

Outdoor improvements that boost home value

Whether home improvement projects are design to improve the interior or exterior of a house, focusing on renovations that make the most financial sense can benefit homeowners in the long run. The right renovations can be assets if and when homeowners decide to sell their homes.

So how does one get started? First and foremost, speak to a local real estate agent who is knowledgeable about trends in the community. While a swimming pool may be something coveted in one area, it may impede sales in another. It also helps to study generalized trends and data from various home improvement industry analysts to guide upcoming projects.

The following outdoor projects are just a few renovations that tend to add value.

- **Fire pit:** A fire pit is a great place to gather most months of the year. Bob Vila and CBS news report that a fire pit realizes a 78 percent return on investment, or ROI.

- **Outdoor kitchen:** Many buyers are looking to utilize their yards as an extension of interior living areas. Cooking, dining and even watching TV outdoors is increasingly popular. Outdoor living areas can be custom designed



and built. In addition, prefabricated modular units that require a much smaller commitment of time and money are available.

- **Patio:** Homeowners who do not already have a patio will find that adding one can increase a home's value. Patios help a home look neat, add useable space and may help a home to sell quickly. The experts at Space Wise, a division of Extra Space Storage, say that refinishing, repairing and building a new patio offers strong ROI.

- **Deck:** Deck can be as valuable as patios. A deck is another outdoor space that can be used for entertaining, dining and more. Remodeling magazine's 2018 "Cost vs. Value" report indicates that an \$11,000 deck can add about \$9,000 in resale value to the home, recouping around 82 percent of the project's costs.

- **Door update:** Improve curb appeal with a new, high-end front door and garage doors. If that's too expensive, a good cleaning and new coat

of paint can make an old door look brand new. These easy fixes can improve a home's look instantly.

- **New landscaping:** The National Association of Realtors says an outdoor makeover that includes well-thought out landscaping can net 105 percent ROI. Installing a walkway, adding stone planters, mulching, and planting shrubs are ideas to consider.

Many different outdoor projects can add value to a home. SH192670

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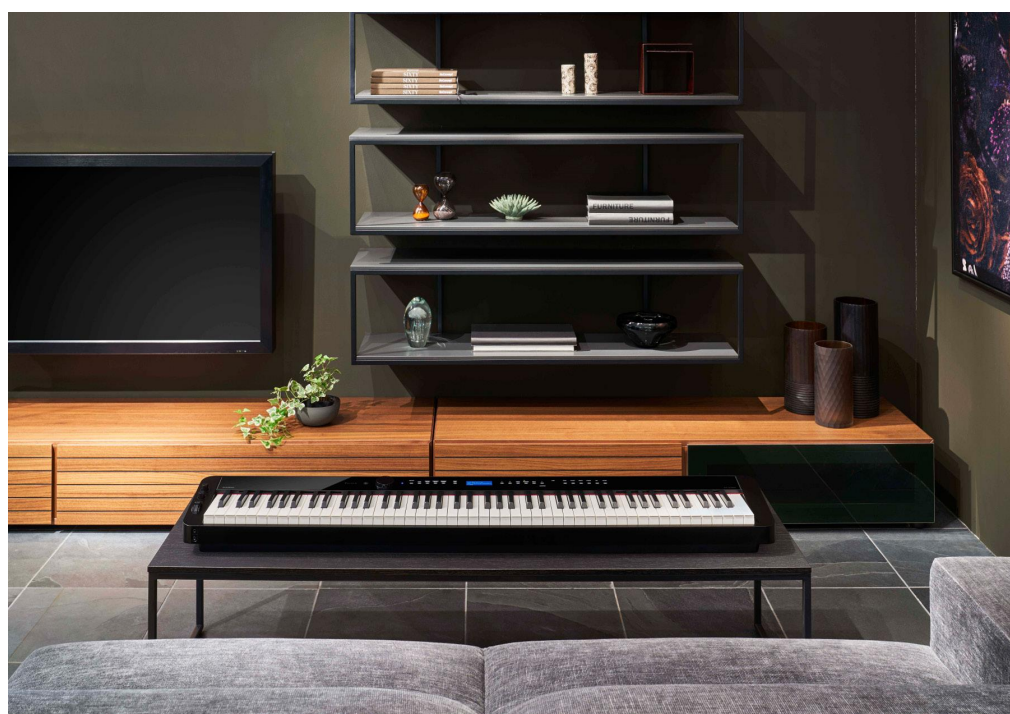
Five ways to upgrade your home with new tech

(StatePoint) New technology has the power to make your home safer, more comfortable and better suited to your family's needs.

So, if you're planning to make some home updates, consider these great ideas for incorporating the latest technologies.

1. **Smart lock.** Give your neighborhood watch group a deserved break and consider investing in smart lock technology. You'll be able to control your home's entry points from anywhere through a compatible app, which will also notify you of possible break-ins and tampering. Whether you have guests staying at your place and need to let them in before you get home, or you forgot to lock your front door before leaving the house, a smart lock can offer you convenience and peace of mind.

2. **Full sound.** No matter the size of your home, you can create the ambiance of a concert hall with the latest technology. Even the slimmest electronic pianos today have the potential to retain a sophisticated keyboard touch and authentic timbre of a grand piano. For example, the new design of the Casio Privia PX-S1000 keyboard, reproduces the individual response characteristics of each of the 88 keys on a grand piano and its Bluetooth audio playback feature allows you to connect



to your device and play along with your favorite songs.

3. **Greater climate control.** Heading to the airport but forgot to adjust your thermostat? Want your home to be a comfortable temperature when you arrive home from work? Next-generation, smart thermostats offer you the ability to get a better handle on climate control while potentially lowering your utility bills.

4. **The right light.** You can set the right mood for the right occasion in every room of your house by creating programmed scenarios through a smart lighting system. A

smart lighting app can also improve home security, making your home looked lived in while you are away.

5. **Beefed up entertainment.** You can go beyond a standard home theater and gaming area with the installation of a projector that offers a great quality picture, long lasting-brightness and a fully connectable interface. The SLIM Series of LampFree Projectors from Casio, for example, require little to no setup time and provide projection at maximum brightness in as few as five seconds, for a truly immersive home theater experience.

Did you know?

Investing in a home renovation project not only requires money, but also time and patience. While contractors, architects and designers can estimate how long a project may take, it is impossible to anticipate all of the scenarios that can affect that estimated timeline. Information from the real estate firm Keller Williams indicates an average kitchen remodel involving installation of new countertops, cabinets, appliances, and floors can take

three to six months. But if ductwork, plumbing or wiring must be addressed, the job may take longer. A midline bathroom remodel may take two to three months. Adding a room to a house can take a month or two. The home improvement resource Renovation Junkies offers similar estimates, with the average home renovation taking between four and eight months. Homeowners need to consider time when planning their home projects. SH192663

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