

INSIDE, OUTSIDE, AND INBETWEEN - DIY Solutions for trends and tips to keep your home, and its value, up to date.

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As our homes age, we see new trends come and go every day in the media. While we can't change our homes as often as the trends happen, it is important to keep the condition, as well as the style, of our homes up to date. The useful life and value of our homes are both raised with good seasonal maintenance, and time-to-time style updates, that don't have to cost a ton. There are many cost-effective DIY items you can do to help your home stay current.

While trends are tough to keep up with, there are some that stick around, and become a part of the look and feel that buyers expect to see in a home they purchase. Our advice is to incorporate some of the long-lasting trends into the "base envelope" of your home (walls, floors, fixtures), and keep the personal patterns and bolder looks to your décor, so that they are removable.

Equally important for value is maintenance. Maintenance doesn't have to be arduous. Simple regular maintenance items, that are cost and time effective, can help your home from having costly replacements later. And, it shows. It is easy to see the results of a well-kept home vs one with what the industry calls "deferred maintenance".

We want to help you on your way to regular, easy, DIY maintenance and updates that we call "Value Adders". While you can do all sorts of changes to your home, our Value Adder picks are suggestions of where to make updates, if you are keeping it simple. Our Value Adders will be for the "base envelope" of your home, which are items that stay with your home when you sell it.

INSIDE

The "Inside" of your home is where trends and maintenance live and breathe. Set aside four times a year (each season) to DIY regular maintenance items, and you may help avoid costly repair items later. Pick one time a year to review your style trends and organization. We used to call this "spring cleaning". But, it has evolved to color and décor updates, as well as straightening up those regularly used cabinets, that become a jumbled mess inside.

COLORS: Staying with the latest trends is no more prevalent than with the colors and patterns you use in your home. The interior of your typical Starbucks has had it right for a while. Warm rich greys with earthy accent colors will replace the cooler neutrals as your base envelope colors for the 2018 trends.

- Warm Greys
- Rich Earthy Shaded: Camel, rust, Tobacco, Brown-Blacks
- Matte Blacks
- Warm woods
- Vibrant Floral Patterns or popping colors for accent décor items

2018 Color of the year: Sherwin Williams color of the year is "OCEANSIDE SW 6496". This is a dark, rich, blue-green color. Having said that, being "in" with the super trendy crowd is not always the best option for base envelope items. However, if you want to keep it fun and relevant, you can pick an accent wall or your front door for the trendy pop of color to keep you in style...something you can easily paint or change every-so-often, or bring back to a neutral base when you go to see your home.

OCEANSIDE SW 6496



FIXTURES: The biggest tell-tale of the age of your home are the fixtures installed for lighting and plumbing. These can also be the costliest to update, because of the number of them in your home, and the price of each new piece. So, how do you update fixtures without breaking the bank? There are many DIY projects you can find on YouTube and other home improvement sites, too many to talk about here. We prelude this conversation with a warning to think about your DIY skills, how long a finish will last, and what a buyer of your home in the future may think of your DIY re-finish of a fixture. We love the "idea" of refinishing your fake brass tone fixtures, like lights, knobs and faucets, to an oil rubbed bronze look. However, if used daily, the finish may not last, and it may look cheap, if the finish doesn't adhere properly. We suggest to not skimp on the paint brand. Use spray paint like "Rust-oleum Advanced Formula Metallic Paint & Primer In One" (oil rubbed bronze color), along with a protective coating of "Rust-oleum Matte Clear Enamel". We choose oil rubbed bronze as a go to color for DIY ease, and style longevity.

INSIDE DIY Value Adders

- Interior Knobs – from brass look to oil rubbed bronze
- Light Fixtures – warm matt bronze or black colors, solid or brushed look
- Cabinet knobs - Can DIY color changes, or find affordable replacements on line
- Sink Faucets – DIY with caution – may want to find affordable replacements
- Add trim molding – anywhere and everywhere it makes since, like picture mold and enamel paint for wainscoting look in hall and stairways. A fun place, that is elegant and noticeable, is adding header caps over doorways.

