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TIPS to MAKE A LIVING ROOM A more comfortable, welcoming space



A kitchen is widely recognized as the most popular room in a home. Though it might be true that the hustle and bustle of home life runs through the kitchen, many a memory is made in the living room as well.

Living rooms tend to be go-to spaces for family movie nights, game watches with fellow fans and places to gather during holiday celebrations. That's a lot of quality time spent in the living room, and those moments can be more enjoyable if the space is as comfortable as possible. With that in mind, people can consider various ways to make living rooms more comfortable.

- **Prioritize comfort over aesthetics.** In an era of Instagram, it's easy to fall head over heels with images when designing a living room. Aesthetic appeal certainly has its place in a living room, but it's important to remember how much living will be done in these rooms when designing them. Comfortable couches and furnishings like ottomans can make it easier to relax in the living room whether you're watching a movie, cheering on your favorite team or reading a book.

- **Ensure there's ample seating.** It can be hard to feel comfortable in cramped quarters whether you're welcoming friends and family into your home or simply lounging around on

Sunday mornings. If comfort is your top priority, arrange the room so there's ample seating throughout and people don't feel like they're sitting on top of one another when spending time in the room.

- **Consider neutral paint colors.** Furnishings are not the only things that can affect how comfortable people feel in a living room. The home improvement experts at The Spruce note that neutral paint colors with warm undertones help to establish a cozy feel in a living room. Various shades of white, beige, tan, or even gray can help to establish a warm, comfortable vibe in a living room.

- **Incorporate the outdoors into the room.** The great outdoors can have a calming effect on anyone, so it makes sense that incorporating the outdoors into a living room can make the space feel more comfortable. Furnish the room with plants and look for items with earth-toned furnishings to create a calm and comfortable vibe in the space. In addition, new windows that allow for more natural light and offer views into a yard can help lift spirits and make the room feel more comfortable.

A comfortable living room is a space where people will want to spend their time. A few simple strategies can help create an inviting and comfortable vibe in any living room.

Spring planting pointers



Many people view spring as a season of rejuvenation. That renewal may be somewhat metaphorical for human beings, but it's literal for lawns and gardens that begin to grow anew as temperatures rise and hours of daylight increase in spring.

Each spring presents an opportunity for homeowners to get back outside and tend to their gardens. As the

loosening the soil. The Farmer's Almanac recommends loosening soil to a depth of at least eight inches if planting a new garden. An existing garden may only need to be loosened to a depth of around six inches, after which homeowners can mix compost into the soil in early spring. Compost is organic matter that provides nutrients and helps to build strong plant roots.

temperatures rise, homeowners can consider these spring planning pointers to ensure their landscapes look lush and full in the months ahead.

- **Start with the soil.** Soil can serve as the starting point each spring. Winter can take its toll on a garden and even overwhelm the area with debris over the colder months. Clear rocks and other debris from the area before

- **Consider a raised garden in colder climates.** The Farmer's Almanac notes raised gardens can help homeowners in colder climates dry out and warm up wet, cold soils more quickly. Homeowners in such regions also can cover their beds with black plastic or cardboard prior to planting. Doing so can protect the beds from late-season snow and spring rains and also helps to overcome erosion.

- **Take soil temperatures.** Unpredictable weather is among the noticeable effects of climate change in recent years. That lack of predictability can make spring planting a little more tricky than it once was. Experts note that soil temperatures around 50 F are best for cool-season crops, while soil should be 60 F or warmer when planting warm-weather plants such as tomatoes.

- **Work with a garden center to identify what to plant.** The right plants for one region may not be ideal for another, so homeowners are urged to work with a local landscaper or garden center before planting. Such a consultation can

be especially useful for homeowners planting a new garden. Landscapers and garden center professionals will know which plants work in the local climate.

- **Consider planting vegetables in the spring.** Various garden experts note that spring is an ideal time to plant a vegetable garden. If planted at the right time, a vegetable garden can save homeowners money on their grocery bills and provide a season's worth of fresh veggies. Lettuce and spinach are sun- and shade-friendly vegetables, which can make them good options for a spring garden. Cool-season root vegetables, which include beets, carrots and swiss chard, are some other notable veggies that can thrive in early spring.

