

Furniture & Design Trends





Smart Furniture

As with nearly every other industry, the furniture market takes advantage of innovative technology to enhance the traditional experience of relaxing on the couch.

While comfort and price certainly matter when upgrading the living room, you should know about the smart features commonly found in today's options.

You can begin your search for smart models at your local furniture store. Check several outlets for the best price,

service and options. If the advanced fixtures aren't in stock, check with your salesperson about ordering a specific unit or setup. A significant advantage of buying from a specialty store is that they will often deliver the new inventory and remove your old items.

When browsing in-store catalogs, look for these cutting-edge advancements for sectionals, recliners and fixtures.

USB CHARGING

Since we rely on electricity to charge our phones, laptops and even electronic books, it's convenient to have built-in charging ports nearby. Many options come stocked with USB ports and storage buckets to keep all your devices in

the relaxation zone. One consideration you should make is that the furniture must be arranged near an outlet. If you need to install a new electrical source, it's critical to hire a licensed electrician to complete the process.

TOUCH LIGHT NIGHTSTAND

Have you ever woken up in the darkness only to stub your toe as you navigate to the bathroom? A touch light nightstand can be installed near your bed and offers AC outlets to plug in a standard lamp. It will connect to an easy-to-reach sensor strip or button to make engaging it effortless.

RECLINER REMOTES

For those with aching bones or prob-

lems operating the sometimes-stiff handle of a recliner, a power assist remote is a problem solver. The switch seamlessly raises and lowers at the push of the button. High-end furniture may come with a massage option to further your comfort when lounging around.

LIGHT-UP CUPHOLDERS

Cupholders have been a staple in furniture and may qualify for one of the earliest upgrades to traditional couches. Take the technology a step further by investing in a fixture with light-up holders. The soft light creates an attractive ambiance in a living room and can help avoid spilling drinks when watching a movie in the dark.

Eco-Friendly Materials

Based on the 2020 International House & Hotel Interiors conference, this year's furniture trends are all about being eco-friendly and sustainable.

