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Relaxing at a spa each week may be a luxury reserved for celebrities and socialites. For many people, a day spa is a treat enjoyed on special occasions or while on vacation. However, home bathrooms can be designed to provide the same types of amenities offered at day spas right in the comfort of one's home.

The American Psychological Association says that money, work and the future of the country are particularly strong stressors today. Eighty percent of workers feel stress on the job and learning how to manage stress is a top concern, according to the American Institute of Stress. Creating a Zen-like retreat at home can help alleviate stress and improve health.

Homeowners whose renovation plans include turning a bathroom into a spa oasis will need to choose which features they desire most. These suggestions can spur on more ideas to create the ideal retreat.

- Soaker bathtub: There's something to be said about a luxurious soak in a tub. Tubs come in different sizes and shapes, like the highly recognizable clawfoot tub and other freestanding units. These types of tubs, as well as corner tubs, can offer deep-seated luxury by way of a relaxing

and restorative soak. Pair with scented bath bombs or salts for a true spa experience.

- Steam shower: Steam showers are self-enclosed units that feature generators that deliver steam through steam heads. The steam fills the space and can help a person unwind before a refreshing shower or bath. According to the retailer Modern Bathroom®, modern steam showers come with digital controls, which makes it easy for users to activate the shower, adjust the length of time that the shower will operate and adjust temperature controls. Extra features like music, mood lighting and aromatherapy can be included as well.

- Heated floors: Heated floors provide the utmost in comfort when stepping out of the bath or shower. They can warm the room and make using the space more comfortable in cold weather.

- Vessel sinks: A vessel sink typically features a bowl or basin that looks like it was placed on top of the vanity. Vessel sinks can elevate the ambiance in spa bathrooms.

- Plush towels and robes: In addition to fixtures and other functional components of the bath, linens are key. Soft-spun Egyptian or Turkish cotton towels and robes are a must-have luxury for the full



spa experience.

- Comfortable seat: A bench or chair nestled by a bathroom window is the perfect spot for pedicures or catching up on some light reading.

- Natural light: Skylights or privacy-

ensuring windows are a must to create a relaxing space close to nature.

A spa bathroom at home is within reach. With a few touches, any bathroom can be transformed into a luxurious oasis.

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Refresh your home's appeal with furniture paint

Furniture, bookcases, cabinets, and doors present opportunities to add or change color throughout a home. Woodcraft offers an extensive line of furniture paint, tools and supplies necessary for successful painting projects. In addition, Woodcraft retail store associates are always ready to help customers, and extensive how-to material is a click away at woodcraft.com.

Lori Harper, Woodcraft public relations manager and blogger, offers some advice about updating a kitchen: "Painting kitchen cabinets is a big job, but it can transform the look of your kitchen at a fraction of the cost of new cabinets. It may sound daunting, but breaking it down into bite-size steps can take away the fear factor."

To read her project blog, visit Woodworking Adventures on Woodcraft.com and search for "Kitchen Cabinet Conundrum."

Paint & Color Selection

Three easy-to-use and easy-to-mix paints are:

- Black Dog Salvage Furniture Paint is a water-based, low-VOC, matte finish

Furniture paint - continued on page 5B

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Furniture paint - Continued from page 4B

paint for indoor use that requires only cleanup before painting, except in the case of chips and scratches, and adheres to wood, metal, glass, ceramics, and plastic.

- General Finishes Milk Paints are premixed water-based acrylic paints suitable for a variety of interior or exterior applications from furniture to crafts.

- General Finishes Gel Stains are heavy-bodied gels formulated to flow evenly for consistent color control.

Before you pick up a paint brush, consider which colors are best for the area you plan to refresh. Choices will need to complement wall color and colors of other pieces or accents in a room. Two handy color guides are the 36-page General Finishes Milk Paint Fan Deck and the Black Dog Salvage Furniture Paint Color Recipes (available for download as a free PDF on Woodcraft.com).

For more than just a change of color, consider creating decorative effects, such as distressing, antiquing, faux marble, or rag rolling. Choose General Finishes Pearl Effects to make it easier to create specialty finishes.