Spring is a season of rejuvenation for gardens. That's even more true when homeowners consider some conventional planting wisdom in early spring.

Drought-resistant plants and trees

A beautiful landscape adds considerable aesthetic appeal to a property and an awe-inspiring lawn and garden can greatly improve resale value. In fact, the American Society of Landscape Architects claims landscaping can increase a home's resale value by as much as 20 percent, a contention that supports the notion that a lush landscape is something buyers want and are willing to pay for.

Maintaining a lush landscape is no small task, but that job is notably easier when homeowners pick the right plants. The right plant for a property depends on where a home is located, but it's worth noting that drought-resistant plants and trees may be especially worthy investments. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, 54 percent of the contiguous United States experienced moderate or exceptional drought over the first 10 months of 2024. The NASA Earth Observatory notes

that even the southeastern United States, where Hurricane Helene struck and dropped considerable rainfall in the final days of September, was affected by drought, experiencing no precipitation in the month after that devastating storm struck.

When planning a landscape renovation, homeowners must take variables such as climate into consideration, particularly if their end goal is a lush, awe-inspiring lawn and garden. With that in mind, the following are some drought-resistant plants and trees homeowners may want to consider adding to their landscapes.

Trees

The National Arbor Day Foundation notes that drought-tolerant trees are ideal as summer temperatures rise in many parts of the world. Drought-tolerant trees can survive in dry conditions, and they also provide great shade that allows people to enjoy their yards even when temperatures rise. The ADF notes that the following are some drought-resistant trees homeowners can consider:

- Eastern redcedar
- Bur oak
- Northern red oak
- Kentucky coffeetree
- Hackberry
- Scots pine
- Northern catalpa
- London planetree
- Shumard oak
- Live oak

Plants

Trees add ample aesthetic appeal to a property, but colorful plants also help to create a stunning setting. Homeowners concerned about drought can consider these plants that various garden experts note are tolerant of dry conditions.

- Aster
- Beardtongue
- Black-eyed Susan
- Bugleweed
- Catmint
- Lantana
- Lavender
- Purple coneflower
- Russian sage
- Stonecrop

Homeowners are urged to work with local lawn and garden professionals when picking trees and plants for their properties. Such individuals can provide insight about species that are accustomed to local conditions and capable of thriving in them even when precipitation is low.



COMMON QUESTIONS and ANSWERS ABOUT CARPETING



No two homeowners are the same, and that's perhaps most evident in the design decisions individuals make when decorating their homes. Flooring is among the first things a person notices when entering a home, and the array of options consumers have when choosing flooring materials underscores how unique each homeowner is.

Carpeting is a popular flooring option. Many homeowners prefer carpeting because they feel it helps to create a cozy, welcoming vibe in a home. Consumers considering carpet for their homes may have some common questions,

and answers to those inquiries can help homeowners determine if carpeting is for them.

Is carpeting expensive?

Home renovations are expensive, and the cost of a project is often the first question homeowners have. The cost of carpeting varies widely and is contingent on an array of variables unique to each home and homeowner, including square footage, materials chosen by the homeowner and the cost of labor associated with installation, which can vary significantly between

locations. According to the online renovation resource HomeAdvisor, the average cost to install or replace carpet is between \$782 and \$2,812. That wide range illustrates how much the cost of the project will be affected by variables unique to each project. However, even homeowners who come in around or above the high end of that estimate may find carpet installation is among the more affordable ways to give the interior of a home an entirely new look and feel.

How different are carpeting materials?

Carpeting materials differ in their look, feel and function. The home renovation experts at Angi.com note that some carpet fibers are better suited to areas in a home that attract a lot of foot traffic, while others make for better options in areas with less use, such as a bedroom or home office. For example, Angi.com notes that polyester has a luxurious, soft feel, making it a strong option for bedroom floors. Nylon carpet fiber is resistant to stains and damage and maintains its height under heavy weight, making this a good option in heavily trafficked rooms. Homeowners can

discuss each carpeting material with their flooring retailer to determine which suits their budget and which is best in each room of their homes.

