

Home Improvement





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On-Trend Paint Colors

Freshening up your home inside and out is as easy as adding a fresh coat of paint.

If you're looking to sell your home anytime soon, a fresh coat of paint could more than pay for itself. Here are a look at some of the trending colors for inside and outside of your home.

WARM PALETTES

After years of cool whites and grays, palettes are starting to warm back up. Even the blues have a reddish or pur-

plish cast to them this year. Lucy Blue is one of Valspar's colors of the year and is a vibrant shade of ocean blue that the company says brings a playful happiness to any space. Pair it with neutral furnishings for an elegant look with a touch of whimsy.

HGTV says to look for deep, rich color that helps you connect with home. In this pandemic year, we're looking for comfort, and warmer palettes signify that. It points to shades like Sherrington Williams' deep red Passionate and warm peach Pale Apricot that makes spaces welcoming and cozy. Also see Behr's Kalahari

Sunset and Valspar's Maple Leaf.

EXTERIOR PALETTES

Blues are having a moment in residential color schemes along with blue-grays. Highlight these colors with bright whites and vibrant accents, like abandoning the traditional red or black door for screaming turquoise. Other hot accent colors include deep navy blues (Sherwin Williams suggest Dress Blues) and golds (Cut the Mustard, also by Sherwin Williams). Sunny yellows can insert a pop of cheer in an otherwise neutral scheme — it looks particularly good against

grays. Think along the lines of Valspar's Golden Yellow or Roasted Corn from Behr.

If you're afraid of going too bold, take some baby steps. Keep your large areas neutral and go for pops of color in your accent pieces — shutters, doors, porches, eaves and other spots — that can be easily changed out if you don't like the way it looks. When you're choosing your colors, also work with your contractor or the experts at the home improvement store to choose colors that will last. Darker colors, for instance, may fade more quickly than light neutrals.

Faucets of the Future — Today

Kitchens are the heart of the home, and in the middle of that heart is the kitchen sink. It's so important that when we pack everything up, we grab it, too.

Crowning the sink is the faucet, and these days it does a lot more than just dispense hot and cold water. Check out these futuristic faucet picks that you can have today.

DELTA FAUCET TRINSIC SINGLE-HANDLE KITCHEN SINK FAUCET

House Beautiful editors loved this faucet's sleek design, and you'll love its Diamond Seal technology to reduce leaking. Delta says this faucet lasts twice as long as the industry standard. It also features a pull-down sprayer with a magnetic dock that keeps it in place when not in use.

BRIZO ARTESSO SINGLE HANDLE PULL-DOWN KITCHEN FAUCET

If your kitchen needs some bling, look no farther than this faucet with a brushed gold finish. It also features a pull-down sprayer and single-handed operation. Pair it with on-trend brushed gold hardware on your cabinets and other fixtures for an up-to-the-minute kitchen update.

NUEVO ELEMENTS OF DESIGN HERITAGE KITCHEN FAUCET

Sleek might not be your thing, and this faucet may be just the one you're looking for. It's a vintage-style classic with sweeping

curves and double-handed operation. But it's also got a modern brushed nickel finish to bring it into this century.

DELTA KEELE CHROME KITCHEN FAUCET

Minimalists, this faucet's for you. It's ultra-modern look is topped with a shiny chrome finish and a nearly seamless single handled design and a pull-away sprayer. It's right at home in any contemporary kitchen.

We haven't forgotten about those all-important bathroom faucets, either. Here are some good picks from House Beautiful for creating the perfect retreat in your home.

MOEN EVA TWO-HANDLE CENTERSET BATHROOM FAUCET

Sleek but full of beautiful curves, this brushed nickel Moen set will update any bathroom.

PHIESTINA MATTE BLACK BATHROOM SINK FAUCET

Matte black is the new-and-now bathroom fixture finish. This single-handed faucet with modern lines makes a bold bathroom statement.

DELTA CASSIDY SINGLE HOLE BATHROOM FAUCET

If you're looking for more of a vintage faucet, see this single-handed bathroom tap with a swooping curved spout.



Talking Toilets

Last year's toilet paper shortage meant everyone was running out to upgrade their toilets with tush-saving bidets.

But even the simple bathroom throne has more updates to offer than just a bidet. Keep reading to find out the latest in toilet technology.

