the screws, get the correct mirror wire for the weight of the mirror. This is critical, if the mirror is particularly heavy. If you are at all unsure, go to the store where you got the mirror and ask for help. Once you're sure the wire is strong enough, attach it to the eye screws by threading it through one eye screw and then tying a knot it. After that, tie it to the other eye screw. Here's another important tip: be sure to leave a good amount of slack in the line; you want it to bow a little on the back.

As the mirror is oval, getting it evenly placed on the wall is very easy; you just mark the place you want the centre of it to be with a pencil. But, here is another critical hint: the mounting screw must go into solid wood. Most walls these days are drywall, and even with a molly anchor, it will not be strong enough to support a mirror that has a substantial weight. Even if your walls are sheetrock, it is still advisable to secure the mounting screw in a stud. So, use a stud finder to – as the name implies – find a stud, and install the mounting screw in the marked spot.

After the mounting screw is in place, lift the mirror into position, make sure the wire goes over the screw, and then let it hang down. Adjust it as needed to get it properly centred, and you're done. Such a simple piece, and yet it adds so much to a bathroom.

## **Making Your Own Kitchen Cabinets**

If you want to achieve a custom look to your cabinets without spending a lot of money, there are a number of steps to the process of making them yourself. In so doing, a little planning and preparation will allow you to save money, yet create cabinets that are just what you want.

### **Get Ready**

So, step one, assemble the tools and materials you need. You'll need a table saw, a jigsaw router, a drill, a sander and sandpaper, some medium and small-sized clamps, wood glue, several sheets of ½-inch plywood, some 1"x6" lumber, some wood dowels, hinges and knobs, a

box of flathead screws, a box of finish nails, some wood putty, some drawer slides, and a measuring tape.

### **Measure Twice, Cut Once**

Next, measure the opening(s) for the cabinet(s). Use the table saw to cut the ½-inch plywood for the pieces to the back, side, top and bottom pieces of each cabinet. If you're unsure about a template, you can buy one at a hardware store or download it from a woodworking website. Once you have template, frame the cabinet pieces according to the design specifications. Use the finish nails to connect the pieces and some glue to give it extra strength. The clamps can be used at this point to hold the frame together until the glue dries.

### **Attaching the Face Frame**

The next step is to attach a face frame. So, drill holes into the sides of the frame. You then need to make the face frame with some 1"x6" lumber. The face frame is what you use to attach the doors to the cabinets. You'll need to cut four pieces of 1"x6" lumber for each cabinet that you're making. Attach the 1"x6" pieces to each other with some wood screws. After that, drill holes into the face frame so you can attach it to the cabinet frame with nails. By pre-drilling the holes, this will allow for the finish nails to be driven in without any chance of splitting the plywood. Once all the nails are in place, use the wood putty to cover the nail holes.

### **Cutting the Wood**

Now you're ready to cut the wood for the doors. You want them to have a ¼" to 3/8" of overhang so that they can be easily opened. Once again, use the table saw to cut the plywood, and then sand the doors to make them smooth.

### **Applying a Finish**

Here's an important tip: apply wood stain and a polyurethane finish to the cabinet and the doors before you attach them. Apply the wood stain, set everything aside, allow them to dry, and then apply a second coat. As soon as everything is dry, put on a coat of polyurethane finish to all of the components. After that, let it all dry overnight. Another point to remember: always apply the stain and polyurethane in a well-aired room, or outside.

### **Hanging the Cabinets**

Once the cabinets have completely dried, you can attach them to the wall. Another hint to consider: be sure to find walls studs to screw the cabinet into. This is where you'll need help, because you don't want to screw the cabinet in all the way at first. Get them started, and then use shims and a level to set the cabinet into place, before screwing them all the way into the studs. After that, attach the doors, and you're done.

## **Making a Faux Metal Ceiling**

Lots of people love the look of a metal ceiling, but it can be quite expensive to install – or have installed. These days, what with the state of the economy, you may not be able to afford it. Yet, if you want the look of a metal ceiling without the expense, there are ways around it. This particular method involves remodelling an existing hanging ceiling – one that has tiles.