Is carpet padding a must?

Carpet padding is one of the costs associated with carpeting. When shopping for carpeting for the first time, homeowners may notice carpet padding costs on their estimate and wonder what it is and if it's truly necessary. Carpet padding is necessary, as Flooring101.com notes that it keeps the underside of the carpet from wearing against the subfloor while absorbing the impact of foot traffic and furniture. That absorption helps to reduce stress on the carpet and thus extend its life expectancy. Carpet padding also can have an insulating effect and help to reduce sound in a room. So while carpet padding might be a costly expense on an itemized estimate, it's well worth the investment.

Carpeting can help make a home feel more cozy and welcoming. Homeowners can work with a local carpeting retailer to find a carpet that meets their needs and fits their budget.



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HOME INTERIOR TRENDS on the RISE



Trends that seem ubiquitous one day can seemingly vanish before the sun rises again just 24 hours later. That's especially true in the digital age, when overnight celebrities and viral videos can be on the tips of everyone's tongue before being forgotten entirely when the next online sensation emerges in an increasingly rapid news cycle.

Home trends typically benefit from a longer shelf life than viral videos and other fads that originate on the internet, and that's something renovation-minded homeowners should consider when improving their homes. Homeowners preparing to do just that can consider these notable trends, which the online renovation experts at Houzz suggest will be particularly popular in the year ahead.

• **Rounded furnishings:** Houzz noted that gentle curves and rounded edges embody the organic modern styles that many current homeowners love. Rounded dining tables

and similarly circular coffee tables may merit consideration among homeowners who want to embrace popular trends.

• **Arches:** Houzz cites arches among the more popular modern trends, and the experts at Better Homes & Gardens note this unique, eye-catching style has been gaining popularity for several years. Better Homes & Gardens suggests that part of the appeal of arched doorways could be their deviation from a more traditional door shape. That uniqueness draws the attention of residents and visitors alike, and Houzz notes that arched windows, cabinets and even millwork details are part of the pivot toward arches.

• **Stove alcoves:** If it's a touch of history homeowners want, kitchen range alcoves might be just the project for them. Range alcoves call an earlier time to mind when wood burning stoves were commonplace. The report

from Houzz notes range alcoves immediately draw attention, which undoubtedly adds to their appeal.

• **Wood for warmth:** Homeowners who hear "wood and warmth" might think fireplaces, but Houzz reports that wood elements are being incorporated into interior designs as a means to giving homes a

more cozy vibe. Ceiling beams, trim, wall paneling, and cabinetry are utilizing wood to add warmth to a home.

Trends come and go, but home trends typically have more staying power than styles that emerge in other arenas. Homeowners who want to upgrade their home interiors can consider the latest trends and choose those that align with their own personal tastes.

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Did You KNOW?



Home renovations are wildly popular, and that popularity can be traced to a number of factors.

Some homeowners renovate their homes with their own comfort in mind, while others do so to improve the resale value of the property. For those in the latter group, a recognition of renovations that yield the highest return on investment may help them decide which projects to pursue. According to the housing market research and analytics firm Zonda Media, a garage door replacement offered the highest return on investment in the American real estate market in 2024, earning a whopping 194 percent return on homeowners' initial investment. An entry door replacement with steel door offered the second best ROI at 188 percent of homeowners' initial investment, while replacing siding with stone veneer was third on the list with an average ROI of 153 percent.

WHAT IS A QUIET ROOM? (And why you should create one at home)



Home for most people is a sanctuary that offers comfort, familiarity and a place to gather with family and friends. Although home can be a welcoming place, with so many people in the average household humming along from day to day, it may not always be the most serene setting.

From teenagers playing video games to video meetings in a home office to dogs barking at the postal worker doing daily rounds, there are plenty of potentially distracting sounds in and around a home. Lawn care workers with their mowers and blowers also may contribute to ambient noise. A dedicated quiet room can be beneficial for anyone, and most especially for people who experience sensory issues.

How to create a quiet room

The first step in establishing a quiet room is to identify a location that is far away from the main action of the household. A bedroom, basement, nook in the garage, or even an attic can be a good spot for a quiet room.

