

'My DIY room looks STUNNING!'

STYLE GUIDE

'I love the crisp combination of blue-black cupboards and white tiles with warmer brass handles, wood accents and blue walls'

VISUAL CONNECTION

'Opening up the wall means I can keep an eye on the kids from the kitchen'

COME ON IN!



ABOUT ME

I'm Becky Russell (@SurreyHouseDIY), 41, an entrepreneur. I live here with my husband Graham, 41, a software engineer, and our children, Isabel, nine and Joshua, six. We bought our three-bedroom semi in Godalming, Surrey, in November 2017.

THE CHALLENGE

Getting the layout of three interconnecting rooms to flow as a wall blocked off the kitchen from the playroom, a half-wall separated the dining room, and the sink was positioned at a right angle across the width of the room.

MY WISH LIST

I wanted to make the kitchen more functional and homely. I wanted to move cupboards, add colour, upgrade the worktop, fit a new tap, change the flooring and create space for an American fridge-freezer.

IDEA TO STEAL

To refresh wood worktops use 80 grit sandpaper, a lighter 220 grit and then Ronseal antibacterial worktop oil

TOTAL
£3,723

TURN OVER FOR MY SHOPPING LIST

Upcycling existing cupboards and making minor layout changes meant Becky Russell could stretch her budget to the max

We weren't sure about this ex-rental when we began searching for our first family home,' says Becky, 'but my estate agent cousin pointed out the positives in its location, the big garden and extended kitchen, reminding me I could change the aesthetics in any look I wanted.

I began to look beyond the empty shell and magnolia walls. We started to see the benefits of the open plan kitchen-dining-living space and have a vision of what the house could become.

Starting point

A plus point was the size of the long kitchen with its utility-cloakroom at the end, but the layout was awkward. A breakfast bar faced the wall and the sink unit stuck out into the room. I also didn't like it being cut off from the playroom.

Before we moved in, we knocked the wall through to create a visual connection between the two - although discovering a water pipe from the bathroom above was a nasty surprise, prompting an emergency call out to a plumber.

Improving the layout

We'd planned on replacing the kitchen but when our carpenter friend came over, he told us he could take out some of the cupboards and reposition others. He could also fit new worktops and cover the floor tiles with laminate flooring - his ideas made a lot of sense.

Our carpenter flipped the breakfast bar to behind the half wall and created space for our new fridge-freezer. The sink was moved back against the wall. I painted the wood-effect cupboards pale grey and he fitted a new oak work surface.

Style updates

As I moved onto decorating other rooms in the house, my interest in DIY and design grew. I became drawn to black cupboards with crisp white tiles and >>



Do it! PAINT YOUR KITCHEN CUPBOARDS

- 1 Start by taking the doors off your cupboards and sanding them back with a small 'mouse' sander.
- 2 Use a sheet of 180 grit sandpaper to get into the corners and edges.
- 3 Next, prime the doors with Zinsser's B-I-N – a shellac-based primer that creates a highly adhesive surface for paint
- 4 Once the primer is dry, use Zinsser's Allcoat Satin to paint them. It's a

5 Alternatively, spray the doors with Wagner's hand spray gun. Use the same paint but dilute with 10% water, to the consistency of double cream, to avoid splatters.



BUDGET SOLUTION

'I made shelves from scrap wood, which I sanded and stained'

'I HIRED TOOLS THAT I DIDN'T HAVE OR BORROWED THEM AFTER A SHOUT-OUT ON OUR LOCAL WHATSAPP GROUP'

» warm wood accents and decided to do the updates myself. I repainted the doors, fitted brass handles, and my dad and I did the tiling together. The work didn't quite go to plan, though. Mosaic sheets with a mesh backing were a cheap alternative to an expensive style I liked but they were really difficult to cut. Next time I'd think about spending a bit more on tiles.

Flexing DIY skills

Although the kitchen now looked good and was much more usable, where we'd moved the breakfast bar against the half-wall still wasn't working for me. I decided to have a go at demolishing the wall myself. My dad removed the plug socket and I took a sledgehammer to it, filling the floor gap with some rubble and self-levelling concrete over the top.

I think it's important for women to feel empowered to do these jobs themselves, which is what my Instagram channel @SurreyHouseDIY is all about. I use my other channel @diyherway to share tried and tested DIY products.