1. Step one is to buy some anaglyptic wallpaper. This is also known as embossed or raised wallpaper, and it can be quite expensive. A good place to find deals on it is on the internet. The wallpaper is ideal for this project because you can get it in a two foot wide roll, and this is almost exactly the size of the standard tiles. They're actually a few inches wider than that, but not enough that people will notice.

2. Next, get some wallpaper glue, paint brushes, a paint roller and pan, and some paint of your choice. You want to go with a metallic colour – brass, silver etc, and maybe a lighter colour for highlights. After that, take down each tile, wipe them off, and then unroll the wallpaper. Cut it into two by two squares, apply the glue, and then centre each piece on a tile. You'll then need to set the tiles aside for a while – from half an hour to an hour – to let the glue set a bit. Then, fill the paint pan with the paint, and use the roller to cover each tile. Now, this is important, do not try to paint the tiles too soon! If you do, you may end up pulling the wallpaper right off. Also, there's the matter of putting the tiles back in place. Do it too soon and the paint might drip and the wallpaper peel off. So, give each tile plenty of time to dry.

3. After you're sure the tiles are well dried, you can add a lighter colour to give highlights – make the "metal" look like it has rusted a bit – and then put them back in place. Finally, use a smaller brush to paint the metal frame that holds the tiles in place the same colour as the tiles. Once done, you'll have a ceiling that truly looks like a metal ceiling, and at nowhere near the same cost.

### **Further Tips**

Here are a couple of other tips to consider when doing this kind of ceiling. First off, wear a mask and goggles when taking down the tiles. If your ceiling is very old, you may have a ton of dust and dirt up there. Next, it's quite common for such ceilings to have insulation above them – this is yet another reason for the mask and goggles. Very often, the insulation is not attached to anything – it's just lying atop the tiles. So, when removing the tiles, do it in an alternating pattern – every other tile. That way, the insulation has enough support to stay in place, and not come tumbling down!

Follow these simple steps, and you can change a dull looking tile ceiling into a lovely faux metal ceiling.

## **Painting a Bathroom**

### **Materials**

When looking to paint your bathroom, there are some materials and supplies you'll need to get. You can get paint that doesn't need a primer, or go with a more inexpensive brand and use a primer. Then there are brushes – fine tips and firm bristles – a paint roller and pan, and a metal screen. This last item will help to insure that the roller doesn't drip. And then there are the non-paint items: sand paper, painter's tape, and some plastic or cloth drop cloths.

### **Preparation**

Once you have all of the proper materials, you can get started. Step one, lay out the plastic or cloth drop cloths and cover as much of the floor sink, vanity cabinets etc that you can. You want to make sure that the drop cloths stay in place; so, use the painter's tape to secure the cloth in place. Next, cover the mirror(s) and other hanging items with small cloths and tape them so that the cloth or plastic won't get in the way of your painting. After that, objects like cabinets, the toilet, the shower, and anything very large and/or bulky can be protected with the painter's tape.

Run it along the edges of those things to insure you don't get any paint on them. Good old painter's tape is the best guard against drips and spots.

### **Getting Started**

At this point, you're ready to get started painting. Now, if your paint requires a primer, apply it to the entire bathroom. The easiest method is to use a brush to first paint the edges, and then use the paint roller to get the midsections of the walls. Now, important tip: when you dunk the roller in the bucket, be sure to roll it up and down a few times on the paint screen. This will avoid any drips creating a blotchy mess on the floor. After completely priming the room, allow it to dry for a few hours. Here's another tip: you only need one coat of primer, despite what some salesperson might tell you. So, don't go crazy with the primer. Once it's dry, run the sand paper across all of the corners and then up and down the middle of the walls. This will insure that the paint looks even across the entire wall, and isn't bumpy and tacky. If you like, this is a good task for using a small electric sander on, but be sure to set it to a low setting. If you sand too hard, you'll take the primer off.

### **The Painting**

At this point, you're ready to paint, and you apply it the same way as the primer. Now, depending on the thickness of the paint, and your own personal preference, you may be able to get by with one coat. Make a judgment after the first coat has dried. If you decide you do need a second coat, be sure to sand the walls prior to applying it. As with the primer, use a brush along the edges and around the sink, toilet etc, and then roll it everywhere else. Once the final coat has dried, give it a light sanding so that it has a nice smooth finish. At that point, you're done!