Repair

If furniture, cabinets and other surfaces need repair prior to painting, the Mohawk PermaFill Wood Touch-Up and Repair System is an easy answer. Just pop in a color cartridge (six color families available), power on the battery-operated dispenser, aim, fill and level this durable repair. Briwax ChaiRX is perfect to fix loose parts in chairs. Drill a small hole, inject ChaiRX, and in 12 hours the thin unique formulation will penetrate the wood cells and permanently swell the joints and bond them together. Visit <https://youtu.be/iWMu6OKyOUE> to watch a video that demonstrates these products.

For more extensive repairs, use the Kreg Jig R3 Kit to reinforce weak parts with pocket holes and avoid complete disassembly of your project.

Furniture paint - continued on page 7B

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Protect your home (and more) from winter's freeze

Freezing temperatures may be good for ice skating or building snowmen, but sub-freezing temperatures can be dangerous for the average person and his or her home.

Cold weather often leaves people scurrying to do whatever is necessary to safeguard themselves from the big chill. But it's important homeowners also protect their homes in cold weather.

Plumbing

Plumbing and pipes may be vulnerable to cold weather. Frozen pipes may burst and cause substantial damage to a home, potentially causing flooding and structural damage.

Homeowners should disconnect and drain garden hoses before winter arrives. Water to outdoor hose bibs should be turned off, though the valves on these outdoor faucets should be left open to drain. Also, outdoor faucets can be covered with insulating foam covers.

The Red Cross says pipes that freeze most frequently include pipes in unheated areas, such as basements, attics, garages, and crawl spaces. Close vents to the outside in areas like attics and basements to limit the amount of cold air that gets indoors. Think about insulating unheated areas, as well as using pipe sleeves, heat tape or wraps on exposed pipes.



By opening kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors, homeowners can allow warm air from a home to reach pipes under the sink. During extreme freezes, keep cold water dripping from a sink to prevent pipes from freezing.

Service HVAC systems

It's important to ensure that heating systems are working properly prior to the cold-weather season. It may only take hours for the interior of a home to reach dangerously low temperatures without adequate heat. Homeowners should schedule annual checkups of furnaces and

hot water heaters. Inspect the heat exchanger for cracks, install a clean air filter and make sure all thermostats are working properly.

Have fuel ready

Homeowners who heat their homes with oil, wood or coal should make sure they have plenty of fuel on hand in advance of winter. Shortages can occur, and it may take some time for new fuel to arrive in the midst of a cold snap.

As a precaution, homeowners can rely on portable space heaters to fill in the heating gaps during freezing temperatures. Exercise extreme caution with these devices, turning them off when leaving the room and remembering to avoid overloading outlets.

Protect outside

Drain birdbaths, clean out downspouts and remove water from other items where water can freeze and cause damage. Inspect roofing prior to the snowy season, but stay off roofs during freezing weather.

Remove snow shovels and other winter gear from storage and make sure the items are easily accessible during snowstorms.

Winter's bite can be severe. Homeowners can protect themselves and their properties when the freeze sets in.



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Furniture paint - Continued from page 5B

Clean and Prep

Use Krud Kutter TSP Substitute to remove dirt, grease, smoke, mildew, food stains, crayon, wax, and more from surfaces to be painted so paint will adhere better. For sanding chores associated with painting, consider the Porter-Cable Restorer Handheld Drum Sander with attachments, which is designed to remove paint and finish from wood, brick and fiberglass, as well as remove rust and polish metal. The Porter-Cable 382 5" Random Orbital Sander and the Norton 5" Random Orbital Sander are other good choices. For sanding with hand power, the Preppin' Weapon Sanding Block Kit and Norton 4 1/2" x 5 1/2" SoftTouch Sanding Sponges are handy helpers.

Application & Topcoat

If spraying is your preference, HOMERIGHT Finish Max Fine Finish and HOMERIGHT Super Finish Max HVLP Sprayers are easy to use on everything from furniture to fences with oil- and water-based products such as chalk-style paint, latex paint, milk paint, enamels, primers, polyurethanes, stains, and varnishes. Large and Small Spray Shelters make painting furniture easier.

