

DETROIT

NATIVE SUN

A DIY guide for first-time homeowners

(StatePoint) Becoming a first-time homeowner is a remarkable achievement, but the journey doesn't end at closing. With today's market challenges, making your new house feel like home can seem daunting. The good news: with thoughtful planning and proven DIY tips, you can create a space that's beautiful, functional and uniquely yours, without stretching your budget.



Luckily, there are many places to find inspiration. Try browsing the aisles of a home décor store—what lamps or pillows are you just dying to put in your cart? When visiting a friend's home, mentally note what you love and what you'd leave. At the grocery store? Pick up a few home décor magazines on your way out. And, of course, your phone or computer holds a

treasure trove of style inspiration, from renovation tutorials on social media to style and décor trends on your favorite brand's website.

Diving In

Before getting to work, ensure you have versatile supplies for various projects. The essentials include: a hammer, flathead, Phillips screwdrivers, painter's tape, and a power drill.

Now it's time to DIY. Not sure how to approach a project? Lean on inspiration from friends and family, use YouTube tutorials to walk you through it, or get instructions from an expert at your local hardware store. Of course, make sure whatever you choose is something that's safe to DIY.

"One of the first projects I recommend is painting, since it's a relatively affordable update that can completely transform the way a room comes together—and even how it makes you feel," said DeBoe Harper. "You can paint an entire room or update a piece of furniture or cabinetry with a new color. Other high-impact projects that can be done at a lower cost include swapping hardware, like cabinet knobs or pulls, installing a new showerhead, building bookcases, changing the kitchen faucet or hanging peel-and-stick wallpaper, all of which can enhance your look almost instantly while boosting DIY confidence."

For even more DIY renovation tips and inspiration, visit Moen.com.

And remember, successful DIY renovation is built on planning, preparation and a willingness to learn. With these tips for first-time homeowners, you can shape a stylish, comfortable space tailored to your needs.

Budgeting and Planning

One of the biggest reasons to DIY? You can save serious dollars. In fact, a 2024 report by NerdWallet showed that on average, DIY projects cost less than half of professional projects.

Before beginning any DIY endeavor, establish your budget and assess what your house needs, prioritizing the most cost-effective yet impactful updates. Take a trip to a local home improvement retailer or do an online search to gauge costs.

"While it's tempting to cut corners on costs, investing in high-quality products up-front can save you significantly in the long run. Quality materials offer durability and better performance, minimizing the need for frequent replacements or repairs. Think of it as buying peace of mind - a well-chosen faucet, sturdy cabinetry or durable flooring can elevate your home for years to come," said Danielle DeBoe Harper, senior creative style manager, Moen.

Once you have a map of projects in place, plot when you want to tackle each one on the calendar.

Defining Your Home's Aesthetic

Before diving in, ensure you're investing in an aesthetic that resonates with you versus what is trending online.

"As you embark on the exciting process of styling your first home, it is essential to determine your personal taste so that it truly reflects who you are," said DeBoe Harper. "Whether your style leans modern, traditional, industrial, farmhouse, glam, or a combination of a few, understanding your preferences will help you establish the overall atmosphere of your home."

Your home safety checklist: Steps to keep a safer space



(StatePoint) Your home is more than just a place to live, it's where you create memories, unwind and feel most comfortable. Yet, many household items and systems can hide potential safety risks.

"The good news is that by identifying and addressing potential hazards early, you can create a safer space for your family," says Christine Reed, Fire and Disaster Mitigation program manager at the International Code Council.

As part of the recent International Code Council's Building Safety Month campaign, Reed is sharing basic tips for at-home electrical safety, fire safety and more.

Electrical Safety

1. Manage Power Strips and Extension Cords
Proper use of power strips and extension cords is essential. Avoid overloading and make sure cords are never hidden under rugs or furniture. To keep electronics safe from electrical surges and help prevent potential fires, utilize power strips with built-in surge protection that will trip if overloaded.

2. Inspect Electrical Cords
Inspect electrical cords for fraying, cracking insulation or wire damage to prevent future issues. Replace worn-out cords right away.

3. Modernize Wiring
If your home is 30 or more years old, have the wiring evaluated or updated by a licensed electrician. Modernizing your electrical system can increase safety, reduce energy costs and prevent potential hazards.

Fire Safety

1. Keep Escape Routes Clear
Having clear escape routes and an action plan are critical. Ensure that evacuation pathways, like hallways and in front of windows, are free from obstructions. Practice periodic fire drills so everyone knows exactly what to do and where to meet.

2. Reduce Clutter
Keeping combustible items, such as paper, towels and other clutter, away from heat sources like stoves, space heaters and fireplaces can significantly reduce the chance of an accidental fire igniting.

3. Maintain Smoke Alarms and Fire Extinguishers

Smoke alarms save lives. Test them monthly and replace the batteries semi-annually or replace any smoke alarm equipped with a built-in 10-year battery after the 10-year timespan has passed.

Store your fire extinguisher close by, but not immediately next to, heat sources like stoves and water heaters, and keep the extinguisher's periodic service tag current.

4. Use Lithium-Ion Batteries Properly
Lithium-ion batteries, common in portable devices, should be handled with care. Follow the manufacturer's guidelines for charging, storing and disposing of these batteries, including using the charging cord that comes with the device. While charging, keep the device out of evacuation paths.

Proactive Maintenance

1. Address Aging Plumbing
Small leaks can quickly become big problems, leading to water damage and mold. By checking your plumbing pipes and fixtures regularly and addressing leaks right away, you can avoid major health risks and costs, and ensure your water systems are running efficiently.

2. Maintain Water Heater Systems
Water heaters are often overlooked, but keeping them updated can save you time and money. Flushing your water heater annually removes sediment buildup, helping it run more efficiently and prolonging its lifespan.

3. Prevent Mold Growth and Promote Clean Air

By maintaining proper ventilation in damp areas like bathrooms and basements, you can prevent mold growth and improve your home's air quality. Use dehumidifiers or exhaust fans where needed and keep an eye out for dark spots or musty smells.

Backyard Safety

1. Keep Pool Area Secure
Install a fence around the pool with a self-locking gate and safely store pool chemicals out of children's reach. Always supervise swimmers to ensure their safety and your peace of mind.

2. Ensure Safe Outdoor Equipment
Outdoor play equipment, grills and yard tools should be checked regularly to maintain safe use. Ensure play structures are stable and free from sharp edges or rust, and keep tools securely stored to avoid accidental injury. Keep grills clean of grease buildup to reduce flare-ups.

For more fire, water and electrical safety tips, as well as tips for disaster preparedness and sustainability, visit iccsafe.org.

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