

## BIZ VOICE

# Cheap ways to boost value of your home

Minor updates can go a long way to making more pleasant place.

Everyone wants their own home to be a pleasant place to live, with amenities that please the eye and make life easier. Whether you're renting or buying, there are inexpensive ways to make your home more attractive and livable.

I'm not talking about making major changes or spending a lot of money — many of us are stretched thin already.

I've put together my TOP TEN LIST of favorites, but you may have some of your own to share, so I want to hear those too!

Here are a few easy ways to make your home more visually appealing and comfortable:

## Fix the small stuff

Think about minor stuff that drives you crazy. The faucet that leaks, the front door that you have to slam to close properly, the ceiling fan that wobbles and makes too much noise — these are all minor repairs that a handyman can fix in half an hour or less.

But the truth is that you can learn to "do it yourself" at most big box home centers for free! Call one of them and ask for the schedule of improvement clinics in the next few weeks.

## Clean up and keep it that way.

This is so simple yet so profound. A messy room is depressing to be in, while a neat room is a delight to the eye and the senses. There is no reason to keep a kitchen sink full of dirty dishes for long enough to draw fruit flies. Get in the habit of having a weekly cleaning day.

## De-junkify.

A common trait of humans seems to be that we hold on to WAY too much stuff, and no matter how much space you have, eventually, the stuff will expand to fill the space allotted, and you'll begin to feel crowded, which is really unpleasant. If you don't absolutely, positively need to have it in the room it is in, find an out of the way place to store it. Or better yet, toss it out!

## Get creative with storage space.

Most folks waste a tremendous



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amount of storage space by failing to go vertical! Plan a floor to ceiling set of wall brackets with 8-inch shelves every 12 to 18 inches. Buy a foldable step-ladder to reach upper levels. Don't give up an inch of storage!

Think about overlooked space behind and above doors, under beds, and totally wasted space above your head in the garage or in the shower/bath. Ventilated wire shelving and closet organization systems are versatile, affordable and easy to install yourself.

## Paint. Everywhere.

If you haven't undertaken a paint project in the past few years, you are in for a pleasant surprise. Today's premium paint is super easy to use, does a great job, is very durable, and cleans easily if scuffed or marked.

You can apply it with one coat and cleanup is easy. It's not cheap, but a little goes a long way.

Think bright cheerful color to brighten up a less than bright room, and plan on doing it yourself. It's a LOT easier than it was just a few years ago.

In addition, sites like Sherwin Williams COLOR SNAP Visualizer allow you to get a very good idea of what your selected color will look like "on the wall" rather than just on a small chip at the store.

## Brighten things up!

Go through your house or apartment and ask "where can I upgrade the lighting and get the maximum bang for the buck?"

Begin with the kitchen, and replace (or supplement) existing overhead lighting with a 48-inch 4-bulb fluorescent fixture. This is a small project that will yield big results. Then go to your baths and replace the medicine cabinet with a 3x6 foot beveled glass mirror and replace the light over the sink with a 8 bulb strip outlet.

Instantly, your bath feels twice as large and five times as bright! Don't forget a dimmer on the

lights or you'll get sun-burned!

## Refinish the tub or the surround tile.

For less than forty bucks, you can buy a tub refinishing kit that will make your old tub or tile wall look new again fast. If you like white, and who doesn't, it's a quick way to solve an old problem.

Know in advance it may not look as good as if you had it refinished by a professional, but for the price differential, it may be worth trying on your own. Today's epoxy paint is much more durable than just a few years ago, making this alternative a viable one.

## Think about curb appeal

If you live in a detached house, your front entryway is where visitors get their first impression of your abode. Paint the front door a bold color, install a brass kickplate, add brass numbers, paint the railing, and buy a pot or two of bright flowers from time to time.

If you're in an apartment, consider paying to replace the entry doors altogether. If they're old, they probably offer little or no real security, and their visual appearance does nothing to enhance your home experience.

New doors can provide a fresh look, and at the same time, provide a major enhancement to security. Make sure to get written permission from your landlord before you begin.

## Replace kitchen drawer knobs, cabinet knobs

This is a surprisingly inexpensive way to give your kitchen a fresh new look. And it's so easy to do. Get online and shop for inexpensive replacement hardware.

That's ten good ideas to consider for enhancing the livability and value of the place we call home. But I know some of you have your own favorites, and I hope you'll share them with me by email. I'll try to pass along some of the best in a future column.

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