Soundproofing the space can make it even more inviting. Sounds will bounce off of walls and floors, but acoustic panels can help muffle noises. If acoustic panels are not in the design plan, thicker draperies, wallpaper, carpeting, and wall art can help counteract echoes and noise infiltration. Soft furniture also can absorb sound.

Small rooms work better as quiet spaces, as such areas can feel more cozy. Less is needed to decorate the space if it is on the smaller side. Bring in warm, soft lighting and soft decor. A sound machine playing favorite ocean or natural sounds also can mask outside noises even more.

Establish rules that govern how the quiet space is to be used. When someone is inside the area, they should not be disturbed. If possible, use the quiet room during naturally quiet times of the day. Keep the room stocked with books, journals, crafting items, or whatever it is you need to unwind and relax.

What is a quiet room?

A quiet room is a space where a person can enjoy peace and quiet in a distraction-free environment. According to designer Rachel Cannon, "a quiet room is a sanctuary from the stimulation and overwhelm that we encounter every day." A quiet room may go by various names, including a mindfulness room or cozy cove, but the common goal is to remove as many sensory distractions as possible so that an individual can disconnect from the outside world and reap some calming benefits. According to School Specialty, LLC, an education resource provider, schools are now providing quiet rooms for over-stimulated students, and homeowners can take similar cues to create these relaxing retreats at home.

Quiet rooms can be special retreats homeowners use to escape the hustle and bustle of a household.



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WHY HIRING A PAINTER is the RIGHT CHOICE

Few home improvements can change the look of a room faster and more affordably than a painting makeover. In fact, homeowners often turn to paint before they make any other renovations. Home Light, a real estate technology company, says painting a home's interior can net a return on investment as high as 107 percent.

Although painting is a project that can be tackled by do-it-yourselfers, there are various advantages to calling in a professional to handle painting projects. Here is a look at some of the benefits to working with a professional painter.

Cut down on the job time

A professional painter can reduce the project timeline. Painters have the skill set and experience to complete a project in a timely manner. This means the job will be streamlined from preparation to clean-up.

Pay attention to details

Professional painters are likely to do a job that is nearly flawless, especially after homeowners exercise their due diligence and vet painters carefully. Professionals will pay attention to the small details that less experienced painters wouldn't think about.

Reduce your workload

Painting can be a time-consuming job, and most of it occurs even before you pick up a brush. It can take hours to prep walls, patch holes, remove moldings, and apply painter's tape. Homeowners who do not have much time are better off leaving trusting the project to a professional.

Painters already have equipment

Do-it-yourselfers may need to buy new tools before beginning the job. This means brushes, rollers, tape, tarps, trays, and much more. Unless you plan to paint multiple times, this can make stocking up a considerable investment. Professionals already have all the right gear and tools of the trade.

Lasting results

Professional painters understand which products will produce the desired results, depending on the wear and tear of the space. Paints are not all created equal, and certain walls, floors and trim may require unique priming and preparation that novices are not familiar with. Professional painters can help ensure durability and save homeowners from having to do the job again in a few months or years.

A safer experience

Painting can be a challenging job when it involves painting hard-to-reach spaces and/or climbing and balancing on tall ladders. Homeowners are not at risk of injury when hiring a professional painter. In addition, professional painters should be licensed and insured. This means if an injury or incident occurs, the homeowner will not be on the hook for the cost.

A fresh coat of paint can produce amazing results. Leaving the work to a professional can ensure a job is done correctly and beautifully and completed on time.



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PROS and CONS of OPEN CONCEPT FLOOR PLANS

Open floor plans that make it easy to move through primary living and entertaining areas have been popular for decades. Open concept floor plans join the dining room, kitchen and living (great) room into a communal space where sight lines are maximized and walls are minimal.

According to JJones Design Co., the origins of open concept floor plans may be traced to the deaf community. An open layout allows for better visual communication and awareness of one's surroundings, and some deaf individuals modified their kitchen and living spaces to facilitate more room for social gatherings and signing. Nowadays, it's nearly impossible to find a new construction with closed-off rooms. Here's a look at some of the pros and cons of having an open-concept home.