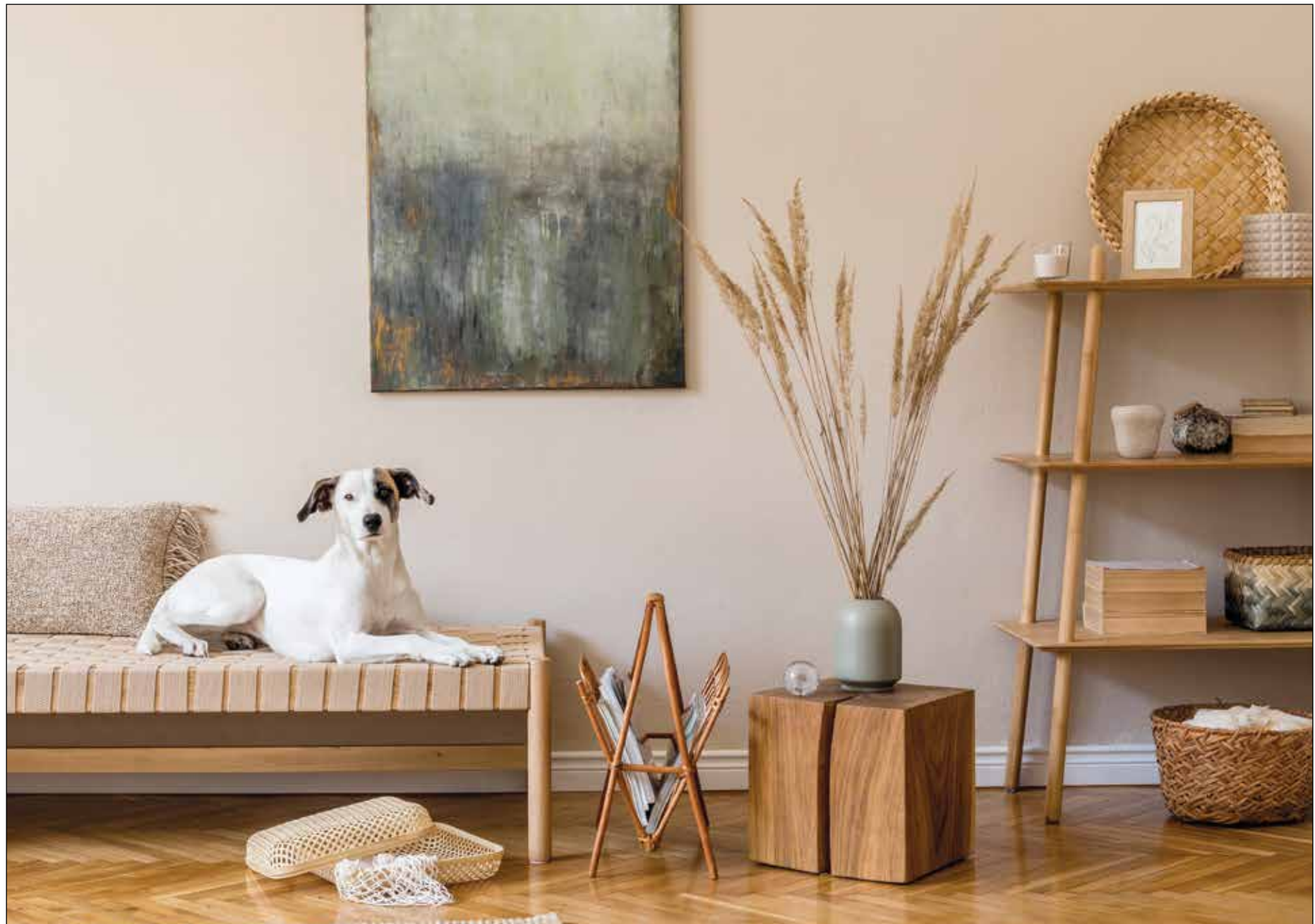
A few of the highlights included a sofa made of 100% recycled plastic bottles. The welcomed movement allows homeowners to make responsible decisions to respect the environment when decorating their homes.

According to the Sustainable Furnishings Council, environmentally safe furniture is made and distributed in ways that protect our planet. Steps are taken to minimize carbon emissions, waste stream pollutants and un-recyclable content and primary materials for their products.

Do you know how to spot furniture and design fixtures that are built with eco-friendly materials? Here are some tips to assist you while researching different options.

THINK LONG TERM

While everyone enjoys saving money, buying models of poor quality can result in early retirement and disposal. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that furniture and furnishings taken to a landfill rose from 7.6 million tons in 2005 to 9.69 million tons in 2015.



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When you throw away broken couches and sofas, the environment degrades, and you are required to fork over more money for a new set. You can do your part to help by investing in high-quality furnishings that are built to last. Once it's time to spruce up your space with new models, consider donating the old stock instead of having it wind up in a landfill.

SEARCH FOR THESE MATERIALS

Eco-friendly furniture is created with natural sources that are built with integrity. When shopping for new models, ask your sales representative about their commitment to sell durable and environmentally friendly options. Sustainable materials can include:

- Salvaged wood, recycled

textiles.

- Bamboo, rattan and seagrasses.
- Reused items, such as wooden pallets.

Perform simple research to find furniture manufacturers that are dedicated to building their models with high-quality and natural materials. You can then ask your local furniture store if they are an authorized dealer and can help you find

the perfect addition to the home.

SHOP LOCAL

Shopping local benefits your local economy by keeping your hard-earned dollars in the community. Investing in furniture that is built and sold locally limits the costs and adverse pollutants caused by transportation and manufacturing.

Small Updates with Big Effect

If you're committed to updating your space, but your budget restricts major renovations, minor upgrades can create a significant difference.

Small changes, like adding new lighting fixtures or brightening a room with a fresh coat of paint, can alter the ambiance of the entire home. Check out some other affordable ways to spruce up an area without breaking the bank.

