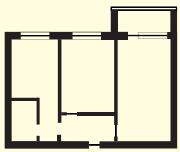




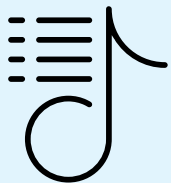
Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers

Investing in a Home Sound System

Whether for personal enjoyment or for entertaining guests, having speakers wired for sound throughout your home can be very appealing. But to ensure you get the best audio outcome, a savvy homeowner should think ahead and properly plan the setup. Here are some considerations prior to getting started.



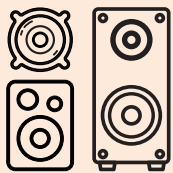
1 Determine layout. Your first step should be to identify which rooms you'd like to add sound to. Remember, the more rooms you choose, the more expensive the project will be. Speaker size/type is also dependent on which rooms you select—bigger rooms may call for larger speakers.



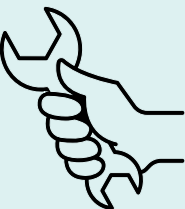
2 Figure out what you'll listen to. You can sync your home audio system to a host of media options: cable TV, streaming services, video game consoles, satellite radio and more. Select a system that allows all of your potential audio sources to be easily added and accessible. Consider a multi-source or multi-zone system if you'd like to listen to different audio sources in different rooms at the same time.



3 Wired vs. wireless speakers. There are pros and cons to both wired and wireless speakers. Wired speakers traditionally produce better sound quality, but the gap has narrowed in recent years. Wireless speakers allow for more flexibility, as you can easily attach or detach them around your home. Wireless options, however, are usually more expensive.



4 Choose your speaker style. Depending on the style and aesthetics you'd like to achieve, homeowners have a ton of options. From wall-attached to in-ceiling to bookshelf to floor-standing, you can mix and match to find the best combination of speakers for your entire home.



5 Professional help or DIY? Depending on your experience with home improvement projects and the equipment you select, you may need to hire a professional to help with the installation of your audio system, albeit at a higher cost. If you have the DIY chops, there are many guides and videos available online to help ensure you do things properly and safely.

Main Bedroom Remodeling

Giving your main bedroom a makeover can be a large undertaking. But along with improving your space, it also can increase your home's value. Here are a few ways to change your bedroom for the better.

Consider expansion — While putting an addition on your home could open up more space for your main bedroom, this option may be cost prohibitive or impossible due to the home's foundation for some homeowners. An easier way to create a larger bedroom could involve knocking down walls to combine your bedroom with a smaller room next to it.

Add lighting — Upgrading your lighting can be a great way to refresh your bedroom. Think about replacing your old hand-me-down table lamps with more modern options. You can take things a step further and add a stylish ceiling light fixture above your bed, wowing anyone who enters.

Walk-in closet — Your original bedroom may only have standard closet space. If room layout allows, consider adding some drywall to create a new, spacious walk-in closet. Having more area to store clothes and other items can revitalize the entire space.

Replace old flooring — If you're tired of that worn-out carpet or 30-plus-year-old hardwood, it may be time for a flooring upgrade. There are pros and cons to carpet versus hardwood, depending on your style, finances and living preferences. Whichever option you choose, new flooring can make a tired bedroom feel brand new in no time.



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Fireplace Mantel Décor Ideas

A fireplace is often designed to be the focal point of a room. While a roaring fire adds ambiance to your space, the mantel above your hearth can also set the mood of the room. Here are some ideas on how to spruce up a dull fireplace mantel.



Avoid clutter — Just because you have space doesn't mean you have to use it. Instead of littering your mantel with a crowded assortment of candlesticks and family photos, consider using only a few items. This creates a less hectic and more visually pleasing look.



Vary shapes and sizes — A great way to create a fun aesthetic on your mantel is to include items of different heights and shapes. Play around with items and placements. A bit of chaos can seem difficult to plan or visualize, but it can make for a striking display in the room.



Paint for contrast — To make your mantel area stand out, add a pop of color to accompany the fireplace brick and other décor. This color could be added to the mantel itself or to the wall directly above the mantel to draw the eye to the space.

Make use of what you have — You don't need to buy brand-new picture frames or trinkets specifically for your mantel. Instead, take inventory of items you already have—photos, mirrors, vases, candles—that don't necessarily fit in other rooms and see if they work for the space.

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