## **Building a Home Swimming Pool**

In summer and especially after cans of Diet Coke, it is natural to pursue the thought of having a pool to cool you off! All thanks to the new age technology, you don't have to call in the professionals to make your own pool anymore. There are many Do It Yourself kits that are available in the market, to help you in your cooling quest.

Normally, when we talk about building a pool, what comes to mind is how much the diggers/laborers will charge. But if you consider a DIY home pool, you can stop worrying about the wages and the extra costs that you would be charged otherwise. It hardly matters if what you want is a baby pool or a pool to accommodate seven to ten people, you can easily get the equipment from your nearest department store. It is problematic though if you want a bigger pool. This is where you approach the professionals and seek their help in that matter. The most important thing to remember is that if you can make a kiddy pool, you've just got to put in a little more effort to make a larger one. It definitely does not take an Einstein to figure out how to build a pool.

The first thing that you have to do is complete all the formalities like getting a construction license and adhere to the law in your locality with respect to meeting the noise levels. The designing process of the pool will need you to put on your creativity hat. That's because, the idea discussed here is only the basics on how to build a standard in-ground pool. If you are looking forward to building a pool which is unique in design, you have got to be very imaginative.

Look for a good spot where you want your pool, preferably in the backyard. However, you have to make sure that the spot you picked is not much needed so that it can be used for your pool and no other purpose. The digging work has to be done with utmost care or you'll end up having mud all over your house. Mark the place where you about to start off with the digging work and then simply trick your friends by inviting them for a barbeque and hand them the shovels. They are certain to hate you for doing this, but from a long-term point of view, this pool will benefit your friends as well, if you plan to invite them for a swim of course. If the work is too much for you and your friends, you always have the option of renting a backhoe. It will make your job much easier and definitely faster.

Building a DIY home pool is the best way to save money and perhaps the best substitute for employing labor services.

## **Decorating Those Small Box Rooms**

Decorating small rooms always seems difficult. Due to less space you need to plan carefully. You need to know where to place the furniture, what colors will suit the walls and what accessories to buy. All you need is proper arrangement. It's not that difficult to turn your decorating project into a reality if you follow some simple decoration tips for small rooms and small spaces.

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Avoid using warm colors like red and yellows, as they will make a small room seem more small and intense. Since bright colors make a room seem more spacious, go in for colors like blue, green and purple. Usually shades of white and cream look great with “graduations” of accent colors. In case you have a white sofa then you can visualize three shades of rosy pink pillows against it. Use light color for the ceiling, as it should be in contrast with the walls. You can use large patterns in accessories like pillows and throws, but use smaller patterns for wallpaper and furniture.

Simply hang a framed mirror on one of the walls and notice the change in ambience. A modest dining area will appear much larger than the actual size. Thus it enhances the room’s dimension and also creates an illusion of space. In case of small rooms, space is a big problem. So minimize the size of your furniture to maximize space. Reduce the number of furniture pieces so that you get more space. Choose a flat screen TV so that it can be mounted on a wall. Wisely select your furniture like armless chairs that seem to add to the space in the room. Select a coffee table which has multiple shelves below or one that has a lid that lifts to store books, magazines and other similar items.

Make use of combining textures in your décor. This gives a unique appeal, dimension and depth to your small room. You can try new accessories and fabric to create an impact. For example you can chose stone, metal, chrome, copper, bronze, mirrors, shiny fabric, textured fabric etc. Consider daybeds with pullout trundles for small bedrooms. As these daybeds occupy less space and accommodate two people at a time, they offer real value for the money spent. Screens are very useful to divide the rooms for multipurpose in case of a small house or apartment. Place the taller furniture along a far wall and the shorter ones away from the wall to create an illusion of space.

Consider low-back or backless stools in the kitchens to add to the available space. Lighter walls, shelves and cabinets do well to add to the space too. Adding a touch of color by painting one accent wall in the room is the best way to draw attention to that area of the room. Your creativity and imagination will help you to change your decoration project into reality and will make you feel very happy with the end result.

