

Affordable Updates

Even if you're short on money or time, you can still make improvements to your home that will add value or increase its appeal to potential buyers.

The improvements you choose will depend on your home's current condition, and in the case of selling, the competition.

PAINT

Paint is "the most oft-tackled DIY home-improvement upgrade," according to This Old House. The reason? It's relatively inexpensive — about \$150 to paint a room — and can have big effects on how your space looks and feels. The National Association of Realtors reports that 88% of survey respondents said they had a greater desire to be home after giving their home a fresh coat of paint, and 86% reported feeling a major sense of accomplishment at their project.

This Old House suggests adding a bright color to a half-bath or painting a pure white to cover old decorating mistakes. If you're preparing to sell, choose a neutral color,



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though that doesn't have to mean just white or tan. Modern alternatives include gray or greige, and according to Zillow.com, a periwinkle blue bathroom can increase sales price by \$5,400, while a black front door can fetch 2.9%.

WALLPAPER

Once believed to be outdated, wallpaper is making a comeback. The trick is to use it in moderation. Cover an accent wall with a trendy new paper design. Good places for this include a powder room, a bedroom or an office. New removable wallpapers offer

you the opportunity to remove and replace wallpapers on a whim, or avoid damage to the walls if you're renting. Some wallpapers are even functional, such as chalkboard and dry erase designs. You can even use wallpaper to cover wood panels and use them as a headboard.

DIY Network reports that wallpaper runs from \$18 to \$250 per roll, but be careful, as more expensive wallpapers can actually be less durable.

LIGHTING

Updating your lighting can make a dramatic difference in

your home. Replace a brass and glass panel chandelier with a modern design. Update ceiling fans. Install dimmers to avoid harsh overhead lighting. Add wall sconces for interest. Replace builder-grade strip lighting in the bathroom with more stylish options, or purchase a vanity light refresh kit, which includes a shade to cover the strip lights. A separate store-bought kit allows you to convert a recessed light into a pendant fixture. Even new lampshades will make a room feel updated. You could even use spray paint to update an old brass fixture. A lighting

refresh can cost as little as \$40, depending on which products you choose. While you're at it, switch out old incandescent or CFL bulbs for LEDs. This inexpensive update will save you money down the road. They can be had for as little as \$1 and quickly pay for themselves.

CABINET UPDATE

Compared to an entire kitchen remodel, a cabinet update can be affordable. There are many options, from a fresh coat of paint or varnish (refinishing) to refacing — recovering cabinet doors with wood veneer or thermofoil and updating fixtures and hinges — to replacing all doors and drawer fronts. All of those options range in price from \$2,000 to \$5,000. Talk to a contractor about which option is best for your kitchen and budget. With even a minor kitchen remodel topping \$20,000, according to Remodeling Magazine, salvaging the cabinets you have could provide significant savings.

If you're planning to sell, consider that a kitchen remodel can return 75% of the project cost in increased home value. Check out competing homes for sale in your area to see what type of kitchens you're up against. If most homes have updated kitchens, updating your own could help make a sale.



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REAL ESTATE 101



Exterior Color

Painting your home's exterior can revive your curb appeal. It's important to choose colors that highlight your home's exterior features. TheSpruce.com offers help with choosing not just paint colors but the amount of paint to buy. Read more at <https://bit.ly/2UUK62r>.

HOMEWISE GLOSSARY

FHA mortgage limits: the dollar amount limits for qualifying mortgages that the FHA will insure as part of its single-family home mortgage program.

SOURCE: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

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