Final details

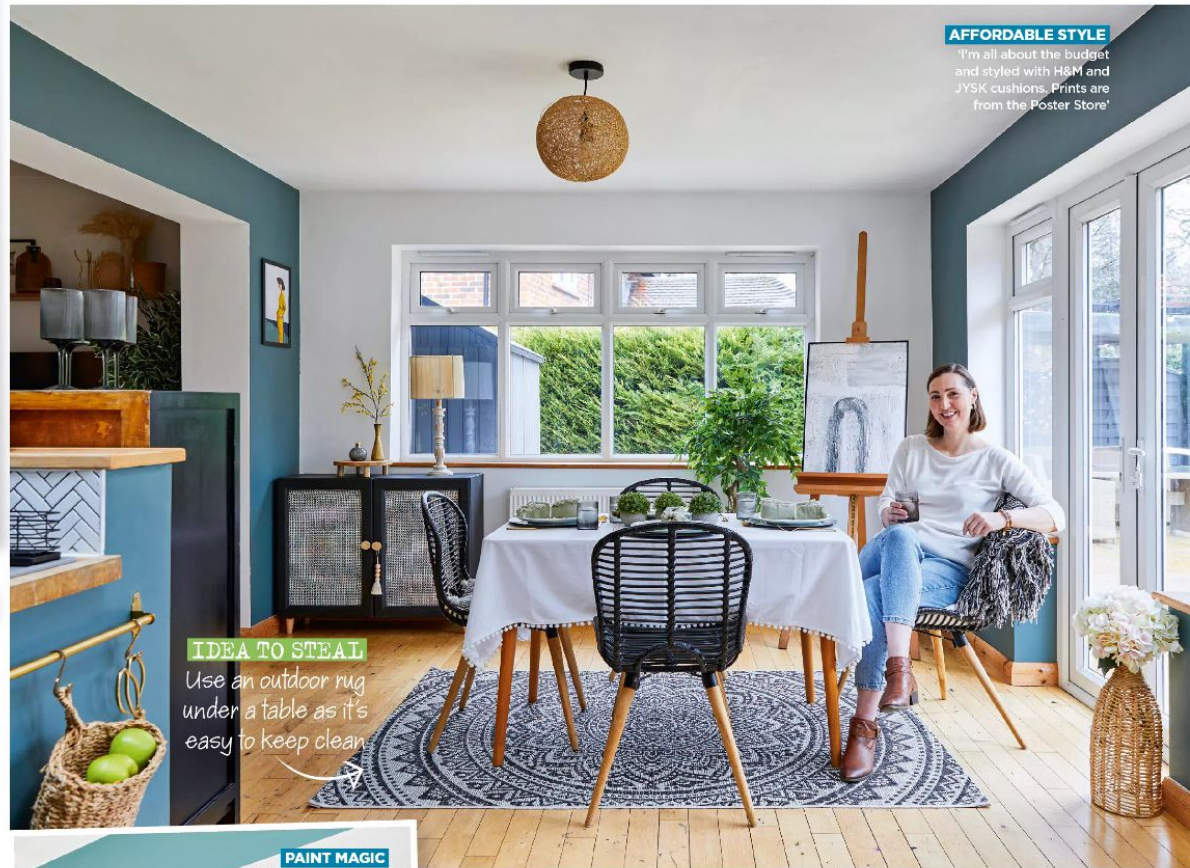
The missing aesthetic that pulled all three rooms together was decorating in Farrow & Ball's Inchyra Blue. The colour makes me so happy and the monochrome kitchen now really pops.

Our project goes to show that if you're prepared to have a go at DIY, follow some YouTube tutorials and take your time, a renovation doesn't have to be expensive and can be just as transformative.'



MONOCHROME TEXTURE

'I love how the shape of the miniature herringbone tiles really pops with the black grout between them'



AFFORDABLE STYLE

'I'm all about the budget and styled with H&M and JYSK cushions. Prints are from the Poster Store'

IDEA TO STEAL
Use an outdoor rug under a table as it's easy to keep clean



PAINT MAGIC

'I fell in love with Farrow & Ball's Inchyra Blue paint, and it brought all three rooms together'



PARE BACK

'I hid the ugly radiator and colour-drenched the wall, adding my parents' old wood kitchen cupboard for contrast'

Where to buy Becky's style

Cupboards colour-matched to Farrow & Ball's Railings in Zinsser alcoat satin, £53.89 for 2.5ltr, walls colour-matched to Farrow & Ball's Inchyra Blue in trade vinyl matt, £23.99 for 2.5ltr, both Decorating Centre Online. Satin brass knurled pull handles are similar, £13.09 each, Ironmongery Experts. Similar oak worktop, Worktop Express. Pixel White herringbone gloss mosaic tile is similar, £4.17 per sheet, Walls And Floors. Venice spring-style kitchen sink mixer with pull-out spray is similar, £119.95, Victorian Plumbing. IVC 1120 tile-effect slip resistant vinyl flooring is similar, £15.99sq m, Vinyl Flooring UK. Dining table in solid mango is similar, £191; Black rattan dining chairs, £286 for four, all VidaXL. Cleo indoor/outdoor black and white rug, £35, Benuta. Vida Designs Oxford medium White radiator cover is similar, £48.99, B&Q