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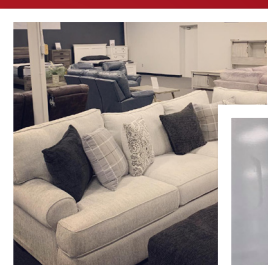
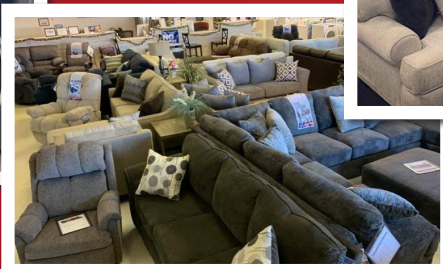
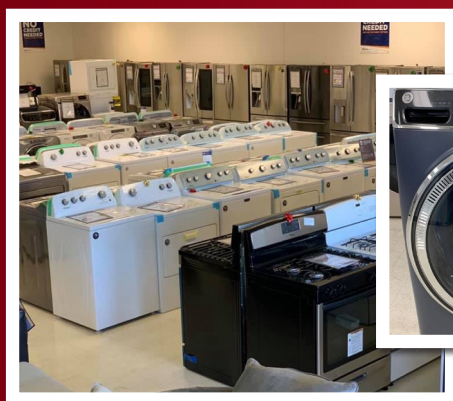
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Tips for planning a major renovation

Do you want to remodel your home so it better suits the needs of your growing family? Or maybe you hope that a major upgrade will appeal to potential buyers? Regardless of your goals, here are a few things you should do to ensure your large-scale renovation is a success.

- Determine your needs and establish a list of priorities such as creating an open-concept living space or adding a second floor
- Settle on a maximum budget and reserve a portion of the amount for unexpected expenses
- Do some research to find out whether you qualify for any home renovation rebate programs

- Obtain all the necessary permits from your municipality before you begin any work
- Consult with and hire all needed professionals such as an architect, interior designer, general contractor and electrician
- Set a realistic timeframe in which to complete the work
- If needed, make arrangements for your family to live elsewhere during the renovations

Remember, when properly planned and completed by experienced professionals, most major home renovations offer a great return on investment.



7 essential steps for painting kitchen cabinets

An effective and affordable way to freshen up your kitchen is to paint the cabinets. For great results, follow these seven steps.

1. REMOVE DOORS AND DRAWERS

Start by taking apart the cabinets so you can work on a flat surface. You should also remove all handles, hinges and other hardware. Be sure to number the doors and drawers so you know where each item goes when you reassemble the cabinets.

2. CLEAN EVERY SURFACE

To remove fingerprints, grease and other residue, wipe down all components of the cabinets with a solution of warm water and liquid dish soap. Rinse thoroughly and let each surface dry completely before you move on to the next step.

3. LIGHTLY SAND EACH SURFACE

Remove the finish on the doors and cabinets using a sanding block with fine-grit paper. This will create a rough surface for the paint to grip. If the existing paint is peeling, you may need to start with a medium- or coarse-grit sandpaper and then finish with one that has a finer grain.

4. REMOVE ALL THE DUST

Sanding the cabinets will create wood dust, which needs

to be removed to ensure a smooth paint job. Start by vacuuming up the loose particles, then wipe down each surface with a damp cloth. Allow the cabinets to dry completely.

5. APPLY A COAT OF PRIMER

An undercoat of primer helps ensure the paint's adhesion. Be sure to apply it evenly to all surfaces. For a more eco-friendly option, choose a water-based product.

6. ADD TWO COATS OF PAINT

Once the primer dries completely, apply a thin coat of paint to the interior and exterior of the cabinets, doors and drawers. Make sure the paint flows into the corners of any raised features. Wait at least three hours for the paint to dry before you apply the second coat.

7. LET THE PAINT CURE

To ensure your cabinets are resistant to scratches and dents, wait a week or two for the paint to harden before you reinstall the doors and drawers.

Once your cabinets have been remounted, consider getting stylish hardware and light fixtures to enhance your kitchen's new look. These elements will help define the space's style.



