



Painting a focal wall in a home can create a serious impact.

Complete these home improvements over the weekend

Home improvement projects ramp up when the weather warms up, as homeowners channel the rejuvenating feelings of spring and tackle their home to-do lists. Large-scale renovations can greatly affect a home, but smaller projects can yield impressive results and be completed over the course of a single weekend.

If time is of the essence, these weekend or one-day projects may satisfy homeowners' desires to fix up their homes.

- Create an accent wall. Painting a focal wall in a home can create a serious impact. The bonus is it will not take as long or require as many materials as painting an entire room. Accent walls frequently feature a bold color, so decide on placement and tackle this project in less than a day.

- Install stair runners. Dress up hardwood stairs with decorative carpet runners. Runners come in elongated pieces of carpeting or individual pieces that can be placed on each step. If carpeting doesn't fit with the home's design, painting individual stair treads also can create visual appeal.

- Dress up the entryway. An entryway is a guest's first impression of a home. Many entryways can use a minor overhaul, both inside and outside. Paint the front door a different color so it pops from the curb. Install a new mailbox or decorative house numbers. A new welcome mat can change the look as well. Inside, consider laying a new floor. Resilient vinyl tiles come in many different patterns and can mimic the look of wood, travertine or marble. Installing a floor can take a day or two.

- Install a new faucet. Instantly improve a kitchen or a bathroom with new fixtures. New faucets can provide aesthetic appeal and low-flow faucets can help conserve water.

- Create a gallery on the staircase. Gather and arrange framed photos, artwork or wall accents so that they ascend the wall of a staircase. This creates a designer touch and can dress up an often barren area of wall space.

- Install a fresh light fixture. Improve drab spaces with a little illumination. Better Homes & Gardens suggests replacing an existing fixture with something new and vibrant. If hanging a new fixture is not within one's skill set, free-standing table or floor lamps also can cast a new glow on a space.

- Add molding. Molding can add instant aesthetic appeal to a room. Molding is appropriate near the floor, at the top of walls where they meet the ceiling, or even mid-wall as a chair rail. Some homeowners like to create framed molding on walls in formal living spaces.

- Update kitchen or bathroom hardware. Replacing hardware is a fast and easy project, but one that can have immediate impact. Swap out tired or outdated hardware for newer brushed metals and more impactful shapes and designs.

Home renovations do not need to take weeks or months. Many projects can be completed over the course of a weekend.

Did you know?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency notes that there is no practical way to eliminate all mold and mold spores in an indoor environment, including a home. But by controlling moisture in their homes or apartments, men and women can control indoor mold growth. One way to do just that is to prevent condensation in a home by adding insulation. In addition, clean building materials or furnishings that become wet as promptly as possible, and no more than 48 hours after the items have become wet. Mold produces allergens and irritants, and inhaling or touching mold or mold spores can trigger allergic responses such as sneezing, runny nose, red eyes, rashes on the skin, and even fever-like symptoms.

Laundry room renovation ideas

To former apartment dwellers or those who have never enjoyed the benefit of a dedicated laundry area, even the smallest washer and dryer space can seem like a luxury.

The benefits of dedicated laundry rooms abound. However, disorganized laundry rooms can nullify such benefits. Depending on the needs and preferences of each homeowner, laundry room designs can be customized for convenience.

Employ vertical space

Floor space may be at a premium in a laundry room, especially for those who want to devote as much space as possible to bulk-size washer and dryer units. Therefore, utilizing wall space is key. Use shelving, wire racks, hooks, and other organizational tools to store items on the wall. Shelves can be tucked into just about any space, and there are different options that can fit into corners or shallow areas.

Electrical

continued from page 3 recommend upgrading the electrical panel to bring more power from the utility poles into the home. This can include replacing the existing meter and circuit breaker box to allow it to handle more power or replacing items that are obsolete or dangerous.

Many older homes are only capable of handling a minimum number of amps, utilizing just a few circuits. But nowadays, when homeowners have far more electronics in their homes than they once did, increased demand on electricity can overload a circuit (all of the outlets linked on one wire). Tripping a circuit breaker is a safety measure to prevent the wire from becoming overheated and causing a fire. However, in some old systems, the circuit breaker will not trip, and this can be problematic.

Rewiring a home is another step. Wire insulation can deteriorate over time, and new wires may be needed. This can be messy and time-consuming, but it's a small price to pay for safety. When rewiring an electrician also may suggest new outlets. Many home building codes now require outlets with ground fault interruptors, or GFIs, in kitchens, bathrooms and other rooms exposed to moisture. Some older homes may not even have three-pronged outlets, so this will necessitate an update as well.

Electrical systems are the heart of a home, delivering power where it is needed. It is essential to keep such systems up-to-date so they can handle the power demands of everyday life.

These are a great option for keeping detergent or other laundry essentials nearby.

Clean designs reduce clutter

Simple, clean designs can be an asset in a laundry room. If budget and space permits, cabinetry built into the design will help keep items out of sight in the laundry room. Cabinets hung directly above the appliances can store detergent, bleach and fabric softener. Use cabinets elsewhere in the room as

catch-alls for cleaning supplies used in various other rooms around the house.

Incorporate a sink in the design

Some older laundry room setups have a slop sink to drain discharged water from the washing machine. However, newer homes may have plumbing installed directly through the floor or walls. It is still a worthwhile idea to have a sink in the laundry

room for rinsing out stains, handwashing items and having a go-to sink for messier cleanup.

Utilize a tension rod

A rod installed between two cabinets or across a narrow width of space in the laundry room is a handy spot to hang shirts or pants to prevent wrinkling. Repurposing a ladder and suspending it from the ceiling also creates a spot to hang clothes.

Consider laundry room flooring

It's important to select flooring materials that will not be damaged by contact with moisture or spills. Vinyl, tile and some composite products often make good laundry room floor materials. Resilient flooring that mimics the look of hardwood may add a classy touch, and give the appearance of wood without having to worry about damage. To alleviate fatigue while spending long moments in the laundry room, invest in a memory foam mat that can be placed underfoot.

Keep lighting in mind

Lighting can be important in the laundry room. Rely on task lighting, under-cabinet strip lighting and overhead lights as needed for efficiency.

Laundry room design can maximize the space available and make it more convenient to launder and sort clothes.



An organized and efficient laundry room setup can make washing and drying clothes easier.

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