SMART TOILETS AND BIDETS

Yes, toilets can be smart, too. These porcelain thrones feature hands-free operation, such as self-closing lids and touch-free flushing, both of which reduce touching germ-infested surfaces. Toilets today can also clean themselves with bacteria-killing light and interior mechanisms that clean for you. More modern lines on toilets can also eliminate nooks and crannies in more traditional toilets, making cleaning the outside easier.

NEW HEIGHTS

You can also get toilets in various heights. If you have someone in your family that has trouble getting up and down, consider getting a toilet with a little more height to make it easier for them to use. Elongated bowls may also make it more comfortable to use.

An example of a little higher toilet may be around 21 inches, and are great for bath-



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rooms primarily used by adults.

WALL-MOUNTED TOILETS

These toilets are all clean lines and elegance. Wall-mounted toilets offer a modern, geometric solutions for bathrooms, especially those with limited space. Some feature in-wall tanks and flush panels to make the toilet even more seamless. The flush

panel for some models can be set at any height, meaning you no longer have to bend down to flush.

FANCY FEATURES

Architectural Digest says luxe features are also in demand, especially as a year of pandemic lockdown put people in a mood to pamper themselves. Some features to look for include built-in bidets,

heated seats, soft-close seat and automatically closing lids.

EFFICIENCY

Toilets are the main source of water use in the home, the EPA says, using nearly 30% of a home's indoor water consumption. Older toilets can use up to six gallons of water per flush, but more modern, efficient toilets use just 1.28 gallons per flush. The federal

standard is 1.6 gallons per flush, and toilets that meet that threshold carry the WaterSense label. WaterSense toilets, the EPA says, are high performance, water efficient toilets that are available at a variety of price points and styles. Replacing older toilets with WaterSense toilets can save families about \$140 per year and about \$2,900 over the life of the WaterSense toilet.

Smart Homes

Smart homes feature appliances and devices that can talk to each other and create a unique ecosystem that can make our lives easier.

Devices that can work together include appliances, lighting, climate control, shades, security features, televisions and more.

INTEGRATION

For a smart home to function, it needs a system to run all the devices through. This can be a digital personal assistant such as Google Home, Amazon's Alexa and others. Or you can run them through your home security or cable systems if they allow it. Once you decide on a platform, you'll need to look devices that work with that platform. If you use a digital assistant, you'll need appliances that you can control with your voice, such as asking Google or Alexa to turn the temperature down or turn the bedroom lights off.

APPLIANCES

One of the hottest trends in smart homes are smart appliances. Fridges, ranges and more now have features that allow for control via Wi-Fi. Some of these appliances feature things like checking the ice level in the freezer or cameras and touch screens that



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allow you to see if there's enough milk in the fridge. Other appliances serve as a communications center for the home, like a GE range hood that features an integrated touchscreen where you can store favorite family recipes and allow you to manage other smart devices through your range hood. Yes, really.