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2020 TRENDS: Why glass partitions deserve a look

If you want to create designated spaces in your home without sacrificing the airiness of open-concept living, glass partitions offer a beautiful compromise.

This type of room divider helps block out noise while continuing to let in plenty of natural light. If you want to create an office space or reading nook in your living area, for example, such partitions are ideal. Alternatively, glass walls can be used to keep strong smells in the kitchen without obstructing sight lines.

From intricately etched panels to industrial steel frames, glass partitions can be incorporated into any style of home and customized to fit any space. Plus, they're typically made of tempered glass, which means they won't shatter into sharp pieces if they accidentally break.

To help you make the most of this practical and striking feature, consult an interior designer.



Hardwood floors: repair or replace?



Have your hardwood floors seen better days? If the planks are dull, stained, damaged or creaky, you may be wondering if you should refinish them or simply start over. Here are some factors to consider before you decide.

REPAIR

If you like the look of your hardwood floors, you may be able to revive them. Sanding and varnishing as well as staining the wood can extend the lifespan of your floors by a few years. If the planks are warped or worn thin, however, they're likely beyond repair. Similarly, if numerous damaged planks need to be replaced, you're probably better off starting over.

REPLACE

If you're in the mood for a change, installing new flooring is an opportunity to completely transform the look of your home. Plus, it will last for many years to come. It should also be noted that renovating old floors can take several days, whereas replacing them is a fairly quick process albeit more expensive.

If you're still uncertain about whether to repair or replace them, ask a professional to evaluate the condition of your hardwood floors. He or she will be able to recommend a solution.



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3 things you need to pour a concrete slab

Concrete is a durable and affordable material that can be used to build a patio or walkway on your property. Here's what you need to successfully pour a concrete slab.

1. A STABLE BASE

Excavate a hole that's the right dimensions for your project, then add a layer of compacted gravel that's at least 10 centimetres deep. This facilitates soil drainage and will help prevent the slab from shifting and cracking when the ground freezes and thaws.

2. A STRONG FORM

A form is a framework that holds the liquid concrete in place to ensure it hardens in the desired shape. For best results, use straight wood planks to build the form and firmly brace the sides. You should also reinforce the

concrete with rebar to strengthen the slab and prevent cracking.

3. A STEADY HAND

When you pour the concrete, make sure it seeps into every crevice. Once the form is filled, you'll need to remove air bubbles and smooth out the surface of the slab with a bull float and trowel. Allow the concrete to harden overnight before you carefully remove the form.

Keep in mind that pouring concrete can be a challenge, particularly for large-scale projects like a garage floor. To ensure the job is done correctly, leave it to the professionals.



5 components of a cozy nursery



If you have a baby on the way, you'll probably want to think about creating a nursery. Here are five design elements to incorporate into the room.

A SOFT, NEUTRAL PALETTE

Create a soothing space with light tones and pastel colors. Options like seafoam green, lavender and cream are lovely alternatives to the traditional pale pink and baby blue. Be sure to use eco-friendly paint that doesn't contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

A DURABLE FLOOR

Favor strong materials like bamboo, cork and vinyl that will provide a comfortable play surface for your infant. Avoid flooring with a glossy finish as it will highlight every scratch and imperfection. A soft rug makes a nice addition to the space, and there are colors and designs for every taste.

AN ERGONOMIC CHAIR

A comfortable place to feed, soothe and read to your baby is essential. Opt for a rocking chair, glider or simply one with sufficient padding. For those 3 a.m.

wake-up calls, treat yourself to a rocking ottoman as well so you'll have a place to rest your feet.

A VERSATILE CHANGING TABLE

An increasing number of vendors now offer multi-purpose changing tables that double as a dresser or bookcase. In addition to being an attractive piece of furniture, you'll have plenty of storage space for clothes and toys as your child gets older.

A SAFE PLACE TO SLEEP

Before you purchase a new or second-hand crib, make

sure it adheres to the latest government safety standards. This includes having a tight-fitting mattress and bars that are no more than 2-3/8 inches apart. You should also be aware that drop-side cribs are a hazard and their sale is prohibited.