For painting by hand, Black Dog Salvage Furniture Paint Round Brushes, made from both natural and synthetic bristles, and Redtree Matey Synthetic Bristle Brushes work well.

Give paint extra protection with Black Dog Salvage Guard Dog and Show Dog Topcoats and General Finishes Gel and High Performance Polyurethane Topcoats.

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Homeowners looking to add more space to their homes do not necessarily need to make major renovations. They simply have to see the possibilities in outdoor living spaces.



Outdoor living spaces are coveted niches in a home. The American Home Furnishings Alliance says more than 70 percent of American households have outdoor living spaces, and nearly 70 percent of people use these spaces at least once per week in-season. Furthermore, homeowners are increasingly interested in enhancing these spaces to make them more usable and comfortable.

A recent survey from the online home design and remodeling resource Houzz found that more than 4,500 users were planning a landscape update. In addition, 56 percent of homeowners surveyed were making updates to improve their yards for entertaining.

While the creation of outdoor living spaces can cost thousands of dollars depending on the renovation, homeowners have more budget-friendly options at their disposal as well. The following are some ways to create

inviting spaces no matter how much square-footage is present.

Revamp a garage or shed

Rather than turning a storage area into a catch-all for items time forgot, clean out the space and put it to better use. For instance, kids may appreciate their own clubhouse away from the main living area. These spaces also can be handy bonus rooms for when Mother Nature doesn't cooperate and backyard guests need to seek shelter. Wall art, curtains, a pendant light, and some comfortable outdoor-compatible furniture can quickly transform a space.

Create a relaxing nook

Whether there's a ledge, overhang, small terrace, or

porch off the house, turn it into a relaxing area for reading a book or sipping a beverage. Use a few outdoor pillows, pull up a small folding table and dress the area with hanging lights and potted plants for a quiet retreat.

Add privacy to a porch

If it's privacy you covet, install curtain rods and hang lightweight mesh or another translucent material that obscures neighbors' views without blocking out natural light. Invest in outdoor sofas and chaises to create an outdoor living room right on the porch. If your budget allows, consider closing in the porch as a true three-season room so it can be used throughout fall, spring and summer.

Outdoor living spaces are booming and highly achievable, and many such spaces need not be expensive.

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Defining hardscape and how to use it



Curb appeal is beneficial in various ways. Curb appeal can make a home more attractive to prospective buyers and give existing homeowners a place they want to come home to. In its study of the worth of outdoor remodeling projects, the National Association of Realtors found standard lawn care and overall landscape upgrades were most appealing to buyers, as well as the most likely to add value to a home.

Although plants, grass and other items can improve curb appeal, homeowners should not overlook hardscaping.

Hardscaping is an industry term that refers to the non-living features of a landscape. These features can include everything from decks to walkways to ornamental boulders. Introducing paths or paver walls to a property helps develop that home's hardscape. Hardscape and soft elements often work in concert to create inspiring landscape designs.

Hardscape - continued on page 11B

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Hardscape - Continued from page 10B

DIY landscape designers can heed certain tips to make the most of hardscape features on their properties.

Choose materials.

As with many landscaping projects, homeowners must first determine what types of additions they would like on their properties. Common hardscape features include patios, decks, walkways of pavers or bricks, and retaining walls. Hardscape elements can be functional or simply decorative features that add whimsy to the yard.

Choose a theme.

The right style allows hardscaping and softscaping materials to work together. For example, homeowners may want to give their yards an eastern feel, complete with a koi pond and decorative bridge or trellis. A formal English garden, however, may include manicured paths with stepping stones and ornate topiaries. Mixing too many styles together can take away from the overall appeal.

The pros suggest looking at the overall plan of the design, even if all of the work can't be completed at once. This way the

eventual finished project will be cohesive.

Think about the purpose.

