

2016

Singapore

新加坡装修同业商联会

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Pembekal Persatuan Singapura

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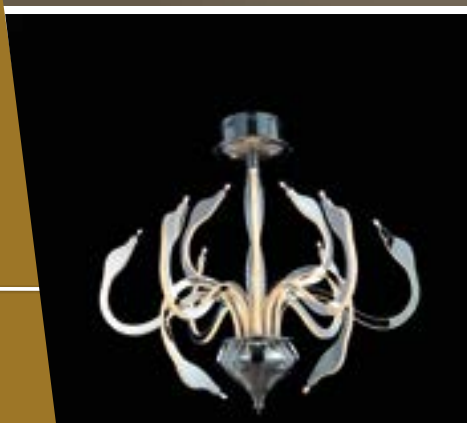
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HIP HANGOUT



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ORIENTAL CHIC



OPEN-SPACE LUXURY

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“A warm, neutral palette makes the urban space look more pleasant and homey.”

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BUILT-IN BEAUTY

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“These rooms designed by Impress 21 show that built-in cabinetry, closets, and other furnishings actually make small spaces more efficient.”



**Mr Tan Chim Hoon,
President, Singapore Renovation
Contractors and Material Suppliers
Association, RCMA**

Case-Trust RCMA Singapore Renovation Guidebook reminds us that the biggest investment in our hurried pace of life, is none other than owning and living in a pleasant, warm and comfortable home. In Singapore, where land price is in term of an inch of land is an inch of gold, it can be said owning a small house needs a big investment. According to each own individual condition, the house can be simply or lavishly decorated. But house renovation disputes cannot be allowed to occur to cause material damage, mental distress, etc., thereby resulting in consumers and renovation contractors being engaged in unpleasant situations.

In recent years, in tandem with the boom in public and private housing development, renovation contractors sprung up everywhere. Inevitably, not all renovation contractors are of quality. Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) data show that, renovation complaints increased year by year and also declined in certain years. Some of the complaints made were due to contractors not fulfilling the contract, as well as some customers have high service requirements and felt customer service was unsatisfactory.

Singapore Renovation Contractors and Material Suppliers Association (RCMA) is actively pursuing a timely solution to this problem, in co-operation with government agencies such as HDB, BCA and the Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE). CASE and RCMA have established CaseTrust -RCMA Joint Accreditation Scheme for the renovation industry, to be followed a series of measures, which include implementation of a renovation performance bond scheme. Lack of information is identified as one of the reasons causing the problem. Hence, consumer education and engagement, as this home design book is, is the result of our improvement effort.

Consumers need knowledge, in addition to seeing drawings and listening to renovation contractor presentations, to be able to tell their contractors, clearly what they want. Or they should carry out detailed communication with the Contractor, to get a clear understanding of different decoration materials, material colors, processes and final effects etc., a better understanding of the history and experience of their contractors, trade relations and whether is there proper channels to resolve disputes to avoid unnecessary problems.

CASE and RCMA signed a memorandum of understanding in August 2014, to carry out gradual implementation of Case-Trust RCMA Joint Accreditation Scheme and Renovation Performance Bond, moving towards the establishment of a just, reasonable and reliable ecosystem is like injecting a clear stream of flowing water into the renovation industry to enhance the renovation industry quality level, reduce or even stop renovation disputes, build consumer confidence and assure consumers that their legitimate rights and interests are protected.

Singapore renovation industry is one of the industry leaders. Since the 1960s, after Singapore Government implemented its public housing policy, renovation industry came into being in Singapore. Singapore's public housing, has accumulated 50 years of experience in design and functionality innovation, winning the admiration, reputation and appreciation of the world. Singapore's public housing facilities design and consulting have gone out and achieved international operations, secured contract projects in several countries, creating jobs and income for Singaporeans. Singapore renovation industry after 50 years of history is tempered, has the gene to reach out of Singapore, but did not exploit this opportunity. In 2015 Budget, the Government encourages SMEs to explore the path of internationalization, which is worthy of exploration by Singapore renovation contractors and RCMA.