## DIY Projects To Increase The Value of Your Home

Home improvement projects have really come a long way and all thanks to the popular home improvement shows like “Monster House” and “While You Were Out”. Lets admit it, no one wants to stay in a house that looks and smells like a larger version of an out-house. Just imagine a house that is totally unchanged for about 10-15 years. It really starts looking bad if it is neglected any further. The magical transformation that you see on the show “While You Were Out” isn’t that magical after all. All it takes is skill, creativity and the right expertise on the part of the professionals that you employ for the project.

Home improvement projects are bound to increase the value of the home. Although you don’t need any reasons for remodeling your home, you should remember that a remodeling project would always pay off in the end. It is obvious that you’ll need a remodeling job if your house is falling apart. You can also do a remodeling job if your house just doesn’t reflect the same ambience that it used to five years ago. As time passes, so does fashion and it is important for you to stay in touch with the growing trends when it comes to redecorating your house.

A basic remodeling job would include either having a paint job or changing the layout of a particular room altogether. It is amazing what you can do after a remodeling job. You can even convert your bedroom into a full-fledged workplace. However, in case of redecorating, it is important for you to know what you want. If you've already figured that out, the next thing on your agenda should be the budget and hiring the best professionals. In this regard, you have to consider whether you are considering a major overall remodeling job for your entire house or whether you are targeting a specific room. In the former case, you will definitely need the assistance of an architect and an interior designer, whereas in the latter case you will need specialists like electricians, plumbers, carpenters and a painter.

A remodeling job without a plan is just no good. It is necessary for you to prioritize your needs according to your budget. This is good time to have a talk with the professionals about wages and the costs likely to be incurred for the additional equipment. If the price is not within your budget, you can easily opt for another plan. The remodeling project should be aimed at increasing the value of your home. Painting and making extra storage spaces can work wonders with respect to the expected return on your investment. The modeling of your kitchen and the bathroom also play an important role and the floor remodeling should be next on your list followed by the clean up process. In case of remodeling, always choose the best professionals and create a plan to gain a good return on your investment.

### **DIY Remodeling on a Budget**

Decorating the home can be one of the most important and enjoyable experiences for you and your family. But what is more important is to figure out how to get the best from a fixed budget. For newbies, plan your decorating needs. Decide a plan ahead of time on what you are ready to spend on the project and don't forget to include money for miscellaneous accessories. Be realistic in your assessment and specifically list where and when the money will come from. If you think a home improvement loan is required, start on the paperwork and check out the various schemes available. It makes more sense to begin the project later rather than have it held up in between due to lack of funds.

Decide on one room at a time and select the priority areas. Have a plan detailing the color scheme, style and atmosphere that you want. Above all fix a target date for the completion of each area. Time usually overruns results, so always stick to the detailed plan and then finish the work within the speculated time schedule.

Another situation where sometimes costs can go overboard is when people are unsure of exactly it is that they want or hesitant in deciding the precise decorating material suitable for a particular area of the home. In case you do not feel absolutely confident about tackling all aspects of the decoration, then get in touch with a professional interior decorator. The money spent will be an investment rather than an expense, as he or she will save you time, energy, money and a lot of headaches. Explain your likes

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and dislikes, because whatever they do, it is you and your family who should be comfortable with the décor.

Paint and wallpaper borders can be used for updating and refreshing a room and they usually cost less. View colors and patterns in your home during daylight hours before making a purchase. Try and repeat each color in your scheme at eye level and floor level to achieve good visual soothing balance. Always place mirrors so that they reflect something beautiful in the room and the dimensions. They are known to reflect and enhance space as well as lighting too.

If you wish to change your glass panes, first try and dress them with curtains or place larger plants near the windows. While arranging furniture in the social area, you should always plan and allow some flexibility in terms of pulling extra sofas when more guests arrive. Mix and match items that you like. Remember that functionality is more important than fashion. Always select budgeted items that suit your taste as well as functionality. If you wish to remodel your home by adding granite counter tops and hardwood floors, it will cost a lot. Try and find some alternative methods that will cost less and give you the desired effect.

