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Inexpensive bathroom additions

As older adults age in place and more households make room for multiple generations, how will Americans respond to the home-improvement challenge?

Two important housing trends are both emerging and merging today: Older adults increasingly want to "age in place," while a record number of households have united across multiple generations. The second trend is in response to both the flagging economy and to support elder parents' desire to stay at home.

If your home is reaching capacity, as family members band together, you are likely faced with a home-improvement challenge. How can you inexpensively accommodate additional family members under a single roof, especially their need for added bathrooms?

■ One is never enough

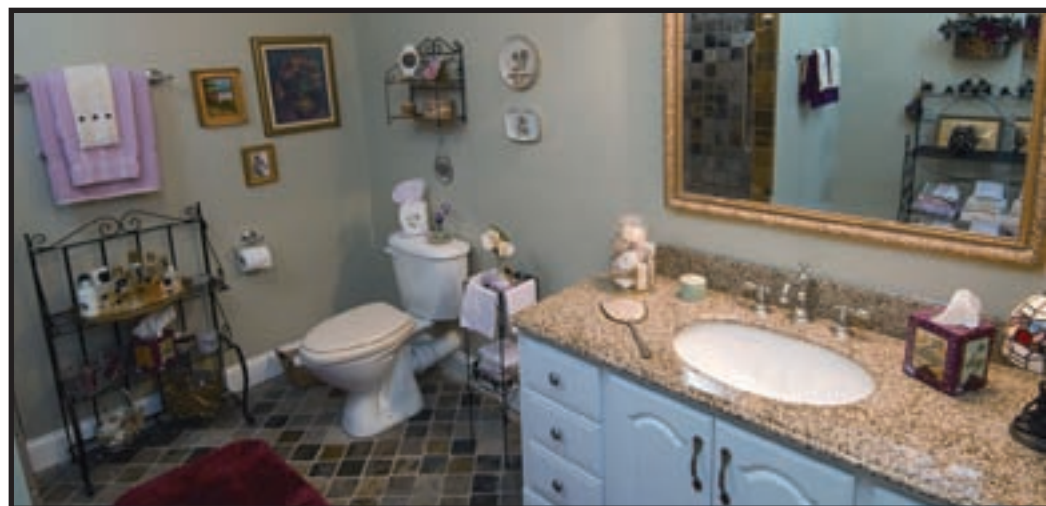
Costly, messy and time-consuming conventional plumbing can leave families stuck with a single shared bathroom. Fortunately, there is a smart and inexpensive way to increase bathroom privacy and convenience in any home, on any level including the basement, even in smaller homes.

Saniflo macerating toilet and plumbing technology lets you add a complete bathroom with an up flush toilet; and there's no need for expensive digging through the floor to install new drainage where none exists. If space is a problem, these bathrooms can easily be installed in a closet or the area beneath a stairway.

■ The sandwich generation

Baby boomers can get sandwiched in the middle of multi-generational living, say gerontological nurse specialist Rosina Bloomingdale and designer Genevieve Liesemeyer. Partners with Pillar Design in Mukwonago, Wisc., the two women create designs that promote health and well being in harmonious environments.

"Many boomers still have children at home



and/or in college," Liesemeyer says. "Some may have one or more parents moving in, too, while others have adult children moving back in with them. Saniflo products can be a real problem-solver in these cases."

Have a Gen X-er moving in with you? Why not add a basement bathroom? Need to help grandma, so she can stay at home longer? Create a ground-floor master suite with a full bathroom, so she won't have to climb stairs. Whatever is motivating your modern multi-generational household, with up flush technology, you can have a convenient extra bathroom anywhere, even in smaller homes.

■ Self-reliance plus safety

Regardless of age, Bloomingdale suggests we all take steps to promote mobility and independence, while increasing safety. One easy option is to use bright LED lighting, which is longer-lasting, so there is less need to climb ladders and step stools to replace them. Bloomingdale also recommends keeping floor surfaces in good repair, removing tripping and slipping hazards, and providing easy access to



phones and other essential equipment.

For homes with young children, the nonprofit Home Safety Council recommends constant supervision. Other selected safety advice includes:

- Lock up medicines and other poisons.
- Keep water heaters set at 120 F to prevent scalds.
- Use toilet lid locks to prevent drowning.

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How you can make your home more fire safe

A home fire is as devastating as it is dangerous. Fires in the United States cost as much as \$347 billion every year. Even more distressing is the fact that as many as 3,200 civilians and 85 firefighters lose their lives to fire every year.