Benefit: Open concept plans make small spaces feel bigger. When smaller homes are broken up by walls, they can seem even smaller. By tearing down walls, one can trick the mind into thinking there is more square footage.

Drawback: The space may feel too large. An open concept floor plan in a large home can make interior spaces feel cavernous. A cozy home can be difficult to achieve with fewer walls.

Benefit: Open concept plans facilitate the flow of natural light. Without walls to break up rooms, homeowners can maximize light coming in through their windows. This also may help to brighten darker rooms that do not get as much natural light.

Drawback: Privacy can be hard to achieve. Unobstructed views from windows and doors can make it more challenging to create privacy when desired. When window shades are open, passersby can see into a home. Also, sunlight may end up wearing out flooring and furniture throughout the home.

Benefit: Open floor plans allow more space to spread out when entertaining. One of the biggest pluses of open floor plans is that it makes it easier to host crowds. Guests can enjoy the communal space, while hosts can still interact with friends and family even while preparing meals in the kitchen.

Drawback: Homeowners will likely need to do more cleaning ahead of hosting guests, as multiple rooms will be on display. Also, cleanup afterwards may be more arduous since guests have spent time in multiple spaces.

Benefit: Open concept plans can improve property value. The home renovation experts at The Spruce note open floor plans are desirable and increase the value of a home by up to 7.4 percent a year.

Drawback: Some home buyers are beginning to shy away from open floor plans. This may have been prompted by stay-at-home requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic, when multiple family members were working and doing school work at home. In that environment, an open-concept layout didn't provide the privacy or distraction-free spaces residents may have needed.

Open floor plans have been around for more than 30 years, but they aren't everyone's cup of tea. The pros and cons of this design style merits consideration when renovating or shopping for a home.

Did You KNOW?

Open concept floor plans may be losing appeal.

According to the design experts with Martha Stewart, open floor plans are giving way to a rise in separate spaces. Older homes with many rooms featured considerably less square footage than modern properties. According to Madeline Merin, a New York-based designer, the average size of a home in the United States has doubled from 1,000 square feet in 1950 to 2,300 square feet now. Instead of taking down walls, which is often done to make small homes seem more spacious, owners of larger homes are looking to delineate between rooms to help homes feel more cozy. The global pandemic led some homeowners to rethink the rooms in their homes when many were forced to cohabitate around-the-clock. Many would now rather see a return to defined gathering spaces and areas where residents can retreat for some privacy and personal time. Furthermore, Taylor Hill of Taylor Hill Interior Design says that some homeowners are increasingly appreciative of walls for their architectural appeal and not just for their utility in separating spaces.



PROJECTS to CONSIDER BEFORE MOVING INTO A HOME



Painting

Painting home interiors is among the more logical projects to consider before moving into a home. Simply put, an empty home is far easier to paint than one filled with furniture and other items. Professional painters may even discount a project if they know they won't have to cover and/or move any furniture before and after applying paint. Painting before anyone has moved in also saves residents the discomfort of living in a home overcome by the lingering aroma of drying paint. Simply open the windows and let the home air out throughout each painting session.

Flooring

Flooring projects are another undertaking to consider before moving in. Whether you're tearing up old carpet and replacing it with new carpet, refinishing wood floors, or installing a wholly new floor, each task is considerably easier if there is nothing on the floor. Flooring projects are best left to the professionals, and labor costs may drop considerably if contractors don't



have to pause to move furnishings or work around other items.

Deep cleaning

A professional cleaning service should be among the first calls homeowners make after closing on a new home. A deep cleaning when the home is empty and all lingering dust and debris is visible to the naked eye can ensure no spots are missed before move-in day. Request that the cleaning service clean the interior of kitchen drawers and cabinets, which have a tendency to accumulate grime over the years.