UPDATING THE BATHROOM

The bathroom is a pivotal space for renovations as you spend significant time in it when getting ready and guests use it privately. A first step to an upgrade is giving it a thorough cleaning. After scrubbing the walls, sinks and shower, analyze the room for outdated fixtures.

A new vanity can be equipped with updated faucets and light fixtures to add a modern touch to any bathroom. For more extreme measures, consider putting in tile in the shower and around counter surfaces.

After a little research, the job can be performed by even an amateur DIY homeowner. Other minimal updates that can make a big difference include new cabinet knobs, a new toilet seat cover and LED lighting.

WALLPAPER BORDERS

Wallpaper has long been a thing of the past after being all the rage in prior years. Today, most choose to simply paint their walls and trim. However, modern wallpaper is making a comeback because of intricate patterns and easy-to-install and removable options.

Incorporate some flair on your walls by adding a bold wallpaper design. Choose one wall to become an accent wall by covering it with a daring wallpaper pattern.

CREATE LIVING SPACE OUTDOORS

If you find yourself needing more room to entertain inside, consider building a patio space outdoors. The job can be cheap to create by installing affordable pavers upon sand. Consider finding inexpensive or even free furniture at various outlets like online marketplaces.

Try your hand at restoring used furnishings to give your backyard oasis your personality. Dangling string lights, a fire pit and attractive cushions will also enhance the area.

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Hiring an Interior Designer

Do you find it difficult to express yourself with your interior design scheme? Sometimes, hiring the assistance of an expert can be the solution.

An interior designer follows current trends and incorporates their ideas into their clients' homes. However, it can be a difficult decision to choose the right pro to help bring your vision to life.

You can find an interior designer in your area by performing research across numerous platforms. Search their professional social media accounts to find links to an existing portfolio. Analyzing before and after pictures of their projects is an excellent way to learn more about their performance.

After contacting a potential designer, don't forget to ask these critical questions during the interview.

HOW MUCH DO YOU INVOLVE THE CLIENTS?

While many designers prefer a hands-off approach from their clientele, some may encourage your opinion throughout the process. Often, an expert feels that clients should be willing to trust their ideas and give them full creative control. The right answer depends on how involved you would like to be during the renovation.



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HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN THE INDUSTRY?

Don't be afraid to ask an expert how long they have been an interior designer. Those with ample experience are more likely to have ideas for updating the scheme of any room, regardless of its size.

You may also inquire about

their favorite remodeling job and which challenges they were forced to overcome. Make sure they are efficient in problem-solving so adjustments can be seamless if issues arise.

It's beneficial to ask them about their past clients and if they are willing to discuss their

experience with the professional. An excellent reputation can provide peace of mind when hiring an expert who is well-equipped for the position.

HOW DO YOU CREATE A BUDGET?

Financial restrictions may inhibit some of the renova-

tions from being completed. Find out which areas the designer will prioritize to receive most of the funding, and which ideas may have to be compromised.

It's essential to express your opinions about which changes are most important to your vision.

Upgrade to Sell

When selling your home, an outdated design scheme can be the difference between making the deal and dropping your asking price to sell.

If you're not familiar with what's trending and out of style, it's difficult to know which improvements are necessary. Certain renovations can boost the value of a home for sale and streamline the process of receiving offers and ultimately selling.

Working with a real estate expert is a beneficial way to discover which updates your home requires. Their knowledge of the local market is a great asset that provides a better perspective regarding the factors home buyers look for when buying.

You can usually find a qualified agent by asking for word-of-mouth referrals from your peers who have previously worked with the expert.

LOSE THE PANELING

Dark wood paneling was a prevalent trend in the 1960s and '70s, but today the covering can make a home appear ancient. How to handle renovating your walls depends on the type of material used.

If it consists of real wood, it can often hold value to homebuyers who appreciate the natural durability. In this case, consider bleaching the panel-



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ing or applying a fresh coat of paint to liven it up.