For the finishing touches, install a roller shade or thick curtains to make nap time easier. You should also include a few lighting options such as a ceiling light, table lamp and nightlight.

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How to hang a mirror

A mirror can add light, depth and elegance to a room. Here are a few tips for a quick and easy installation.

USE THE RIGHT HARDWARE

Drywall, wood and brick require different types of anchors to support a mirror. You'll also need to consider the mirror's size and weight when determining the kind and quantity of hooks to use. For a frameless mirror, you can mount clips or use a strong adhesive.

FIND THE RIGHT SPOT

Use a measuring tape and level to deter-

mine the ideal location to hang your mirror. Opt for a height that's at eye level for most adult members of your household. Avoid hanging a mirror opposite a window that gets direct sunlight as this can create a blinding reflection. Take your time to mark the spot for each nail or screw with a pencil.

Once you've chosen a location and installed the hardware, carefully hang your mirror. Make sure it's secure before you let go, then step back and enjoy the view.



WATCH THE WEIGHT!

Keep in mind that some mirrors are too heavy for drywall, even with a large anchor. If your mirror weighs more than 110 pounds, you'll need to secure it to a stud.

Unwind on a daybed

If you want an elegant piece of furniture built for lounging, consider including a daybed in your home decor. This trendy item offers a number of advantages.

A cross between a couch, single bed and chaise longue, the daybed is a versatile piece of furniture. It's equally great as a spot for sitting, sleeping or curling up with a book.

Plus, a daybed is just as stylish as it is functional. Available in a wide variety of materials and styles, it can tie in with nearly any design esthetic. Use yours to create a private retreat or an inviting area for guests.

This multipurpose piece of furniture can be used to optimize your living space without having to compromise on decor. To find the right daybed for your home, visit a furniture store in your area.



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3 reasons to consider an induction cooktop



Are you in the market for a new stove? If so, here are three benefits of opting for an induction cooktop or range.

1. RAPID COOKING

Powered by electricity, an electromagnetic field beneath the glass cooktop transfers a current to the pot or pan. This efficient process directly heats up the cookware rather than warming a burner which then transfers heat

to the pot. Keep in mind that the cookware must contain a ferromagnetic metal like stainless steel or cast iron to work.

2. EASY CLEANING

Since the glass cooktop doesn't have a hot burner, stray food and spills won't get burned to the stove. This makes cleanup a lot less strenuous. However, you should wait a few minutes before you wipe down the surface as the

pot will have transferred heat onto the cooktop.

3. CONSISTENT HEATING

Induction ranges and cooktops provide consistent heat, even at their lowest setting, and allow you to make accurate temperature adjustments. Plus, since the cookware is heated directly, no energy is lost in the transfer from burner to pot.

One additional thing to keep in mind about induction stoves is that they draw a fair amount of power. For this reason, you'll need to determine whether your circuit breaker has the adequate rating. If you're unsure, consult a licensed electrician.

5 reasons to renovate your home in the fall

Although most home renovation projects can be undertaken at any time of the year, there are numerous advantages to starting them in the fall. Unless you need to deal with urgent repairs, here are five reasons it's best to renovate in autumn.

1. IDEAL TEMPERATURES

Unlike the weather that's typical in winter and summer, the coolness of fall offers optimal working conditions for most renovation projects.

2. PROMPT SERVICE

Since the demand for home maintenance work tends to diminish at the end of summer, contrac-

tors and tradespeople are more readily available in the fall. This means shorter wait times for service.

3. LOWER COSTS

Given the decrease in demand at this time of the year, some home renovation companies reduce their prices in the fall, which could allow you to enjoy considerable savings.

4. SIMPLER LOGISTICS

The influx of workers, temporary loss of living space and ubiquitous layer of dust that come with a major renovation will be much less incon-

venient once your kids have returned to school in the fall.

5. WINTER PREPARATIONS

If you complete projects like replacing windows, improving insulation and upgrading the heating system in the fall, you can make sure your home is ready for winter. Plus, you'll have a stylish new space for the holidays.

In addition, postponing your renovation projects until the fall will allow your family to enjoy backyard summer weather without the constant noise and bustle of a major renovation project.





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