Electrical work

Modern homes are plugged in, so addressing electrical issues prior to move-in day can ensure there are no interruptions to internet connectivity when everyone begins to settle into the home. This is also a great time to install additional electrical outlets, and homeowners are urged to take the time to draw up plans for how each room will look

once all of their furniture is in the house. Doing so can identify where additional outlets should be installed. Homeowners also can visit their new home at night and turn on the lights to see if existing fixtures provide ample illumination. If not, installing new fixtures prior to moving in makes cleanup easier and ensures there are no dark nights once everyone is in the home.

Ceilings

Replacing ceilings prior to moving in is another savvy move. If the ceilings are dated or unsightly, removing, repainting or replacing them before anything is beneath them is a great way to protect valuables from damage. And contractors may not need as much time to complete such a project in empty rooms as they would in spaces where they need to negotiate their way around furniture and other valuables.

Various renovation projects can be conducted prior to moving into a new home. Such an approach can save both money and effort.

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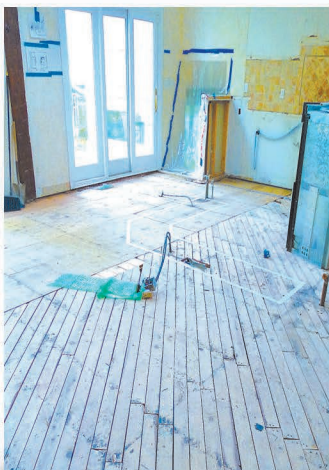
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How to prepare for a lengthy RENOVATION PROJECT

Depending on the scope and scale of a project, home renovations can take anywhere from a day or two for minor cosmetic changes to nine months for a major project. The lender RenoFi says projects like remodeling a kitchen or bathroom have a lot of moving parts, including plumbing and electrical work, structural changes, flooring, and installation of appliances. Due to that complexity, such projects may take six to 12 weeks. A home addition can take months. Homeowners weary of such lengthy undertakings can implement strategies to make conditions at home more manageable.

• **Get a rough estimate from contractors so that you can budget accordingly.** A project will go nowhere without proper funding. Get detailed estimates that include labor and building materials. Then start saving and stash money away for the project so you're not caught off-guard later on.

• **Clear out clutter.** Remove any extraneous items from the room or rooms that will be remodeled. Although it will be an added expense, it is a good idea to rent a storage unit

or have a storage pod placed in the driveway or yard for the duration of the project. Move items that will not be needed into the unit. This will get them out of the way and protect them from damage.

• **Consider starting in warm weather.** Contractors will be going in and out of the home each day, and doors and windows may need to be propped open. Schedule a project during those months when temperatures are more comfortable. If the project involves limited access to the kitchen to cook, utilizing an outdoor grill or kitchen is much easier when the weather is pleasant.

• **Stay with relatives.** While some people have no issues living in a residence during a renovation, others may find the work simply too inconvenient or distracting to be around. Time away from the property can help manage stress, and prevent kids, pets and others from getting in the way of work.

• **Safeguard sensitive items.** Take inventory of items in the home and catalog them for insurance

purposes. This way you're covered in the case of damage or theft. Remove documents, like birth certificates, passports, insurance policies, and other private papers, and keep them in a safety deposit box or fireproof safe.

Home renovations may stretch on for weeks or months. However, with adequate preparation, homeowners can see such projects through without facing too much adversity.

Home renovations can increase resale value and outfit spaces to make them more accommodating to residents. Homeowners interested in remodeling projects understand that such undertakings are often a lengthy process. But the time spent waiting often is well worth it when the work is done and the finished product looks just as homeowners imagined.

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What to know about KITCHEN CABINET PROJECTS



Kitchens have long been characterized as the busiest room in a home. Kitchens are where meals are prepared and cooked, but they also tend to be gathering spaces where families connect at the end of a day and where guests congregate during holiday celebrations and birthday parties.

All that time in the kitchen makes these popular rooms to renovate. Homeowners who want to give their kitchens a new look and feel without doing a full renovation can consider kitchen cabinet projects. An understanding of kitchen cabinet projects can help homeowners decide if this undertaking is for them.

• **Cabinet renovations do not necessarily require replacement.** Some cabinets may

not need to be removed and replaced. The renovation experts at HGTV note that kitchen cabinet refacing can be a budget-friendly way to give a new look to cabinets that do not require replacement. Refacing can be as extensive as homeowners prefer, but such projects can create a whole new aesthetic in the kitchen depending on the extent of the project.