Hardscaping can look good but also serve key purposes. Pebbles or gravel can mitigate trouble areas that don't grow grass or plant life well. Retaining walls hold back soil in yards with sharply inclined hills. Mulch can set perimeters around trees and shrubs, as well as planting beds. Fencing, another form of hardscaping, is essential for establishing property boundaries and adding privacy.

Consult a professional.

While many hardscaping additions can be handled by novices, large-scale projects, such as patios and decking, can change the grading of the yard. Professionals can map out how to handle drainage issues and meet building codes. In addition, professional installation can ensure hardscaping features last for years to come.

Hardscaping should blend with the nature around it and take its cues from the surrounding environment. This can help softscaping and hardscaping work as one.

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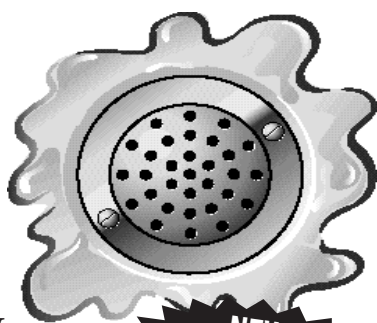
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Basement remodeling tips

A basement remodeling project can add valuable and usable space to a home. For many years, homeowners overlooked the potential of a basement remodel, perhaps thinking it would not be a smart return on investment. But that's no longer the case.

The latest "Cost vs. Value" report from Remodeling magazine says the aver-

age basement remodel can cost around \$61,000 with a 70.3 percent recoup rate. In addition, HGTV says architects and contractors indicate the cost of redoing a basement is roughly one-third to one-half less than the price of putting an addition on a home.

Before remodeling a basement, homeowners should think about how they want



to use the space. Homeowners also must focus on some potential obstacles in a basement that will need to be addressed so that the area can be as functional as possible.

Basements can be chilly and damp. That means moisture issues and heating and cooling needs must be addressed prior to any construction. Homeowners may have to consider the installation of a dehumidifier and run venting through the basement to allow for proper climate control. If a basement takes on water, either through the walls or a concrete slab, a professional waterproofing company

can come in and fix these issues so they will not damage drywall and flooring afterwards.

The presence of insects and pests also must be addressed. Exterminators can help homeowners figure out which insects are in their basements and how to make the space less hospitable to these unwelcome guests so that the room will become comfortable for human occupants.

Space is often at a premium in basements, which may contain HVAC units, water heaters, filtration devices, ductwork,

Basement - continued on page 14B

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How to choose the right window treatments for your home

Plantation shutters? Mini-blinds? Cafe curtains? Formal draperies? Homeowners' options in regard to window treatments for their homes are extensive, which can make outfitting home interiors challenging for novice decorators.

Some people do not pay a lot of attention to window treatments, failing to realize just how great an impact the right window treatments can have on a space. According to the design experts at Hunter Douglas, window treatments are often an afterthought because residents may not consider them necessities. As a result, homeowners may install whatever is on hand or accept window treatments that came with a house or apartment. But ignoring window treatments, especially when they can fulfill certain needs, is a missed design opportunity.

One of the first steps to choosing window treatments is determining your end goal.

Is privacy your main goal? Are you seeking more natural light in a room? Is there too much light and you need to darken the room? Window treatments can serve multiple functions, and some treatments may make better fits depending on homeowners' ultimate goals.



Semi-sheer window treatments

Semi-sheer window treatments are often fabric and can help brighten rooms with natural light but offer little privacy. They're usually appropriate for spaces where people gather, such as living rooms, dens or dining rooms. Semi-sheer curtains may be paired with another complementary window treatment so privacy can be customized as needed. For example, sheer curtains let light into a bedroom, but shades can be drawn at night.

Maximum privacy

Bedrooms, work spaces or bathrooms can benefit from extra privacy. While some people may think that privacy comes at the cost of light, that's not always the case.

Functional curtain panels can be drawn closed when privacy is desired and then opened to let in light. The thickness of the fabric will also dictate the amount of privacy the panels create.

Tiers are hung on a short rod-pocket panel and usually cover the lower one-third of a window. They're popular choices to let light in from the top, but obscure views from the bottom portion of the window.