With the right precautions, your home can be safe and secure. To start, go through this fire safety checklist.

- Check smoke detectors to make sure they're working properly and that batteries have full power. There should be at least one smoke alarm on each floor of your house.

- Consider investing in residential fire sprinklers. If your home already has them, make sure that they are inspected by trained professionals on a regular basis.

- Make sure that your house number is clearly visible from at least 20 feet away. If trees or bushes are obscuring the house number, trim the foliage back.

Once you've gone through your fire safety checklist, it's important to sit down with your family and create a detailed emergency plan. When you know how to escape a fire and protect your home and family, you'll be able to rest easier. (ARA)



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■ IN THE KITCHEN

Savvy storage

Update your mismatched wares with Smart Spin Storage Containers. They offer three different storage sizes and a holder keeps all the storage containers and universal-sized lids organized in less than one square foot (\$20).

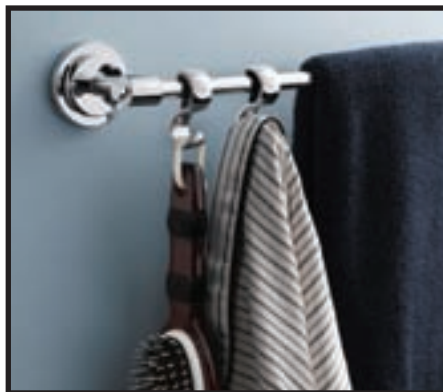
Use unused space

Most bathrooms are equipped with accessories to keep towels neat and at your fingertips, so why not use the same organization tools in the kitchen? For less than \$25, you can add a towel bar, towel ring or robe hook on the side of a cabinet or an island to keep dish towels handy (and off the floor).

■ IN THE BATHROOM

Shower and storage

Space and storage are key concerns in bathroom design; luckily, you can create up to 5 1/2 additional inches of elbow room in the shower, while also adding extra hanging space for daily essentials with the new Double



Curved Shower Rod from Moen (\$59.99).

Simple space solution

No matter how organized your bathroom, it's always tough to find a place for the many daily necessities that we want at our fingertips. Now, you can easily keep these items within arm's reach - yet off the vanity - with new Towel Bar Hooks and Shower Rod Hooks from Moen (\$10). These ingenious, S-shaped hooks snap right onto your current towel bar or shower rod to offer convenient access for a variety of items, such as clothing, jewelry,



towels, travel bags and more.

■ IN THE GARAGE

Up and out

Often overlooked, the overhead area is ideal to suspend a variety of larger items, such as bikes, that take up coveted floor space. For only a few dollars, you can purchase large plastic-coated hooks that easily screw into the ceiling joist and allow you to hang the bicycle upside down by the tires.

Balls, bats and shovels, oh my

Specialized organization systems for sporting goods and lawn equipment are available to confine anything from bats and balls to shovels and rakes. (ARA)

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Questions you should ask about what 'green' means

As consumers and marketers have jumped onto the trend, it's no longer difficult to outfit your home with products that are classified as "green." You now have multiple choices among products that claim to be the most environmentally friendly, which can cause some confusion about which ones are the best.

"Many products are labeled green, but it's important to know what green really means. When selecting green building materials, consider their overall impact on the environment," says Mike McDonald, national green homebuilder. "Select products that are natural and renewable."

Begin by asking three questions.

■ **1. Where does it come from and what has gone into producing it?**

Did it come from the earth or was it produced in a factory? Usually, the less time spent manufacturing the product in a factory means less energy consumed in preparing the product for your use, as the heavy machinery required to manufacture materials in a factory setting also uses lots of energy.

Look for natural products that are renewable, growing back quickly and efficiently, and that use few or no chemicals or compounds



that negatively affect the environment.

■ **2. What is the product's true overall impact on the environment?**

Think about the energy that's needed to manufacture, transport and eventually dispose of the product. Knowing where a product comes from is half the battle. When shopping

for building products, ask the retailer these types of questions. Native wood products from the United States or Canada will have travelled a shorter distance when they make it to your house. You should also give thought to the impact of any work you might need to do with the products once you bring them home from the store or lumber yard.

■ **3. How long will the material last and how will it hold up?**

A key to conservation is selecting materials that will hold up for a long time, as they won't need to be harvested or manufactured as frequently. This will save you money in the long run as well. McDonald and Kelsey recommend using wood products like Western Red Cedar for projects because it's the most sustainable choice and it's beautiful, durable and will outlast other choices.