• **There are many different types of kitchen cabinets.** Homeowners who have never been involved in a cabinet project should know they will have many different options to choose from. Face-frame cabinets are a traditional choice made with a frame around the door and any drawers that might be included as part of the cabinets. Some additional options include full overlay cabinets, frameless cabinets,

recessed panel cabinets, and Shaker cabinets. Homeowners hesitant to choose their own cabinets can work with a contractor and/or interior designer to find the option that aligns best with their current kitchen.

• **Cabinet materials and finishes vary as well.** Cabinets can be made from an array of materials, including wood, laminate, metal, and plastic. Cabinets also can be finished with paint, stain, glaze, and lacquer. Each finish has its own unique characteristics. For example, painted cabinets may need to be tended to with greater frequency than other options because paint can fade. However, painted cabinets remain popular because homeowners can paint them any color at any time.

• **Consider the countertops when adjusting kitchen cabinets.** Kitchens tend to have color schemes, and that scheme is

often reflected in the color of cabinets and countertops. When tweaking just the cabinets, homeowners should give ample consideration to the overall color scheme of their kitchens. Interior designers can be invaluable resources for homeowners who aren't quite sure how new or refaced cabinets will fit into an overall color scheme.

• **Consider replacement if necessary.** A kitchen cabinet replacement project will be more expensive than refacing the cabinets. But there are instances when cabinets require replacement. Excessive wear and tear, insufficient storage, a dated appearance, and cabinets that appear to be sagging off the wall are some indicators that replacement is necessary.

Updated cabinets can give a kitchen a whole new look, even if the cabinets are refaced instead of replaced.



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The benefits of LIGHTING UP YOUR LANDSCAPE



Homeowners know there's no shortage of ways to tweak a property. Some homeowners may lament that the work associated with home ownership is never done, but owning a house also provide endless opportunities to upgrade the spaces people call home.

Landscape lighting has become increasingly popular in recent years. That popularity is undoubtedly due to a number of variables, and each highlights a benefit of installing landscape lighting around a property.

- **Affordability:** Some may think of big budget projects like kitchen remodels or room additions when pondering home renovations. Such projects can have a dramatic impact on the look and feel of a home, but landscape lighting can be equally transformative at a fraction of the cost of larger undertakings. The home renovation experts at Angi.com estimate the average landscape lighting project costs around \$4,000, making affordability a notable benefit of the project.

- **Appearance:** There's no denying the aesthetic appeal of a well-lit landscape at night. Landscape lighting can be utilized to draw attention to awe-inspiring components of a landscape, whether it's natural features like gardens and foliage or manmade components like architectural features. Improved appearance can increase curb appeal, which is often associated with how a home looks during daylight hours. But photographs of a well-lit nighttime landscape can impress buyers as well.

- **Cost savings:** Landscape lighting

might help homeowners reduce the cost of their homeowners insurance. Researchers at PolicyGenius.com found that insurance companies typically offer a discount of 2 to 5 percent to homeowners who install a home security system. Insurance providers may offer additional savings to homeowners who pair such systems with landscape lighting, which can be a deterrent to burglars who prefer to operate under a cloak of darkness.

- **Safety:** Insurance firms may discount premiums because of landscape lighting because they view it as a deterrent to potential criminals. But landscape lighting also makes moving around a property at night safer for residents and guests. Lighting can be used to illuminate walkways, outdoor living rooms, patios around pools, and other areas where residents and guests will be walking at night, which can reduce the risk of falls and injuries that may result from such spills.

- **ROI:** Savvy homeowners consider a renovation's return on investment before deciding to go forward with a project. Studies vary, but the National Association of Realtors indicates landscape lighting can recoup as much as 70 percent of homeowners' investment in the project at resale. When viewed through the lens of ROI, the cost of installing landscape lighting is even less.

Landscape lighting adds notable aesthetic appeal to a home at a fraction of the cost of other renovation projects. The benefits such lighting provides make the project one every homeowner can consider.