Cellular shades are another option that provide privacy but still let light in. Cellular shades come in hard and fabric varieties and their use depends on the room. Many cellular shades are constructed with a honeycomb design, offers the design resource Houzz, so they can insulate as well as decorate windows.

Blackout shades/shutters

Perfect for rooms where babies nap, shift workers rest during daylight hours or external lights, such as that from a street lamp, need to be blocked out, blackout shades do just what their name implies. A dense fabric lining helps keep light out entirely.

Shutters also can block out light but add to the character of the room. They can be painted a bright color to make a statement or match wall colors to blend in seamlessly.

When selecting window treatments, shoppers can choose retail options or custom treatments. Many designers recommend custom window treatments because they are measured, manufactured and installed specifically for homeowners' windows. However, there are many DIY options available at budget-friendly retailers.



Jay Jones, Owner

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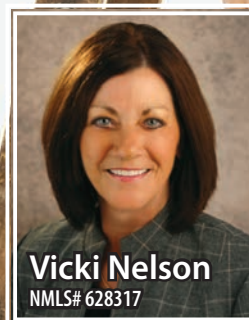
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Transform bathrooms with technology

Technology is infiltrating every room of the house. Many new home buyers are millennials, and this tech-savvy demographic covets technological innovations.

A recent survey by Better Homes & Gardens Real Estate indicates 77 percent of Generation X and Y home buyers want their homes equipped with the tech capabilities they have grown accustomed to. Many of these involve smart innovations, including those that can transform one of the most private rooms in the house — the bathroom.

Automated home theater rooms and Wi-Fi-enabled home security systems have become the norm, but what tech improvements are available to make the powder room more in touch with today's digital lifestyle? According to the home improvement resource The Spruce, bathrooms have the most potential of any rooms to be improved with technology. The following are just some of the bathroom gadgets and gizmos no one should resist before giving a try.

- **Automatic faucets:** Infrared sensors have been helping keep public restrooms more hygienic for years. The same technology can be used in home bathrooms to curtail water waste and keep faucets and sinks from becoming infested with germs. In addition, faucets with built-in timers can be programmed to set tasks for brushing teeth



or washing your face.

- **Musical shower:** Instead of having to blast the volume on the portable speaker you use in the bathroom, a wireless speaker is built into some showerheads. This enables those who like to sing in the shower or listen to podcasts while washing up to enjoy this luxury effortlessly.
- **Smarter weight management:** Bathroom scales have

gone high-tech as well, with various options enabling users to measure weight, BMI and body fat percentage before sending the data wirelessly to a phone, tablet or computer. This can put you in greater control of fitness goals.

- **High-tech toilets:** Borrowing ideas from bidets and trends around the world, modern toilets do not require hands or paper. These toilets have temperature-controlled water, spritzing wands and air dryers to clean and sanitize. Self-cleaning toilets help busy professionals save time and are ideal for those who always want their bowls as clean as possible. And if you desire extra comfort, toilet seat warmers are available, while LED lights can make nighttime restroom visits easier.

- **Soaking tubs:** As fast as stand-alone showers were introduced to the modern bathroom, tubless designs have been replaced with streamlined soaking tubs. Tubs come with different features, including chromatherapy, which employs colored lights to enhance mood. Air baths are controlled electronically and provide different levels of sensation for those who are skipping the hot tub.

Round out these innovations with automated lights, chilled medicine cabinets and aromatherapy, and your bathroom will indeed become a technological spa.

Basement - Continued from page 12B

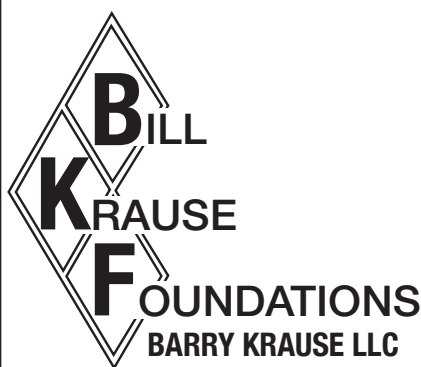
pipes, and the other appliances. Qualified contractors can suggest solutions for cordoning off appliances and camouflaging pipes and wires so they won't detract from the finished product. However, building access panels into the design will make it easier to service or repair features as necessary. Homeowners also may want to wrap pipes before drywall is installed to quiet noisy drainage pipes.