By asking the right questions, you'll be sure that you are doing your part for the environment by selecting the building products with the least impact. Whether you are building a deck, siding your house or adding warmth to interiors, if you select the right material, you'll ensure that your projects will look good for longer. (ARA)

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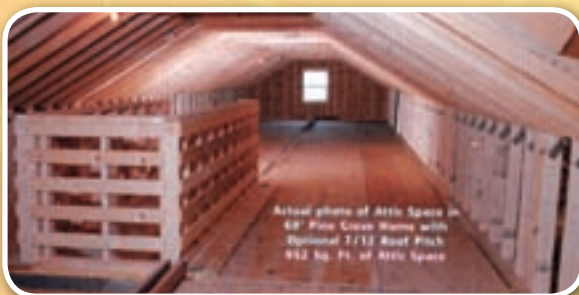
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Warm your home for the holidays with energy-efficient products

Fall colors, cooler weather and crackling fires mean the holidays are right around the corner. As consumers prepare themselves and their homes for colder temperatures, many will seek out energy-efficient products. By making smart decisions, you can be sensible, yet stylish, when the cold weather, family and friends arrive for the holidays.

The first place to start is your windows and doors. Replacing old, drafty windows and doors with fashionable, more energy-efficient ones can help you save energy and lower your utility bills year-round.

■ Long-term energy savings

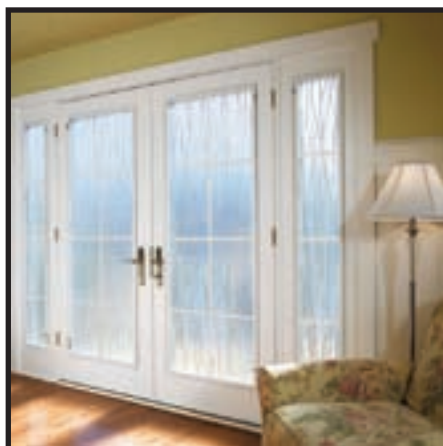
To help stretch your paycheck and add to the comfort of your home, replace items with more energy-efficient options that help provide long-term savings and a short-term defense against rising energy rates.

The Energy Star program, created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy, helps consumers identify energy-efficient products.

■ Improve your energy efficiency

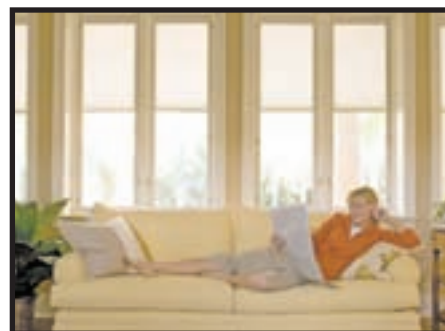
To help improve your home's energy efficiency, consider these tips:

- During cold weather, keep window treatments on southern-facing windows open



during the day to capture the sun's heat. Close them at night to help keep heat inside your home. During warmer months, close the blinds, shades or curtains during the heat of the day to reflect the sun's heat away from your home's interior.

- Choose double- or triple-pane windows with low-emissivity (low-e) coatings to improve energy efficiency and reduce heating and cooling costs, especially from northern-facing windows.
- Keep window treatments closed when



the sun is shining in from east- and west-facing windows to help reduce the heat buildup from solar heat in your home.

Regardless of the type or style of windows and doors you choose, it's essential that they are installed properly for best performance in sealing out air and moisture.

■ Short-term style solutions

Pella is teaming up with Lowe's to make it easy for homeowners to jumpstart their next energy-saving home improvement project.

Pella Designer Series 750 windows and patio doors feature between-the-glass blinds, fabric shades and removable grilles with exclusive snap-in technology that make them easy to change. (ARA)



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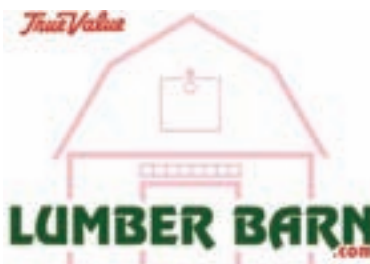
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Get your house ready for the holiday season

Don't be caught off guard this holiday season when you are unexpectedly tasked with hosting the holiday party for your coworkers, friends or family. There are a number of do-it-yourself projects that can help you prepare the kitchen for your next get-together.

The kitchen is where you will spend a lot of time cooking and prepping during the days leading up to a party. A new sink or faucet can instantly modernize your kitchen and even help make your tasks easier.