### **Caring For Your Wooden Floor**

If your floor needs a new look, it is always better to go in for wooden floors since they are known to give the home a whole new face-lift. Besides, wooden flooring is always an investment since it adds value to your house. However, that does not mean that you just install the wooden floors and the value will increase all by itself. You have to work towards maintaining your floors so that you can ensure getting a good price for your house, if you want to sell it any time in future that is.

In case of maintaining wooden floors, one thing that you should remember is that each type of wood needs to be treated differently. If you do not consider this then you will certainly damage your wooden flooring. Wood flooring is beautiful and it should add to the décor of your home, making your rooms look elegant. All your wood flooring needs is some effort from your part by ensuring regular maintenance.

Always remember, water is the greatest adversary of wood. Keeping this mind, take care of any water spillage on the floors. A proper finish given to your wood flooring determines what effect water can have on the floor. But the bottom line is that water and wood just don't gel. The Polyurethane finish is highly recommended by experts. Once you know what sort of finish your wood flooring has, you can get on to the cleaning duties as a measure of maintenance. Water can produce some really disastrous effects on your floor if not soaked up immediately. If the water does manage to seep through the floor, it can directly affect the wooden planks thereby leading to deterioration.

In case of cleaning wooden floors, it is advised to use a slightly damp cloth. That's because there is no way for the water to trickle away from a damp mop thereby ensuring that your floor is cleaned without the water damaging the floor. In addition to the damp mop, there are specific cleaners available for both the finishes, i.e., the Polyurethane finish as well as the standard wax or oil coating. Apart from mopping, you should also dust and clean regularly to enhance the shine. Vacuuming is a good way to start off the cleaning process. The problem with dust is that it manages its way to every corner. In this

regard, using the vacuum cleaner with its specific attachments should just do the trick in order to render your wooden floors clean.

Wooden floors are highly susceptible to surface damages such as dents and scratches, caused by high heel stilettos and animal scratches. It is obvious that some parts of the floor bear heavy traffic of footfalls. You can place floor rugs, mats and carpets in such places ensuring the safety of the flooring.

### **Things to Consider**

The home is the last and most preferred resort for almost everyone who wants to unwind and relax. It should be designed into a living space that has a personalized environment where you truly feel - 'at home'. Decorating your home is the best way of turning an outdated environment into a lively, brighter one.

Decorating isn't only limited to toiling for a well-designed, well-organized, properly painted house, it also includes accessorizing the living space to make the home accents equally important. All you need is confidence to get you going. Whether you are decorating the home on an exorbitant budget or a small budget, it can be equally exciting. If you judiciously decorate the living space and acquire a few pieces at a time, you will be able to take off the strain on your wallet. Moreover, since you are making an attempt to make your home more comfortable to live in, add your personal taste and style. Decorating your home is the most creative and exciting way of showing the tastes and interests you and your family share.

It is always advisable to plan out your decoration and remodelling ideas of the home before you actually initiate the home decoration endeavour. It could be decorating the smallest room or the largest; it is always good to know what would be needed, involved and how can it be done. Try and envision what would be appealing to people walking into your home. Many people try and amalgamate contemporary and traditional furnishing to make a fine mesh out of the two. Choose your furniture carefully so that it suits your family and coincides with the home décor. You can use a variety of fabrics, flooring, furnishings, accessories and hues. After you have thoroughly researched things like the various colour combinations and how they can be applied, you will see for yourself how you can design and decorate your home in a novel and innovative way.

Creativity is an individual thing. Before you actually initiate home decoration, keep in mind that a living space cannot be conformed to a single style. Many home designs are a fine combination of assorted styles that should have an effectual blend. You need not always use the same accessories or copy from someone else. Accessories are an individual reflection; they add personality and character to your home. Whether it is accent pillows or artwork, always try to use accessories that depict a stylish and interesting décor. When you purchase genuine accessories, you can effectively transform your living space into a well decorated home devoid of all high costs. To accentuate your interior designs and display varied home accents like photos and artwork in frames.

## Using tiles to brighten your home

Flooring is the most important aspect of your home décor. It could be your bathroom or kitchen; you need to select the proper tiles. Though a huge variety of tiles are available in the market you need to select the best for your home. Ceramic tiles really brighten up the home with the artistic and wonderful designs.