LIGHTS

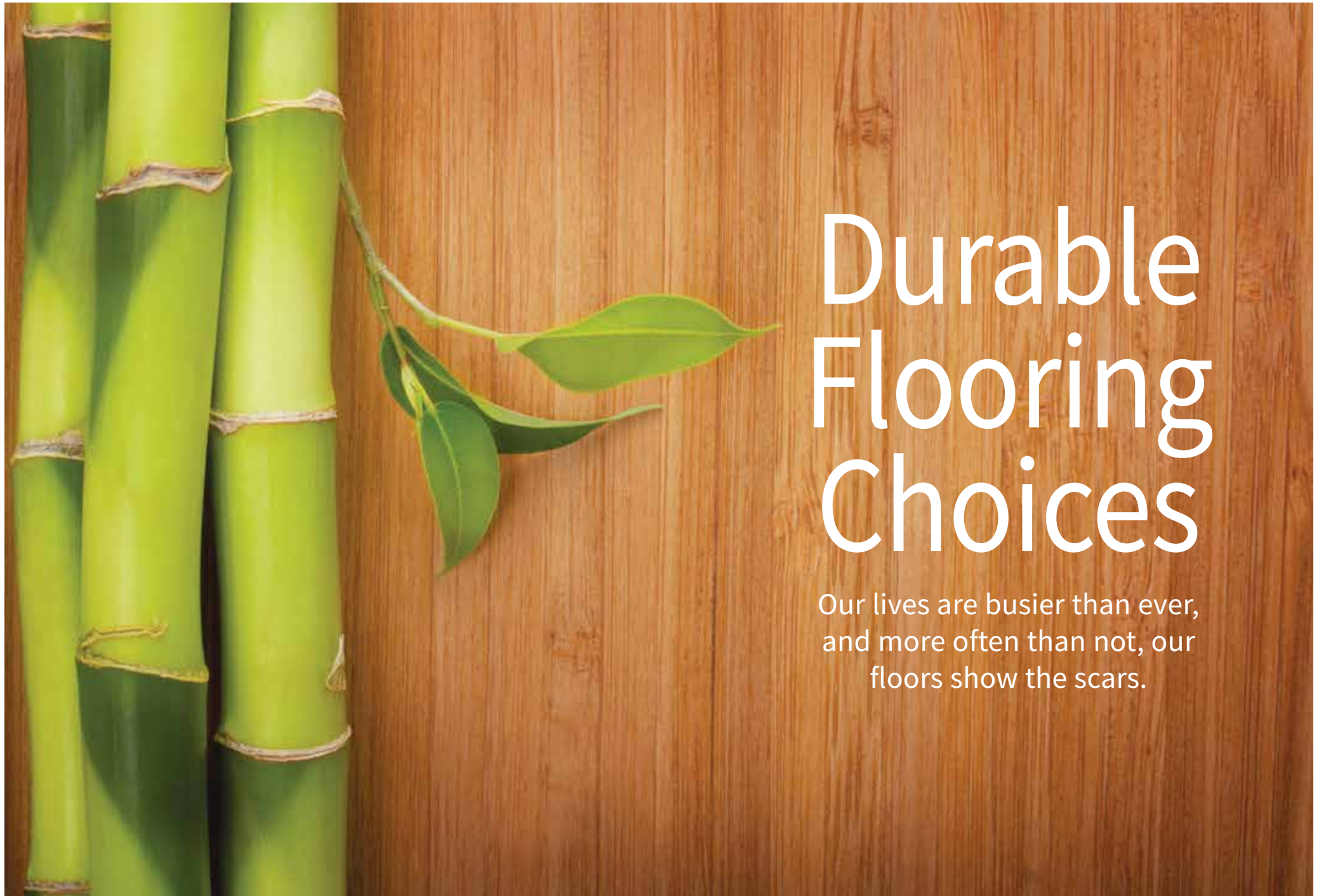
Automating your lights is one of the easiest ways to turn your home into a smart home. You start with smart LED bulbs and, depending on the system you choose, a hub. Once you connect those, you can set lights to turn on and off with your voice, or even change color depending on

the kind of bulbs you get. Many lighting systems also include more than bulbs for your lamps — you can get strip lighting, fixtures and more to customize your smart home lighting to your liking.

THERMOSTATS

Thermostats are another smart home feature that's

popular for people just getting started. Smart thermostats work with your digital assistants to raise and lower temperatures at your beck and call, but they can also work with other devices, such as your smartphone, to allow it to learn your habits and adjust your climate control systems accordingly.



Durable Flooring Choices

Our lives are busier than ever, and more often than not, our floors show the scars.

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Pet nails, children, poor shoe choices and general life takes a toll on our home's floors. But now, with advances in materials, there are great choices out there that can take a beating and are environmentally smart. Keep reading to learn more.

BAMBOO FLOORING

The Greener Living Blog says that bamboo flooring is harder than hardwood flooring and has greater scratch

resistance. Strand-woven bamboo flooring is even more hardy. It's also resistant to denting, so large, heavy furniture can be placed on it without fear. Bamboo is also good for the environment. It's not actually wood; bamboo is a type of grass that can grow to maturity in just a few years. Hardwood trees, on the other hand, can take up to 20 years. When bamboo is harvested, the roots are left in the ground to sprout new stalks, whereas

trees must be replanted.