Uneven basement flooring will need to be smoothed out and flattened before carpeting or tile can be laid down. A self-leveling underlayment can be applied to fill in gullies, while larger crack and holes will need to be patched.

Once the structure of the basement is addressed, then the design work can begin. Many professionals advise against drop ceilings, which can take away from ceiling height and look cheap. Basements can be dark, so the addition of plenty of lighting can help brighten the room. Small basement windows can be replaced with larger ones to add more light as well.

Homeowners can mimic built-ins and architectural details from elsewhere in the home so the basement is aesthetically cohesive and doesn't seem like an addition. Bookcases and shelving can add valuable storage space as well. Decorate the basement with bright, neutral colors so they make the space feel more inviting.

With some effort and financial investment, basements can be as beautiful and functional as other rooms in a home.



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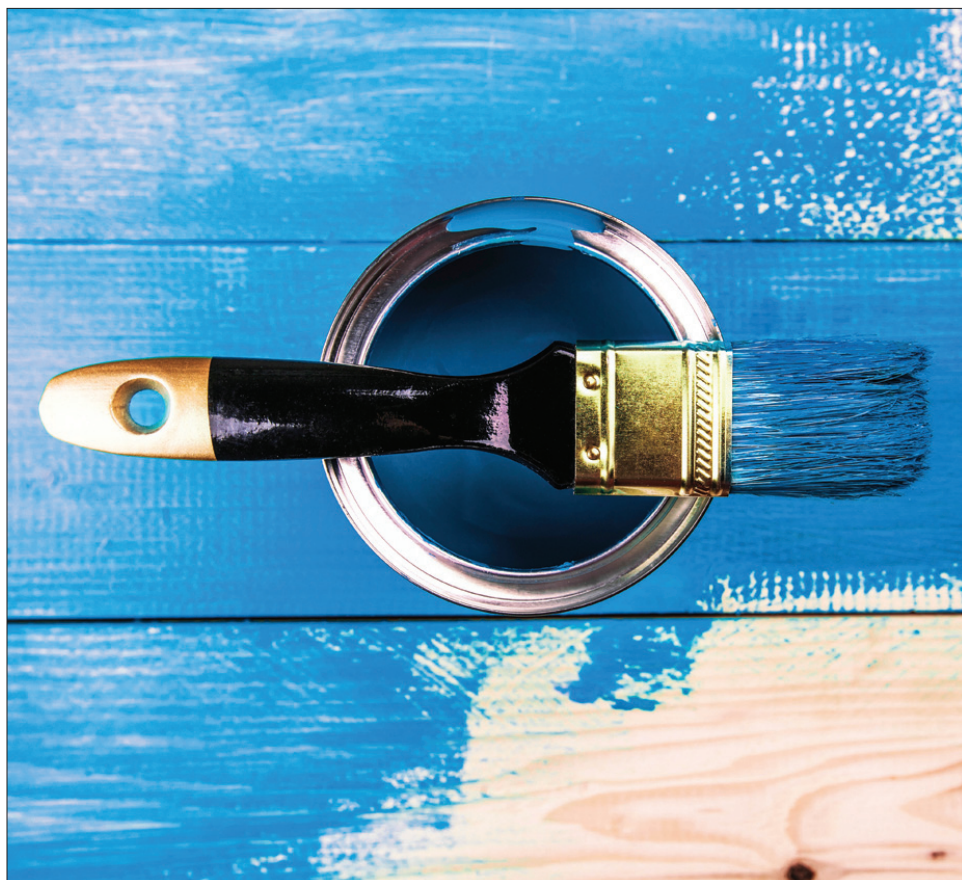
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