Oil Rubbed Bronze
A trend that will last



INSIDE DIYs & Tips to consider

- Add a mirror to make a room seem bigger.
- Add glass décor and/or lighting to a dark corner or area to add to the room's volume.
- Move furniture pieces out of the "walking path" through your home to give a more open feel.
- Declutter and remove anything you can from counters and tables, other than the focal accent piece. This is a great way to share with neighbors by selling through local consignment stores. Use this rule: Never have more than 3 items on one counter or table section.
- Remove standard curtains for a more contemporary feel. If window covers are needed, consider wood style blinds, cellular or roman shades, or sliding panel curtains you can DIY... See YouTube and Pinterest for great ideas.
- Paint oak stair rails and posts black, leave pickets white (use oil based paint to adhere to stains).
- Touch up your baseboard paint. Baseboards take a beating, and a fresh coat of paint will make a noticeable difference. If painting is not on your agenda, try washing them with Scrubbing Bubbles bathroom cleaner....you may be amazed.
- The easiest and fastest style change to a bathroom or kitchen is to change the cabinet knobs. If you already have brushed stainless steel appliances, then it is super easy (a philips head screwdriver) to change out your cabinet knobs to match. TIP: brushed stainless is sometimes called satin nickel. You can find packs of 10 knobs for under \$20 at places like your local Home Depot or Lowe's. Or, for more unique choices, try IKEA. Keep in mind that all metal finishes should change together in a room. So, if you are changing knobs in a bathroom, it may affect the need to change the sink faucet and/or shower hardware/fixtures/frame.
- Upcycle a dresser or sidebar to be a fun bathroom vanity.

ACCENT WALLS: Everyone loves an accent wall, as a way to pop a room into style. We've seen it done, most notably, in dining rooms. It is the easiest way to differentiate your home's entry focal points from that of a neighbor's, even if they have a similar floor plan. This year, consider doing accent walls in rooms like bedrooms and even kitchens. The use of materials like wood trim, brick, concrete, tile, fabric, wall paper and other things are where the trend is heading, instead of just painting the wall. That being said, caution is urged when deciding on materials that will stay with the home. For example: If you go with a big floral wall paper print, your home becomes less "neutral" for when you go to sell it. The same goes for tile, or non-standard, type materials that are permanently adhered to your drywall. For "sell-ability" later, a wood trimmed wall is a safe bet. And, yes, you can "faux" the trend with clever painting jobs that give the appearance of texture. One out of the box, easy DIY idea is a full floor-to-ceiling curtain along the whole wall. It can easily be removed or changed.

Full Wall Accent Trends –

- Bedrooms – most added room
- Millwork – aka wood trim – most used material
- If using "removable" items, go ahead and get creative

Accent Wall Value Adder Choice –

- Fireplace Wall in Great Room - the whole wall, or at least full height of chimney surround walls
- Cooking Wall in Kitchen – floor to ceiling (not just backsplash) (if doing this, make sure your backsplash elsewhere is different)
- Dining Room, Far Wall, most visible from foyer

BACKSPLASH RULES: – One of the most often DIY accomplished game changers in your kitchen is the backsplash. Remember that this is a “base envelope” item that will remain when you sell your home. So, while you may want to go crazy with colors and patterns after seeing all the available options, think of the resale factor.

Kitchen DIY TIPS & Project ideas

- Use Glass tiles in dark areas (reflective)
- Install under counter lighting
- If removing old tiles, cover counters with cardboard to avoid damage
- When removing old backsplash, try to avoid pulling entire sections of drywall off, even if taking off some of the face of the drywall. It is much easier to patch divots in the drywall with dry wall mud (spackle) for your backer for the new tile, than to replace drywall boards
- Add glass in a few of your cabinet doors to give your kitchen volume
- If you have engineered cabinets (not site built), you can take a section of upper cabinets and move it higher (stagger) it, and even bring it out into the room a few inches, to give depth to a straight row of cabinets
- Add legs or corbels to a jetting counter to make it look more like a table



DIY YouTube Video Picks:

- Door Knobs: “How to Refinish Brass Hardware Yourself” - https://youtu.be/mHS3_60Ii94
- Foyer Light Fixture: “DIY Farmhouse Light/Fixer Upper Inspired” - <https://youtu.be/EdeQKIVENZg>
- Bath Light Fixture: “Awesome Rust-oleum spray paint transformation!” - <https://youtu.be/F0xrTq53zxc>
- Fireplace Frame, brass to black: “How to Update Fireplace Brass” - <https://youtu.be/B2V8j9j6Dfg>
- Trim Accent Wall: “DIY Wainscoting for Half the Cost” - <https://youtu.be/RplpBe5wHFc>

OUTSIDE

The first impression of your home is the outside. It is an important statement of your style, and is often overlooked when updating or maintaining your home and property. While trends are slower for landscaping, and exterior finishes are not an easy or economical update, there are small DIY projects that will help your yard and home stay fresh.

THE FRONT DOOR: This is the most visible item on the exterior of your home. It is the focal point of your whole property from the curb, and hey, it was meant to be. Rarely do architects design homes without the front door being a key feature. It is the embodiment of the invitation to friends and family that welcomes them to your home. Such an important statement for your home needs your attention. While you can’t change the door itself without costing a good penny, you can update it with a fresh coat of paint or stain, and even make a style statement with a color change. Seasonal wreaths and other hanging décor keeps your entry looking fresh. Consider other décor items that set near the front door, as a way to make your style evident, and add charm to your entryway.

OUTSIDE DIY Value Adders

- Redo your front door and entry. This is the first impression to your home, near and far.
- Reshape plant beds. Add some curves for a more contemporary feel.
- Remove overly mature and/or overgrown areas with younger plantings.
- Increase your seating area out back with easy combo lawn/paver designs, like a checkerboard.

OUTSIDE DIY Tips & Project ideas

- Re-paint/Re-stain your front door. Make sure your entryway is clean and clutter free to welcome your guests.
- Repaint your mailbox. Believe it or not, your mailbox is a first impression item for your home.
- Add an outdoor seating area – Even a small café style seating area adds ambiance to your front or back porch, deck, or patio.
- Enlarge your patio with pavers: You can add landscape pavers, stones, or slabs, to increase your patio size, keeping grassy, planted or sanded, areas between the blocks for easier installation.

Joint Material Rules

- Under 1 inch, use polymeric sand (ex: with pavers)
 - 1 inch to 6 inches, use Gator Dust Bond (would not suggest going over 2 inches for DIY projects...expert care must be taken to avoid cracking over time.
 - 2 to 6 inches, use plantings like dichondra or dwarf Mondo grass for medium joints
 - Over 6 inches, you can create feature areas with sod for larger joints to blend nicely with your existing yard
- Clean: Easy, cheap, cleaning of all surfaces can be accomplished with ½ part bleach to ½ part water in a 2-gallon EZ-Pump Sprayer (\$17.97 Home Depot, Roundup Section in landscaping). Spray surfaces like white wood trim, patio concrete, drives, sidewalks, decks...avoiding walls/brick/stucco/siding. No need to wash it off. It works better if sits on a while. But, be careful if it rains or gets wet before it evaporates...surfaces will be slick to walk on when wet.
 - Reshape your plant beds: Adding curves to plant beds can breathe new life into the look of your landscaping. Use sod pieces to fill, change or add shape to your lawn, and plug old spots.
 - PLANTS...DID YOU KNOW? Plants have a life cycle. They may not die, but overly mature plants will create an aged and outdated look to your landscaping. Do some research on your particular plant types, that are in your yard. See if they can be pruned to look smaller/younger. Keeping plants that are up near the home smaller, and not overgrown, will make your home appear larger, and your landscaping appear fresher, as well as keep little creepy crawlies from getting into your home. You should never have any plant or branch touching your home. Keeping a nice, one foot, path along the perimeter of your home by pruning back bushes, will help with pest control. One of the bush plants highly used in Hamilton Mill by builders was Indian Hawthorn. Back in 2013, there was an ice freeze that killed or damaged a majority of the Indian Hawthorns in the community. If you didn't pull them out then, they may still be looking a bit scraggly now.
 - Lawn Tip: Don't scalp your lawn. Cutting your lawn too short makes it too inviting to insects and/or susceptible to disease. Longer in the summer (for shade), shorter in the winter (for sun) will help the roots of your grass the best, and create a healthier lawn.
 - Fertilize: Spring and Fall are the best two seasons to fertilize. Don't overdo it. Never treat in the bright sun and always follow up with watering. Side note: Pruning is best in Fall and Winter.
 - Watering: Don't overwater your lawn. An inch of water per week is a good average. Try to pick plants with similar watering schedules as your lawn for easier maintenance. The best time of day to water is super early morning (just before dawn), so that it has all day to dry, which helps avoid damaging molds and fungus.
 - Create a color pallet for your plants and flowers: Don't just thrown in plants or annuals. Treat the overall look like you would the interior of your home.