Delta Faucet's Touch2O Technology makes it easy to stay clean and multi-task in the kitchen. The intuitive technology enables you to turn the faucet on and off with just a touch anywhere on the spout or handle. If hands get messy during food prep, the flow of water can be controlled by a simple tap with a forearm or wrist, helping to keep the faucet clean while reducing the potential for cross-contamination. The tap feature also makes it easier to turn off the water flow when it is not needed between tasks, potentially saving water. The technology is available on the Pilar Pull-Down Kitchen Faucet and the new Addison Pull-Down Kitchen Faucet. (ARA)



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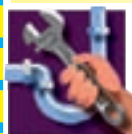
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Fast, frugal fall fix-ups for your home

The shorter, cooler days signal that it's time to snuggle up inside the comfort of your home. If you discover your home could use a little pizzazz, it only takes a few quick fixes, combined with creativity and elbow grease, to transform the rooms where you spend most of your time. In a weekend or less, you can make your home go from stale to striking.

As you look around the house, ask yourself this, "If I could fix only one thing in each room, what would that be?" These answers are your quick fixes. Not all home decorating ideas require a great deal of time or money but can transform a tired-looking room into something truly eye-catching.

■ **Study your foyer, for starters.** It's the first thing guests see when they enter your home. What can you do to make it more inviting? Maybe it needs a little more color. Add a colorful rug to the entry way and maybe a floral arrangement to the console by the front door.

■ **The kitchen likely is the other main gathering place for both family and visiting friends.** These high-traffic areas usually can use fresh paint more frequently than other rooms.

■ **Next, what about your living room?**

Is it too austere? Does it sit unused? While it might be out of your budget to change the furniture, you can warm it up and make it a space where people want to sit and visit by getting rid of those formal, outdated window treatments. Dress windows with light blinds or sheer curtains that provide privacy but allow light to filter through. You might also want to rearrange the furniture into a grouping that's less formal and more inviting.

■ **Chances are, you and your family think your family room is pretty great,** but even your favorite lounging space always can use a little upgrading to keep it modern, fun and welcoming. One easy change for this often-used space is new throw pillows. Add a splash of fresh color to the familiar simply by swapping out pillows on couches and chairs or adding a nook of colorful floor pillows for family members who prefer to sprawl on the floor to watch TV and play video games. Or, maybe you'd rather invest in a new slipcover to bring a fresh look to the room and transform your old sofa into something new and special. New lamps also can update a room almost instantaneously.



■ **When you're doing your fall upgrades, don't forget the bathroom.** For a small investment, you can transform the space with some fresh paint and a new faucet. If you're looking for an even bigger change, you can accessorize it further with a mirror in a finish that matches the faucet, as well as coordinating robe hooks and towel bars.

"Putting a fresh spin on any home's decor doesn't always mean you have to think big," Prebel says. "Small changes can easily transform a space from boring to beautiful in less than a weekend, even on the tightest of budgets."

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Hot paint colors for cool weather redecorating

Summer was a sizzler, but cooler weather brings relief and a return to the indoors, which can seem a bit drab after the lively colors of summer. The easiest way to spruce up your decor is with fresh color on the walls. Along with the beauty and warmth of traditional harvest colors or the soothing calm of winter hues, consider going bold with your favorite vibrant shade of paint. Or, use a relaxed neutral that provides the perfect backdrop for colorful accessories.

■ Hi-DEF color technology in paint

Just in time for your fall and winter projects, high definition paint has arrived. Valspar's Signature Paint with Hi-DEF Color, available only at Lowe's, provides absolutely clear color rendition, meaning the color you see on the paint chip will translate beautifully and precisely to what you see on the wall.

With this assurance, coordinating your decor colors will be easier, too.

■ Practicality with pop

Americans are going back to basics and redefining what is important to them, from spending more time with family and friends to practical thinking about their budgets. As homeowners look at their homes as less of a financial investment and more of an emotional one, they're creating spaces that reflect their personal style, including decor and color schemes that synch with the way they really live. Color is the best way to set the tone of a



home and a very practical way to add pops of personality.

Paint is budget and time friendly, and the mood changing power of color does wonders for the spirit. This year, cool weather color schemes will emphasize neutral foundations, such as grays and beiges with surprising punches of color in fresh greens and cooler blues or classic harvest colors like spicy reds, golds and browns.

For an instant home decor refresh, paint



an accent wall in a favorite hue that complements your existing decor.

■ Holiday hues

Red, green, and metallic colors like gold and silver put many of us in festive moods, and the colors are certainly appropriate for holiday decorating. But they also have their place in year-round decor. Traditional hues can make us feel calm or invigorated in any weather: think relaxing, soft greens, lively golds and deep, Santa-suit reds.

