

Whether your budget is small or large, here are some design essentials you should know when it comes time to upgrade your home.

design trends

S WARM IT UP

Strictly utilitarian is out when it comes to kitchens and bathrooms. Rather than doing a complete kitchen renovation, resurface cabinets and replace laminate countertops to breathe new life into your kitchen. Adding accent lights can create warmth. Spa bathrooms with large whirlpool tubs, heated floors and towel warmers are popular in upscale homes. More economical options include installing multiple shower heads and upgrading sink fixtures to create that high-end spa feel.

S CHOOSE HARD FLOORING

The biggest trend in flooring is the transition away from carpeting. New wood products, contemporary linoleum, stained concrete and travertine tile are being used not only in kitchens and baths but throughout the entire home. Greener options like bamboo and cork also prove durable and attractive. Laminate and vinyl flooring are a less expensive alternative. Consider pulling up old carpeting if you have wood underneath, and refinish back to its natural beauty.

e CREATE STORAGE SPACE

Storage space is a must. Homes today feature walk-up attics, walk-in kitchen pantries and room-size bedroom closets. Builders are adding recycling bins and appliance garages in kitchens, butler's pantries and computer niches. Increase your storage space with built-in dressers and shelving systems.

n DESIGN WITH LIGHT

Lighting is being used in more dramatic ways than it has been in the past. It enhances both traditional and contemporary living spaces. Accent lights highlight architectural elements, uplights draw eyes to a high ceiling, undercounter lights brighten countertops and dimmers help set the mood in each room.

a i s t a g i n g

IT'S ALWAYS TRENDY TO STAGE LIKE A PRO

Whether you are selling your home or just hosting friends and family, here are some easy and inexpensive ways to make your home look its best:

- Place fresh flowers on tables. Replace unsightly artificial plants with real ones.
- Purchase a new shower curtain and white towels for the bathrooms.
- Select colour-coordinated seat cushions and throw pillows for couches.
- Display a seasonal wreath or ornament.

3 home improvement ideas you can do easily.

Select a cozy space in your home and create a "summer room." Freshen the walls with a hue found on a warm summer day. Consider a flower bloom, the sky or a vibrant green from a favourite plant or vegetable as your inspiration. It's a fun, inexpensive project that makes you feel warm—even in the middle of winter.

Great fabrics never go out of style. Lighten up any room by replacing heavy fabrics with light and airy ones. Old drapes can be replaced with an open weave fabric such as chiffon or organza. Throw pillows and slipcovers also make a trendy statement. Add crisp white, a bright solid or even modern, floral patterns for accent and interest.

Do it with mirrors. A well-placed mirror will add more natural light in your home and make any room look larger and more appealing.





stage your home for



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HOME STAGING IS AN EXCITING WAY TO CREATE A BEAUTIFUL, WARM ENVIRONMENT THAT CAN BE ENJOYED BY ALL.

Whether you are staging your home to sell, opening your home to friends or you desire an instant face-lift, home staging is an easy and affordable design option that can be done room-by-room.

- **LIVING AREAS** - When a room is in order, it looks good, feels good and allows potential buyers to visualize their own things in the home. Make sure everything has its own place. Splashes of colour can be achieved with flowers, artwork or accessories.
- **BATHROOM** - Expect guests and prospective buyers to use your bathroom. Make sure your towels are clean and properly hung up. A common trick is to place fresh white towels for display purposes and keep your everyday towels out of sight.
- **BEDROOMS** - The biggest problem with staging a bedroom is to make sure there is ample storage available so that clothing and toys can be put out of sight. Invest a little money in a good closet organizer and you will be able to keep your bedrooms clutter-free and orderly.
- **KITCHEN** - A creative spice rack will keep your counters clean and can bring some flair to your kitchen. Spices come in many different colours and textures, so find a way to make them work for you. If you use copper pots, consider displaying them with a hanging pot rack.
- **OUTDOORS** - Keep your tools and the kids' toys out of sight. Maintain your landscaping properly; mow the lawn and trim the edges regularly. Prune any bushes or trees that block the view out of your windows.

10 inexpensive ways to freshen up your home:

- 1 Buy new towels for the bathroom
- 2 Upgrade outdoor lighting
- 3 Install new doorknobs and cabinet handles
- 4 Make a centerpiece for your dining room table
- 5 Buy a new mailbox
- 6 Polish or replace your house numbers
- 7 Place fresh flowers or houseplants around the home
- 8 Buy colour-coordinated pillows for the sofa and bed
- 9 Replace your worn doormat
- 10 Set out subtle potpourri or scented candles



7 steps to prepare for an open house

- 1) Hire a cleaning service. A spotless, clean home shows off a home better than anything.
- 2) Mow your lawn and make sure the yard looks great.
- 3) Park your cars away from the front of your house or driveway.
- 4) Lock up all your valuables, jewelry and money. Although your real estate professional will be on site during the open house, it will provide fewer temptations.
- 5) Turn on all the lights, even in the daytime. Incandescent lights add sparkle.
- 6) Send your pets to a neighbour's house or take them outside. If that's not possible, crate them or confine them to one room and let your agent know where to find them.
- 7) Visit friends or run some errands. It's awkward for prospective buyers to look in your closets and freely express their opinions with you there.