CONCRETE FLOORING

For those looking for a really hardy flooring surface, concrete can be an attractive option. After all, we drive on it regularly. And a range of glazes can make concrete flooring an eye-catching beauty. However, those glazes are its Achilles heel. Some of them are delicate and can't stand up to heavy traffic and ill treatment. Make sure to work with

your contractor to find a glaze and sealant that works best in your space. Furthermore, even properly installed concrete flooring can develop cracks over time and moisture can also be a problem.

CARPETING

It's popular, but carpeting doesn't always strike as the most durable flooring choice. But advances in fabrics mean that today's carpet is more resistant to wear and tear than

ever. Flooring company Carpet One says nylon carpet is an easy-to-clean fabric that's at home everywhere in your home. It's not stain resistant, but can be treated to protect it from spills and stains.

For high traffic areas, Carpet One recommends a textured carpet like berber or loop carpet. These carpets have a rich feel but a casual look, and its textures and shading can resist traffic patterns and soiling.

Window Treatments that Wow

The windows are the eyes of your home — and often times your eyes on the world.

They're key to a well-dressed room, to your family's privacy and even to keeping your utility bills under control. Choosing the right window treatments is way more about fashion these days.

BLINDS

Blinds typically fit inside a window's frame and come in a variety of materials that lend themselves to a minimalist, clean decor. They're also one of the most versatile window treatments, with levels of light blockage and even some smart features. Blinds not only block light, but they can also muffle outside noise and keep down dust. They typically last longer than curtains and drapes and are also easier to clean. Look for blinds in sustainable materials, such as bamboo or fabrics. In areas where there may be young children or pets, look for cordless blinds to keep everyone safe.

CURTAINS

Curtains are also extremely versatile and can add texture and a rich feel to the room. Curtains also can block out light and warm or cold air from outside. Look for layered curtains with light, airy curtains to let in natural light with darker, heavier curtains over them. On trend this year



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are textured fabrics, like knob-by natural cotton or linen. Look for curtains this year in earthy, organic tones and bold, nature-inspired prints that bring the outdoors in.

DRAPES

You may be forgiven for

thinking curtains and drapes are the same thing. But there are differences. Drapes are usually heavier and longer than curtains, and they're meant to be hung or swagged in different ways around the window, whereas curtain panels usually just hang straight.

Consider pairing drapes with airy curtains or with textured blinds for privacy. Look for drapery with corresponding tiebacks so you can adjust how much of the outside world you let in.

In both curtains and drapes (and in the customizable

world of Roman shades), big, bold prints are in. They can be inspired by nature, by retro patterns and palettes, or both. Using curtains and drapes, which are easy to change out, is one way to bring a bold look into your room without spending too much money.



Buying Appliances

Pandemic supply issues and a red-hot housing market have combined to throttle supplies of home appliances in 2021.

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A National Association of Home Builders survey in February 2021 found that nearly 90% of builders had trouble finding appliances.

WHY APPLIANCES?

Real estate is booming, and with higher home sales comes a demand on appliances. If a family isn't buying, they're probably remodeling, putting even more of a squeeze on supply. And with more people staying a home because of the pandemic, our appliances are

wearing out faster, meaning they have to be replaced.

Smarter appliances also need microchips, and because of a pandemic miscalculation, microchips are in short supply for everything right now, including home appliances. Coupled with shutdowns and other pandemic challenges, that means fewer fridges to go around.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

When possible, repair your appliances rather than

replace them. If you're in the home market, consider taking your appliances with you or purchasing the suite that comes with the house. But there are times when you just have to have new, such as when you're building a new home. In that case, keep an open mind and don't get your heart set on one particular model. Instead, focus on features and what you can get in a timely manner.

You can also turn to the used appliance market. These come

with lower prices, but may also come with a few scratches and dents. If you go this route, consider buying from a used appliance store and purchase a warranty with the product.

PRICING

Buying new, you should be prepared to pay more without the benefit of sales and promotions.

"Why discount something that consumers are lining up and waiting five to six weeks to buy," David MacGregor, an

appliance industry analyst, told Consumer Reports. "The situation is not so dire that people will have to go without a refrigerator if they really need one. But they may not get it at the price they want to pay."

What a savvy bargain-hunter may be able to do is negotiate other parts of a major appliance purchase, such as delivery fees, installation and disposal costs, and for parts and accessories that aren't in such short supply, such as hoses and cords.