

A large, modern house with a dark roof and white walls, surrounded by greenery and a driveway. The house features a prominent gable and large windows. The scene is set against a dark, overcast sky, with lush green trees and a well-maintained lawn in the foreground. A paved driveway leads towards the house.

RENOVATE. RESTORE. REFRESH.

A Guide to Home Improvements



THE INTRODUCTION

A Guide to Enhancing Your Living Space

If you've been thinking about renovating your home, you're in the right place.

This comprehensive guide offers practical tips and advice on a variety of topics, including boosting curb appeal, kitchen and bathroom upgrades, energy efficiency improvements, and more.

Whether you're planning to sell your home soon or simply want to enhance your living space, this guide provides valuable insights to help you make informed decisions about your home improvement projects.



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Recap & Reach out

Hey there!



Hi there! I'm Nikki, a real estate agent serving the vibrant Des Moines Metro Area in Iowa. Whether it's assisting first-time homebuyers, helping individuals downsize, helping single parents find stability in homeownership or aiding families in relocating to our beautiful area, I'm here to make the process as smooth and enjoyable as possible. Beyond the world of real estate, you'll often find me immersed in a captivating book, cherishing precious moments with my daughter, or soaking up the sunshine outdoors when the weather permits.

Thank you for trusting me to share advice along your home renovation journey! I am excited to share what I've learned over my tenure in real estate. My goal with this guide is to ensure that you are empowered to make decisions that work best for you and your home!

Have questions? I'm always available to help. Shoot me a text or give me a call for the quickest response.

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The Importance of Curb Appeal

Your home's exterior is the first thing potential buyers will see, so it's critical to make a great first impression! Studies have shown that people typically form a first impression within seconds of seeing a home's exterior. In fact, according to a survey conducted by the National Association of Realtors, 63% of homebuyers will drive by a property after viewing it online, and 68% of those who do will then form an opinion based on the home's curb appeal.



Let's talk Landscaping

Landscaping is a key element in improving your home's curb appeal and overall value. Here are a few considerations:

- **Plan and budget:** Determine your budget and consider the size and shape of your outdoor space. If budget allows, consider hiring a landscape architect or contractor to create a plan for you.
- **Focus on the front yard:** The front yard is the first thing that people see, so it is important to keep it well-maintained and spruced.
- **Choose appropriate plants and trees:** Select plants that complement the style of your home and thrive in your local climate.
- **Use mulch and ground cover:** Mulch and ground cover can help to suppress weeds, retain moisture, and improve the overall appearance of your landscape.
- **Add hardscaping elements:** Walkways, retaining walls, and other hardscaping elements will add visual interest and functionality to your outdoor space.
- **Consider lighting:** Outdoor lighting has the power to transform your yard by highlighting key features of your landscape and creating a welcoming ambiance.
- **Maintain your landscape:** Regular pruning, watering, and fertilizing will help to keep your landscape looking its best throughout the year.

Exterior Maintenance Checklist

Regular maintenance and repairs will help prevent costly damage and keep your home looking its best. In this section, we'll cover some common exterior maintenance and repair tasks that will boost your home's curb appeal and protect it from the elements.

- Clean and pressure wash siding, windows, and doors.
- Inspect roof for damage, such as missing or broken shingles. Repair and replace to prevent leaks.
- Clean gutters to prevent clogs and ensure proper drainage.
- Replace windows and doors with energy-efficient models to improve insulation and energy efficiency.
- Repaint your home's exterior to give it a revived, updated look and to protect from weather damage.
- Weed and mulch flowerbeds, cut and edge grass.
- Install irrigation or ensure existing sprinklers are working effectively.
- Check outdoor lighting and replace bulbs as necessary.



Kitchen Upgrades

The kitchen is often considered the heart of the home, and upgrading it can have a significant impact on your home's resale value. In this section, we'll discuss the benefits of upgrading your kitchen, popular kitchen trends, and budget-friendly upgrades to consider.



Benefits of Upgrading

- Improved functionality and flow for cooking and entertaining.
- Increased storage and organization.
- Enhanced aesthetic appeal and modernization.
- Increased resale value.

Popular Kitchen Trends

- Open-concept designs that integrate with adjacent living spaces.
- Natural materials such as wood, stone, and metal.
- Smart appliances and technology that offer convenience and efficiency.
- Subtle colors and patterns in tile and backsplashes and cabinetry .

Budget-Friendly Upgrades

- Repainting or refacing cabinets for a fresh look.
- Updating cabinet hardware and drawer pulls.
- Replacing countertops with durable and low-maintenance materials.
- Adding a new backsplash or painting existing tile.
- Upgrading lighting fixtures to improve ambiance and functionality.

Bathroom Upgrades

Next up, let's talk about bathroom upgrades. In this section, we'll discuss the benefits of upgrading your bathroom, popular bathroom design trends, and budget-friendly upgrades to consider.



Benefits of Upgrading

- Improved functionality and layout.
- Upgraded storage.
- Design modernization.
- Increased resale value.

Popular Bathroom Trends

- Spa-like features like soaking tubs, rainfall shower heads, steamers, and heated floors.
- Minimalist design including simple, clean lines, with features like floating vanities and freestanding tubs.
- Natural materials like wood, stone, and marble create a calming and serene atmosphere.

