

How empty-nesters can transform their homes



An empty bedroom can be turned into a cozy sitting room.

After bringing home a bubbly baby boy or girl, it can be hard for parents to imagine that a day will come when their kids are off to college and then onto their own apartment or house. After spending decades nurturing and caring for children, parents are then left with a suddenly quiet house and probably much more time to spare. If saying goodbye to the kids also means extra house, there's the option to downsize or make that extra space more useful.

Homeowners who choose to stay put can renovate vacant rooms into spaces that meet their newfound needs.

- **Hobby haven:** If you've always meant to set up a crafting room, homebrewing station or an artist's studio, now is an ideal time to do just that. Figure out which supplies you will need and begin reworking that former bed-

room into a new sanctuary for leisure interests.

- **Guest suite:** If you've never had a spare bedroom to entertain guests, a child's former bedroom can fit the bill. It may not be that difficult to transform such spaces into relaxing and inviting rooms for overnight guests. Be sure there is at least a queen-sized bed and a dresser or chest of drawers to stash belongings. Select paint colors and linens in neutral tones so the room will be inviting to guests.

- **Living room redo:** When there's an entire soccer team coming over to hang out, that large sectional sofa or modular seating may be ideal. Now that the kids are out of the house and their friends are no longer coming over for movie night, living rooms can be made more intimate with small-scale seating. A

small sofa and two comfortable chairs may be a more fitting option.

- **At-home gym:** Save on gym membership fees by building a mini studio right at home. Choose one of the larger bedrooms and then fill it with some fitness equipment, such as an elliptical trainer, a bench press bench and some free weights. Store rolled-up mats in the closet for yoga or Pilates sessions.

- **Expanded bathroom:** If space has always been at a premium in the bathroom, borrow area from an empty bedroom and turn it into a spa. Install a soaking tub separate from the shower, and fill

the room with other amenities, such as a warming lamp or even a small sauna.

- **Home office:** Working from home a few days a week may be more plausible when nearing retirement, as it will be a smoother transition from heading to the office each day to spending more time at home. Turn a bedroom or den into an office space with a new desk and bookshelves.

An empty nest can be a bittersweet experience, but parents can make such situations work for them by transforming their homes to better reflect their current needs.

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Celebrities turning 50 in 2018

Men and women turning 50 this year need not fret, as they are in very good company. A number of well-known individuals will likely blow out 50 birthday candles in 2018. These celebrities were all born in 1968 and join the long list of other established actors, musicians, artists, and authors who have already reached this milestone age.

Cuba Gooding Jr., Actor: January 2

Carrie Ann Inaba, Dancer: January 5

John Singleton, Writer: January 6

LL Cool J, Actor/Rapper: January 14

Chad Lowe, Actor: January 15

Guy Fieri, Chef: January 22

Sarah McLachlan, Singer: January 28

Ed Burns, Actor: January 29

Lisa Marie Presley, Singer: February 1

Pauly Shore, Comic: February 1

Josh Brolin, Actor: February 12

Molly Ringwald, Actress: February 18

Jeri Ryan, Actress: February 22

Daniel Craig, Actor: March 2

Kenny Chesney, Singer: March 26

Celine Dion, Singer: March 30

Patricia Arquette, Actress: April 8

Orlando Jones, Actor: April 10



Anthony Michael Hall, Actor: April 14

Ashley Judd, Actress: April 19

Carnie Wilson, Singer: April 29

Tony Hawk, Skater: May 12

Timothy Olyphant, Actor: May 20

Kylie Minogue, Singer: May 28

Faizon Love, Actor: June 4

Scott Wolf, Actor: June 4

Yasmine Bleeth, Actress: June 14

Stephanie Seymour, Model: July 23

Kristen Chenoweth, Actress: July 24

Terry Crews, Actor: July 30

Daniel Dae Kim, Actor: August 4

Gillian Anderson, Actress: August 9

Eric Bana, Actor: August 9

Debra Messing, Actress: August 15

Rachael Ray, TV Host: August 25

Guy Ritchie, Director: September 10

Marc Anthony, Singer: September 16

Will Smith, Actor: September 25

Naomi Watts, Actress: September 28

Hugh Jackman, Actor: October 12

Sam Rockwell, Actor: November 5

Lucy Liu, Actress: December 2

Owen Wilson, Actor: November 18



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