RCMA was founded more than 20 years ago. We appreciate the quiet and persistent effort and contribution and dedication of former presidents and other predecessors such as Mr Lim Ah Bah, Ang Chee Guan, PBM, Lim Long Huat, Tan Boon Sang, and Chua Chwee Chiok.

We follow on and renew their spirit, adapt to the requirements of time and adhere to promote the effectiveness of the association activities, as previously mentioned, to attract new members, especially young design and renovation entrepreneurs to join RCMA to become the next generation of successors.

RCMA's vision is to unite all Singapore renovation contractors, be progressive for continuous improvement and build pleasant homes in a harmonious society. The association's success is the success of Singapore renovation industry.

RCMA will be entering its 30 years. We are filled with joy and longing. Today, we come to another milestone in the watershed. RCMA is an indispensable part of all renovation contractors. It is like a zig saw puzzle, where each member is a small piece of the puzzle, put himself into it, the puzzle is perfect. It is like a treasure box, where everyone's wisdom and sincerity is gathered and united for solidarity and tolerance, cohesion to make a good and meaningful renovation career and life pursuits. If you are not a member yet, please do often feel missed out, and become part of us.

Taking this occasion, on behalf of RCMA, I wish house owners and consumers, successful renovation on their upcoming renovation to achieve a pleasant and comfortable home.

I also commend and extend our sincere thanks and best wishes to the hard work of the old and new management committee members and staff!

Mr Tan Chim Hoon
President

**新加坡装修同业商联会 (RCMA)
陈振云
会长**

Case-Trust-RCMA居家设计特辑犹如在提醒匆忙步伐的我们，人生最大的投资莫过于拥有和居住在一个赏心悦目，温暖舒适的家。在新加坡寸土尺金，可以说是小房子大投资。按个人条件，房子的装修可繁可简，但不能因装修纠纷，发生物质损失，精神上的困扰等，令消费者和装修承包商都不愉快的情况。

这几年随着公共与私人住屋蓬勃发展，装修承包商如雨后春笋到处林立，难免从业者素质参差不齐。消协数据显示，跟装修有关的投诉逐年上升，也有下降。

大部分投诉，有些是业者没有履行合约，以及客户对服务要求过高而不满意。新加坡装修同业商联会(RCMA)正积极推行及时的解决问题的方案，配合政府机构如HDB,BCA和新加坡消费者协会（CASE）等建立消协-装修同业商联会保证标志鉴定计划（CaseTrust-RCMA Joint Accreditation Scheme）一系列措施，信息不对称也是造成问题的原因之一。所以消费者教育和互动，如这本居家设计特辑就是我们的这个计划的成果。

有知识的消费者，除了参阅装修图纸和听取承包商的说明，还能清楚说出他们自己的要求，或详细向承包商沟通，清楚了解各种装修材料，用料的颜色和效果,装修程序等，更了解承包商的行业历史和经验，行业关系和有没有解决纠纷的适当渠道，避免发生不必要的问题。

新加坡装修同业商联会与消协(CASE)合作，双方于2014年8月签署谅解备忘录，逐步推行 Case-Trust RCMA Joint Accreditation Scheme 及 Renovation Performance Bond (装修履约保证金),就是朝向建立公正合理，可信賴的装修业生态系统迈进，往装修业里注入一股清流活水，提升装修业质量水平，减少甚至制止装修纠纷，让消费者放心，他们的合理权益得到保障。

新加坡装修业是业界的领先者之一。自1960年代，新加坡政府推行公共住屋政策后，装修行业就在新加坡应运而生。新加坡的公共住屋，累积50多年的经验，设计和功能推陈出新，赢得世界的美慕，美誉和赞赏。新加坡的公共住屋设施设计和咨询已走出去，实现国际化运作，在多个国家承揽工程项目，为新加坡创造工作机会和收入。新加坡装修业经过50多年历史也是千锤百炼，有走出去的基因，但并未发挥这个机会。今年2015年预算案，政府鼓励中小企业探讨国际化路径，值得装修同业和新加坡装修同业商联会研究探讨。