On the other hand, if the panels are made of cheap faux wood material, you should replace it with drywall.

POPCORN CEILINGS

A textured ceiling can be

found in many homes around the country but is often avoided by house hunters. The trouble with eradicating the material and applying a smooth layer is that the process is expensive, messy and may pose health risks.

In the past, the spray-on

substance contained asbestos before it was banned in 1977 by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. If you attempt to renovate a ceiling in an older home, take the proper safety precautions before exposing yourself to this dangerous material.

REPLACE CARPET

Carpet is difficult to keep clean, requires constant maintenance and will become matted or faded over time. Homeowners are replacing it with real hardwood, life-proof vinyl options or ceramic tiles on the main floor.

Find Inspiration for a Project

Renovating your home can be a lifelong process that requires inspiration from multiple avenues.

Sometimes you may get an idea after watching a television show or reading about a renovation in a magazine. However, when your creativity needs a boost, do you know where to turn to find motivation?

Modern technology makes it easier than ever to research different remodeling ideas and determine the average costs to complete them.

Find DIY bloggers who document their progress on flipping homes or completing house repairs. Many website authors offer a chance to subscribe and receive notifications when they have a new article available. Having a consistent stream of inspirational renovation ideas is a beneficial way to keep your artistic mind sharp.

VISIT FRIENDS OR FAMILY WHO ARE RENOVATING

If you're too afraid to begin a renovation because you're unsure of the finished result, visit a friend or family member who has made similar changes.

Ask them about the experience, including how long the remodel took, what their favorite alterations are and if there are things that they wish had turned out differently.



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You should also find out about their thoughts on the contractors they hired. In some cases, you can score a better deal by using a previous client's referral.

THE POWER OF A SMARTPHONE

You can find endless inspira-

tion and creative ideas on the device that is almost always around you. Check out social media pages of relevant designers or follow stories of others who provide real-time updates on their own renovations.

Many enjoy receiving comments and will answer ques-

tions you have about the process. This can help you troubleshoot your own concerns that may come up during your home remodeling project.

Augmented reality apps have come a long way since their inception in the smartphone industry. Today, you can find software that allows users to

visualize a piece of furniture in their homes without making a purchase.

You can also find home improvement applications that create an illusion of different colored walls and cabinets before you invest in a shade that doesn't work with your current scheme.

Finishing a Basement

Are you considering a major basement renovation in the future? If so, plan for an expensive overhaul, as the experts at Home Advisor suggest the average final price ranges between \$6,500 and \$18,500.

Fortunately, the return on investment can be as high as 69%, making it a valuable process if you plan to sell the home later.

If your basement is mainly used for storage, you may be missing out on serious living space. When determining how to decorate or renovate the room, you should first consider how you plan to use the extra area.

The lower level of a home is perfect for family game nights, social gatherings and can even make a suitable gym. Check out some other useful ways to make the space your own from Better Homes and Gardens.

INCLUDE A BED AND BATH

A basement bedroom with working plumbing makes an exceptional guest room or sleeping area for children as they grow and ask for more privacy. When choosing a style of bed to purchase, consider



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how much space you have downstairs and try to leave ample room for other furnishings and necessities.

You should consult local legislation about specific codes regarding your new room as some laws require an emergency exit through a door or window.

ADD DOORS AND WINDOWS

This process should almost always be left to a professional, as during the installation, window wells must be dug to include below-ground windows. However, the addition of natural light will enhance your experience in the new

space. Perhaps, the area will be used as a home office. Ensuring it is well-lit can produce better productivity.

GOOD LIGHTING

If the costs of adding windows is not feasible, you should still consider equipping the basement with quali-

ty lighting to give it a calming effect. Recessed can lights can make a great aesthetic when showcasing artwork or bookshelves.

LED lamps or track lights around the perimeter of the basement can eliminate shadows in corners to brighten each area of the room.