OUTSIDE DIY YouTube Video Picks

- Lawn Edging Choices and Techniques: “How To Make Great Garden Edging | Gardening | Great Home Ideas” - <https://youtu.be/1zjEwLNbBS4>
- Pavers over existing grass (this technique could be used with almost any stone, slab, or heavy tile) – “Laying on grass - Novoceram Outdoor Plus” - <https://youtu.be/GwaXo1GibA4>
- Re-Stain Front Door: “21. DIY Project: How to refinish your front door” <https://youtu.be/FEhcpYF7DRA>

IN BETWEEN = *the maintenance*

Sometimes, it is the things we don't think of on a daily basis that can matter. In Between items are items that are not just inside the walls of our home, but also Outside and Inside. These items can help with the overall impression and the upkeep of your home. Regular maintenance of In Between items can not only add value to your home and property, but help save you from costly repair or replacement items later.

IN BETWEEN DIY Value Adders

- Curb Appeal: Yes, we, actually, mean your curb at the street. Include the sidewalk too, if you have one. Clean these with a mixture of ½ and ½ water and bleach in an empty 2 gallon sprayer (Home Depot Landscape section), and leave it to dry. You can pressure wash, if you have that equipment and know-how. But, don't stop at cleaning. Consider patching and fixing cracked or chipped curbing. This may take a little more research on how to make it blend with your current curb, but will be a strikingly noticeable update to passers-by. Nothing says "old house", like a dirty, chipped up curb out front.
- HVAC Outside Condensers: Here we go with cleaning again. Clean your outside condenser units (watch many YouTubes for proper care), and reposition them, if needed, to be level. Remove overgrowth of plantings around them for better performance. When you go to sell your home, well-maintained HVAC systems say a lot about how you have cared for your home, overall.
- High Tech Automation items that show via wall mounted controllers or user interfaces. Examples "nest" HVAC T-Stats, exterior video cameras, and blue tooth entry locks.
- Change out old flip switches and outlets for newer style décor rocker style, or even smart home type units, and add insulation pads, while you are at it.

