

Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers

Adding a Shed to Your Yard



Have you fallen in love with gardening and need somewhere to store your tools? Or maybe your garage is full of junk and you need extra storage space? Whatever the reason, adding a shed to your backyard is an affordable investment that you'll get much use out of, and the process is easy.



1. Size — First, consider what your shed will be storing as that will determine the size. Do you need enough room for a lawnmower, or will you just be storing lawn chairs and hoses? When it comes to size, it's better to be safe than sorry. Make sure your shed is big enough to fit all the miscellaneous items that you want to store.



2. Budget — Next, how much is the budget you have set for this project? What materials will you use? Are you going to work on this project by yourself or will you be hiring a professional? HomeAdvisor estimates the cost of a shed build ranging from anywhere between \$100 and \$15,000.



3. Zoning — Research the local zoning ordinances in your municipality. Although it is your property, you may need a permit before you can begin building your shed. You'll also want to get a plat of survey to ensure you remain within the borders of your property line.



4. Prepare — Finally, before you begin building, make sure the site has been prepared properly. The ground should be dry and level. You also may want to put your shed a bit above ground so water can drain properly.

Downsizing for Empty Nesters

Getting adjusted to an empty nest after years of creating a home with your spouse and children can be a challenge. Walking past multiple empty bedrooms everyday may have you feeling down and thinking about downsizing your home. Before you make that decision, ask yourself these questions:

How much stuff do you have in your current home and where will you put it? Before you move into a smaller space, take a look around. How much stuff do you have in your current home? What things will you take with you and what will you throw away or sell? Maybe you aren't ready to part with your belongings just yet, so you may want to consider how much it will cost for a storage unit.

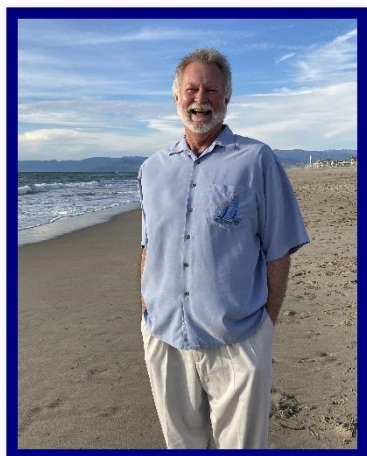
Is there something else that you can do with your extra rooms? Are you working remotely and in need of a home office? Maybe you've always wanted a small home gym. Before you take the leap and move, think of the ways that you can potentially repurpose the empty bedrooms in your home. Creating new dedicated spaces can change up the entire feel of your home.

Could you rent out the extra space in your home? Downsizing is a big decision. As you think about what options would be best for you, is renting the extra space in your home an option? Companies like Airbnb make the process safe and easy. The extra money that you make in rent can be put towards your next home if you do choose to move in the future.





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Planning a Kitchen Backsplash

It is highly recommended that you have a backsplash in the kitchen of your home. The walls that run along the back of your kitchen countertops are at constant risk of damage from water, food debris, grease splatters or other items that may be pushed against them, like cutting boards and knife sets. If you're thinking of adding a backsplash to your space, here's a quick guide to help you get the best bang for your buck.



Consider the overall layout of your kitchen — The design of your backsplash will be heavily dependent upon the shape of your kitchen and where your appliances are located. Do you have an open concept kitchen? Is your kitchen a unique shape or maybe even curved? Also, remember that the backsplash doesn't have to cover the entirety of the wall.



The material you choose is very important — Ceramic and porcelain are two of the most popular materials for a backsplash, as they are the most affordable and very durable. These materials are also very easy to clean and come in a wide variety of textures and designs. Glass tiles are more expensive than ceramic and porcelain, but they are beautiful. They work well in kitchens that have a more modern design. If you have granite countertops, you may want to consider installing a granite backsplash. This will create a smooth, seamless look, but is also more expensive.



Make sure you have all the necessary supplies — If you are tackling this project yourself, there are a few essential items you'll need no matter the material or design you choose. You'll want to invest in DITRA, mortar and grout. There may be more supplies that you'll need for the installation—just make sure to do your research beforehand.

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