Budget-Friendly Upgrades

- Paint can do wonders for a bathroom, and it's a relatively inexpensive upgrade.
- Lighting can make a big difference in terms of both functionality and aesthetics.
- New hardware - Swapping out old faucets, towel bars, and toilet paper holders can give your bathroom a quick and easy update.

Energy Efficient Upgrades

Energy Efficiency is not just a hot topic swirling around in recent times. Taking measures to improve energy efficiency in your home comes with tangible benefits like more savings, higher resale value, and a lower carbon footprint. Let's jump into it!

Benefits of Energy Efficient Upgrades

- Lower energy bills by making upgrades like installing insulation, upgrading your HVAC system, and installing double paned windows and doors.
- Increased home comfort by reducing drafts and improving insulation.
- Environmental stewardship - reduce your home's carbon footprint and overall energy consumption.

How to Improve Energy Efficiency

- Seal air leaks with weatherstripping, caulk, or spray foam insulation.
- Upgrade your insulation: Keep warm air in during the winter and cool air in during the summer.
- Upgrade your HVAC system to a more efficient model. Look for models with high SEER ratings (for AC) or AFUE ratings (for furnaces).

Tax Credits and Incentives

Federal tax credits are available for certain upgrades. The credit varies depending on the upgrade and cost. States and local governments offer incentives like rebates or low-interest loans for energy efficient upgrades. Check with local government or utility company to see what programs are available locally.

The Energy Star program offers rebates and incentives for purchasing energy-efficient appliances.



Flooring Upgrades

Upgrading your flooring will benefit your home's aesthetics and its value. Popular options like hardwood, laminate, tile, and vinyl offer a range of benefits, from durability and easy maintenance to waterproofing and hypoallergenic properties.



Benefits of Upgrading

- Improves the look and feel of your home and creates a cohesive design scheme.
- Increases resale value.
- Improved durability.
- Improved indoor air quality - with hypoallergenic flooring, you can reduce the amount of dust and allergens in your home.

Popular Flooring Options

- Hardwood flooring is classic and timeless. It's durable, easy to clean, and adds warmth & character to your space.
- Tile flooring is a popular choice for bathrooms and kitchens, as it's waterproof and easy to clean.
- Vinyl flooring is an affordable and durable option that's available in a wide range of styles and colors. Bonus: It's easy to install and maintain.

Budget-friendly Upgrades

- Adding area rugs can be a great way to update your space and add warmth and texture to your floors.
- If you have hardwood floors that are in good condition but need a refresh, consider refinishing them to restore shine and remove scratches.
- Vinyl plank flooring is a more affordable alternative to hardwood flooring. It's designed to mimic the look of hardwood but is less expensive and easier to install.

Painting & Decorating

Whether you're looking to update your space with trendy colors or decorate on a budget, there are plenty of options available. By choosing a cohesive color palette, repurposing and DIY-ing decor, and focusing on high-impact areas, you can create a beautiful and inviting space that reflects your personal style.



Benefits of Painting

- Instantly updates the look of a room.
- Creates a sense of unity, organization and cohesion.
- Makes a room feel larger or smaller. Lighter colors can make a room feel larger, while darker colors can make a room feel more intimate.
- Improve the value of your home. Neutral colors and trendy accents can appeal to a wide range of potential buyers.

Paint Color Trends

- Earthy tones like warm beige, sandy brown, and olive green are becoming more popular. These colors can create a sense of calm and relaxation, making them ideal for bedrooms and living spaces.
- Moody blues are more popular for accent walls or as the primary color. These colors create a cozy feel that's perfect for bedrooms and reading nooks.

Decorating on a Budget

- Shop secondhand: You can find great deals on furniture and decor.
- DIY decor: Consider making your own artwork or creating a gallery wall with frames from a thrift store.
- Reuse and repurpose: Before you trash something, consider whether you can repurpose it. For example, an old ladder can be turned into a bookshelf.
- Focus on high-impact areas like the living room or entryway.



Let's Recap!

There are countless ways to improve your home and increase its value, whether you're looking to sell or simply want to update your living space.

If you're planning a home improvement project, it's important to do your research and plan ahead. Consider your budget, timeline, and goals for the project, and don't be afraid to consult with professionals.

Finally, keep in mind that home improvement is an ongoing process. Regular maintenance and updates can keep your home in top condition and prevent costly repairs down the road. By staying proactive and taking care of your home, you can enjoy it for years to come.

Some final tips and advice for home improvement include:

- Prioritize upgrades that will increase the value of your home, such as energy-efficient upgrades and bathroom or kitchen renovations.
- Stay organized and keep track of your budget and timeline to avoid unexpected costs and delays.
- Consider investing in quality materials and craftsmanship to ensure your upgrades last for years to come.
- Always prioritize safety, whether you're doing the work yourself or hiring a professional.

I hope this guide has provided you with valuable information and inspiration for your next project.

With careful planning and attention to detail, you can create a beautiful and functional living space that you'll love for years to come.



Have questions? Reach out!



I'm always happy to discuss what improvements might suit your needs, and to make referrals to my network of professional service providers.

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