IN BETWEEN DIY Tips and Project Ideas

- Organize: It is still ok to have stuff. Just remember that "An organized person put things away. A disorganized person sets things down". If you open the door, and the amount of stuff overwhelms you to the point you can't even start the project, make a schedule to commit to. One a week is a good starting point. One box, or closet, or cabinet.
 - Inside Cabinets: "Ah ha! That is where I put that"
 - Garage: Think of the garage like another entryway...make it almost a part of your home. You enter and leave it almost every day. It can be a fun "man-cave" too, or a place to accomplish other projects, if cleaned up and usable.
 - Basement Storage Areas: Take one of those room, and make it a clean/dust free storage room. Keeping dust down makes storage items stay cleaner, cuts down on pests, and even helps your HVAC system (if it is in your basement). Try these steps: 1. Move everything out of the room. 2. Sweep the floor. 3. Mop the floor with a water and bleach mixture and let dry. 4. Use concrete caulk to fill the crack between the floor and concrete wall (keeps out bugs). 5. Paint the concrete with appropriate stains or paints (walls and floor). 6. If you are trying to seal off open stud walls, you can staple thick plastic sheeting (plastic capped roof nails hold great), or nail other panel types. Hang a few long pieces over the door opening to make an easy passthrough. 7. Add any shelving or separate into sections for seasonal storage, so you can get to things easily. 8. Hang a plug in LED strip light by adding a *socket with outlet* adapter to the keyless bulb fixture, for a lot more light (\$2.69 Home Depot Sku 152008). 9. Write or tape an itemized list of what is inside to the exterior of your boxes and totes...you will appreciate it later.
- Caulk: Twice a year - Go throughout your home, and caulk all tile joints in wet areas. Consider caulking the concrete to concrete (walls to floors) in your basement or garage. Caulk any wood trim that is separating. Always use material appropriate caulk. And, you won't have to paint after, if you use damp sponge to clean up, and keep caulk joints small. Caulk joints should never protrude or be goopy looking. They should be smooth and unnoticeable.
- Weather-strip: One of the best ways to save money on utility bills, is to tighten up those gaps. Try clear "removeable" weather-strip caulk as an easy solution, or the super easy finger caulk cord. Replace permanent top and bottom weather strip pieces on windows and doors with solid rubber/foam track solutions.



- Deck Check: Your deck is a structural item, out in the weather, and made of materials that can age, shrink, and shift over time. Annually check nails, connectors, bolts, hangers, and posts, for condition and connection. Make sure you don't have earth to wood contact.
- Deck Style: Your deck can, most likely, be seen from the inside of your home. This could be a style factor to your interior design and feel. Choose paint colors and décor to compliment your interior. Since replacing a deck can be costly, consider some DIY deck rail solutions to quickly update the style look of your deck.
- GO HIGH TECH: There are tons of fun gadgets available for the base envelope of your home. Consider adding a few you will use. Don't add ones that don't add convenience to the daily use of your home. Make sure devices are compatible with current systems (ex. HVAC...not all devices work with older systems).
- Flush your HVAC Condensation Line: Years of deposits can plug your condensation line, and suddenly you have a drywall ceiling with stains, or even falling in from water damage. This is an easy and cheap maintenance item you should do once a year. Having two people (one on each end of the line) makes it faster and easier to see if the line is clear. Use about a 1/2 part vinegar to water mixture for putting into the pipe. Do not add baking soda, bleach, or other chemicals that could clog or damage pipes or connections. You don't need fancy equipment or pumps. Use your own breath to blow on the drain pipe, after the vinegar solution has a chance to penetrate clogs. That is all the air pressure that should be needed to push clogs and debris through the turns of the line. Never blow air or liquids into the HVAC system side of your unit, only the drain line leading outside.
- Replace the inside parts for your toilets. Once a year, check your toilet seals. If you hear water running when the toilet is not in use, you could have a leaky seal. One toilet with a small leak can cost you hundreds on your water bill in just one month.
- Clean your BBQ Grill insides. Get ready for the long grilling with a thoroughly cleaned grill. This is also a safety item, as the cause of many fires is the grease build up inside the grill on your deck.
- Clean your dryer vent line. Another fire safety item is your dryer vent line. Pull out your dryer, unhook the vent, and get a vacuum out. Use a long Swiffer duster for hard to reach lines, get as much as you can. If you can reach the outside, remove that cover, and do the same.
- Set a schedule for changing your HVAC filters. Changing them once a month with less expensive filters is a good choice, or at the very least, once every three months. We don't advise using super small cell filters, as they can block the intended air flow to your unit, especially when you forget to change them, and, actually, cause damage.
- Complete regular DIY maintenance on all major mechanicals in your home: HVAC, Plumbing, Electrical.