The best part about tiles is that you need to install them just once. If you are looking for something durable and are planning to place it for a long time then ceramic tiles are the best option. Manufacturers have come up with the most durable ceramic tiles, with long lasting beauty.

Ceramic tiles are well known for the glossy finish and pearl like shine. But those who prefer to bathe in a spotlessly clean bathroom should maintain the tiles regularly. There were times when ceramic tiles were meant only for the wealthy. But now they are available at affordable prices. These tiles can be installed easily onto any wall, to enhance your home interiors. Hand-painted ceramic tiles are compared to framed paintings! Framed paintings may not work well in case of steamy bathrooms or a greasy kitchen area, as they gather dust and need to be cleaned frequently.

Hand painted ceramic tiles are unique. A skilled hand-painter can make use of various textures and colored objects. Mayan stone carvings, Egyptian hieroglyphics, and cave art paintings all look real in ceramics. However you need to maintain the glossy look and pearl like shine of your ceramic tiles. This doesn't mean you need to spend a lot on professional cleaners. This can be done easily with proper care. Here are some easy tips to keep your tiles clean.

**Wipe them daily:** This is the easiest way to keep your tiles clean. It hardly takes 10 to 15 minutes of your precious time. Simply take a cloth and some water and wipe of the surface after use. This way you can prevent the dirt from piling up. You can also avoid the mildew formation by drying the tiles with cloth or sponge.

**Protect the tiles with Felt and Pads:** If you prefer heavy furniture made of wood or any other metals like aluminum or even plastic, then place felt or pads under the legs. This protects your tiles from the wear and tear and allows easy movement and shuffling.

**Make use of mats wherever required:** Your kitchen, doorstep or the bathroom doors are the places where most stains show. Make use of good quality mats in such places. These mats protect your tiles from getting dirty. They are also useful in avoiding direct pressure, weight or friction on the tiles. Don't forget to wash these mats once in while, so as to remove the dirt deposits. Replace the mats regularly

## Home Renovation Survival

Dealing with home renovation could seem a very daunting task to some, but it may not always be a pain. You can survive a renovation and minimize the stress. Even if you have opted for the 'do-it-yourself' route, renovating your home can be a very easy task.

Given below are some building and home renovation survival tips

## DIY Secrets

Devise a plan – Whenever you decide to renovate your home, start by creating a realistic plan that includes a schedule of every task you plan to undertake. Since you are renovating the house to make it a better place to live in for your family, their comfort comes first. If a certain room needs more time to work on, allot spare rooms for the family to shift, till the renovation is over. For instance, if you are remodeling the kitchen, make sure you have necessary provisions to cook food in another room.

Make choices before renovating – Choose all the required equipment and fittings before you start the renovation. Everything from the color of the walls to the color and style of the cabinets should be decided on. Make sure the job isn't held up if you don't have something. After you have everything at hand and a definite plan to execute, avoid making any major changes during renovation. Major changes not only lengthen the process, but also increase expenses.

Seek help – Although you have decided to do the renovation by yourself, you can consult a renovation contractor for tips. You would not want to spoil your house in the effort towards making it better. If you end up doing more than necessary, you might actually spend more.

Let your neighbors know – Whenever you decide on renovating your home, make sure the neighbors know. You wouldn't want to take on any brawls with the neighbors over noise issues. Take along a basket of muffins or invite them over for a party after the renovation. They will surely be cooperative if you take on a positive and friendly attitude.

Time is the essence – Avoid making any major renovations if you are planning to join a new job or have a bay during remodeling or renovations. If you happen to have a lengthy renovation, you might end up putting your own job and family life at stake. If at all you have a big renovation project in hand, consider rescheduling your plan.

Limit the disruption – It is highly impossible to control noise and inconvenience while renovating. You can send the family on vacation or to another house in the city to avoid them undergoing any inconvenience. Keep little kids away from the renovation as the dust and rubble might cause health hazards. If you cannot shift the family, consider setup up a make shift kitchen in the yard. You can install a small refrigerator, hot plate and microwave there.