When using two complementary hues, like red and green, in the same room make one more dominant than the other to create a more pleasing effect. Adding metallic hardware and lighting accents in pewter, brushed nickel, burnished brass or copper will add sparkle to your color scheme no matter the season. (ARA)

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The Washington Post - September 25, 2009
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Create a kids room that inspires learning and creativity

As the cold weather approaches, kids spend less time outdoors burning off all that wonderful energy. The change in weather also means that everyone - including you - spends more time indoors.

Don't worry. There's an easy and inexpensive way to turn any room into an environment that fosters your child's learning and creativity. Here are a few tips for creating the perfect area for learning and fun:

■ **Inspire creativity.** When turning up the creativity in a child's room, a good place to start is the walls. Research reveals that painting a room in the colors of nature - light green or warm teal - can inspire creativity, as well as create a calm learning environment that promotes a positive state of mind. Light blue (the color of academics) or light pink or rose, are good colors too, especially for very active children who need a calming environment to focus. Before painting, apply three thin coats of Rust-Oleum Magnetic Primer. It transforms any wall into a surface that attracts magnets, so kids can hang their favorite photos, artwork or school papers without tape or push pins.

■ **Let them write on the walls** (or doors or dresser drawers). Educators recognize that giving kids a space to express their creativity or just think out loud is an important component of the learning process. Instead of creating paper clutter or buying a chalk or dry erase board, why not paint a wall, door or dresser drawers with Chalkboard or Dry Erase Paint. Chalkboard Paint comes in black, green and a tint base where you can choose from fun colors such as Periwinkle or Raspberry. Both Chalkboard and Dry Erase Paint can be applied over existing paint and instantly turn any surface into a space for math problems, poetry or homework assignments. It's also great for leaving messages or subtle reminders, like, "time to clean your room."

■ **Create a space to work.** You don't have to spend a fortune to give your child the perfect workspace for studying and homework. You can transform a flea market desk - or repurpose a table and chair you already own - with a little spray paint. Try Rust-Oleum Ultra Cover 2X. It's available in popular colors and offers twice the coverage of competitive general purpose spray paint. Coordinate by spray painting a bookcase, some picture frames - even the bed's headboard - to add a little more color to the room. The possibilities are endless. (ARA)





Cozy up to redecorating and prepare your home for entertaining

After months of sunshine, cookouts, beach-going and outdoor entertaining, it can be a little disappointing to realize the cool bite of fall is here. But warding off those cold-weather blues can be as simple as redecorating a room (or a few) to create a hideaway that you can enjoy until spring arrives. With a little time and creativity, you can create a fresh space that will outlast the dreary weather of the coming months.

■ **Preparing a home for the coldest months of the year** - whether you expect to host company for the holidays or to simply spend more time indoors - can seem daunting. But professional designer and television personality Danielle Hirsch says there is no need to fret. Hirsch says there are many ways to minimize the time and expense you might associate with refreshing your home's interior. Here are just a few of her easy and affordable tips that can help bring new life to your decor.

■ **A fresh coat of interior paint can truly do wonders to renew a space.** Dutch Boy's Restore My Decor.com website features advice from Hirsch to help you decide what color and design scheme is right for your room. She also offers tips to help your project run smoothly. Don't stop with wall color, though. As the weather turns bleak, heat up your home design by bringing a bit of color inside. Are you conservative when it comes to design? Try accenting a neutral room with a few pieces of the same color family. If you're more daring, play with a variety of warm, bright colors. "Take cues from Mother Nature and pull colors you see from the foliage around you," Hirsch says. "Rich oranges, chocolate browns, vibrant reds and ambers - these colors bring energy as the days get darker earlier."

■ **To create the perfect atmosphere for your cozy escape, appealing to all senses is a must.** Give your entire home a warm, inviting aroma with seasonal scented candles. Liven up a dining room with a visually stimulating centerpiece or wall hanging. Or make a casual den more comfortable with overstuffed throw pillows or a faux fur rug. You can also take pleasure in the changing of the seasons by incorporating natural outdoor elements into your decor. "Nothing says fall like a pumpkin, and if you hollow it out, it makes a great vase," Hirsch says. She also suggests accenting a room with seasonal fruits, vegetables and flowers, colorful leaves and pinecones for quick and easy ways to bring the natural beauty of autumn indoors.

Hirsch goes on to say, "This fall, don't be lulled into hibernation. Take the time you have indoors and put it to good use. Tackling interior projects now will leave your home looking beautiful and ready for family and friends for years to come."

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