IN BETWEEN DIY YouTube Video Picks

- Weather Stripping: "How to stop cold air leaks in winter", also applies to any air infiltration, cold or warm: <https://youtu.be/PYOhxK0yauE>
- Changes Switches and Outlets: "How to Replace Electrical Switches – The Home Depot" <https://youtu.be/imia1J7a8No>
- Favorite Deck Paint Products: "SuperDeck® Deck Stains & Deck Care Products | Sherwin-Williams" https://youtu.be/Q9xEMbly_JE
- Unclog your AC Drip Line/HVAC Condensation line: This basic video will show you how & where. But, we like to use ½ and ½ water and vinegar, and then, after the line is flowing, drain through a couple of gallons of water afterwards, to make sure it is clear. You can also use your own breath to gently blow out loose clogs through turns, and to "talk" to someone on the other end, assuring the line is clear. https://youtu.be/y_G0G-Qke1M
- Clean the coils on your outside HVAC Condenser Units: We are including several how-to videos here, because we did not find one good one for all three items we feel you need to address: 1. Cleaning the coils <https://youtu.be/30gi2h8w1Gg> 2. Overall HVAC check up <https://youtu.be/SEVx7ByV9Rg> and, 3. Getting junk out of the inside of the box or heavier coil cleaning need <https://youtu.be/FshqeKiqDK8>



Other Trends for 2018 – some of these may be costly to accomplish. But, these are “base envelope” items that will stick around for a while. If in doubt, lean towards contemporary for the most current styles. Google Images for “contemporary interior design ideas” to provide you with some inspiration.

- Hidden Range Hoods (slide out type)
- Flat Panel Cabinet Doors (current contemporary lends to modern (1920’s-50’s) styles)
- Floor to Ceiling Cabinets
- Vintage style lighting
- Dedicated small storage spaces, like broom closets and spice racks, pull out drawers
- Kitchen sinks in colors other than white or stainless: darker grays, bronze or matt black are popular
- Dedicated counters for food prep (example: double height island)
- Partial glass panels for showers, instead of curtains or full sliding units
- Dining room tables in kitchens

FAVORITE VENDOR STORES, SITES AND REFERENCES: Here is a quick reference list of our favorite local stores, as well as internet vendors for supplies for your DIY home projects:

LOCAL STORES: ELIZABETH STREET REALTY / HOME DEPOT / LOWES / SHERWIN WILLIAMS / FLOOR & DÉCOR / FINE FABRICS / FRUGAL FABRICS / IKEA / STATUS DESIGN / QUEEN OF HEARTS / HOBBY LOBBY / ECLECTICS / KURTS CARPET WAREHOUSE / JC PENNY / AT HOME / TUESDAY MORNING / BRANDSMART USA /

INTERNET SITES & REFERENCE SOURCES: ELIZABETHSTREET.ORG / HOUZZ.COM / WAYFAIR.COM / AMAZON / EBAY / BLINDS.COM / AMERICANBLINDS.COM / LOWESCREATIVEIDEAS.COM / YOUTUBE.COM / PORCHCO.COM / PLANTHARDINESS.ARS.USDA.GOV / OUTWATER.COM / GLOBALINDUSTRIAL.COM / LAMPSPLUS.COM / LEVITON.COM / THISOLDHOUSE.COM / RD.COM / RUSTOLEUM.COM

USES FOR VINEGAR: REMOVE BALL POINT PEN MARKS FROM WALLS / CARPET: REMOVE STAINS, PERK UP DINGY COLORS, DEOTORIZE PET SMELLS / BRIGHTEN UP BRICK / UNCLOG & DEOTORIZE DRAINS / GET RID OF SMOKE ODOR / CLEAN CHROME & STAINLESS STEEL / REMOVE GREASE FROM YOUR STOVE & PANS / STEAM CLEAN YOUR MICROWAVE / CLEAR THE AIR IN YOUR KITCHEN / CLEAN YOUR DISH & CLOTHES WASHERS / WASH YOUR WINDOWS / WASH YOUR FLOORS

STAY AWAY FROM BLEACH INDOORS: While there are always traditional uses for bleach that can not be argued, like whitening linens and outdoor concrete, and removing mold, we like to try to stay away from bleach for a cleaning solution inside. One of the main reasons is its toxicity when it is, accidentally, combined with other cleaners, like vinegar. Accidental combinations of cleaners can damage you and your pets, and even cause death. Bleach on it’s own is harmful to your lungs, organs, eyes, and skin, as well as the environment.