新加坡装修同业商联会成立于1980年，在林亚峇，洪静源PBM, 林隆发, 陈文献, 和蔡水石等前辈，前会长无私奉献，默默耕耘后，我们继续发扬他们的精神，适应时代的要求，坚持推进如之前提到的实效会务，吸引更多新会员，尤其年轻装修业企业家加入，成为下一代的接班人。

我们的愿景是团结同业，与时俱进，为社会建设和谐，愉悦的家园。新加坡装修同业商联会与新加坡装修业是命运共同体。新加坡装修同业商联会的成功就是新加坡装修业的成功。

新加坡装修同业商联会将迈入第35个年头，我们满怀喜悦与憧憬。今天，我们来到分水岭另一个里程碑。新加坡装修同业商联会是所有装修承包商不可或缺的一部份。它犹如一副拼图，每一个会员就是拼图里的一个小片，把自己那一片放进去，就完美无缺。它犹如一个聚宝盆，凝聚着每一个人的智慧与诚意，凝聚着大家的团结与包容，凝聚着大家对装修事业和生活的追求。还不是会员的，请常惦念，成为我们的一份子。

借此Case-Trust-RCMA居家设计特辑创刊之际，我代表新加坡装修同业商联会向即将装修房子的屋主，消费者，祝愿他们装修过程圆满愉快，住进美丽舒适的新家。

我也谨向辛勤工作新旧理事们，职工表示诚挚的感谢并致以最美好祝愿！

陈振云
会长

RCMA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

2015 - 2016

新加坡装修同业商联会 2015-2016 理事会成员



Our Management Committee

Front row from left to right: 前排, 左至右:

MR HENRY GOH (Asst. Treasurer), **MR DEAN LIM** (Treasurer), **MR RICHARD SOON** (Vice President), **MR TAN CHIM HOON** (President),
MR SKY TAN (Vice Presiden), **MDM MARY MARK** (Hon. Secretary), **MR FRANKIE OW** (Asst. Secretary).

Back row from left to right: 后排, 左至右:

MR KELVIN LIM (Member), **MR RANDY TAN** (Member), **MR RICHARD KOH** (Member), **MR THOMAS NG** (Member),
MR GARY WEE (Member), **MR ANDY TAN** (Member), **MR CARLSON TAN** (Member), **MR JOHN FOO** (Member),
MR NELSON LEOW (Asst. Secretary), **MR WONG SANG** (Member).



Mr Lim Ah Bah,
Honorary Advisor, RCMA
新加坡装修同业商联会
林亚峇
会务顾问

新加坡装修同业商联会成立于1980年1月。转眼间已三十五年了。
理事会决定与消费人协会共同推出“装修商名册”，让消费者有更好选择。

消费者在找装修商遇上什么问题？

消费者在装修问题上最大困难是什么？

最大的困难是不知道该找那家装修公司为他们装修？如果找到一家不称职的公司，搞到去消协、法庭，劳心劳力，甚至蒙受金钱、时间损失。要搬又不能，不搬又不可以，后悔已来不及了，其中滋味只有过来人才亲身体会。

本会乃一“专业装修团体”，旗下会员都是装修行业中的佼佼者。倘若在装修过程中有任何过失，任何不符合行规之处，或欺骗顾客之嫌，请向本理事会投诉。本会将采取行动到现场视察，以鉴定双方的谁是谁非？施工过程中问题在那里？以保障屋主应得到的利益。

Mr Lim Ah Bah
林亚峇
RCMA Honorary Advisor



新加坡装修同业商联会
洪静源, PBM
荣誉顾问

新加坡正处于经济重组的艰难过程中，任何行业都必须因应人口与科技带来的时代变迁与要求，积极改革创新，追求永远不变，经济重组所追求的生产力目标，到达新的平衡境界。

我作为新加坡装修同业商联会荣誉顾问，很欣慰知晓本届理事会抓住历史性契机，与消协(CASE-TRUST)落实重要共识，推动装修业不断向前发展。双方保持积极交往的势头，更加紧密地对接各自发展战略，实现装修业在更高质量水平上的运作，积极扩大对装修承包商的影响力，加强装修业界专业管理，自律的能力，朝着更加公正合理的交易方向发展，让消费者放心，安心，他们的合理合法的权益得到法律保障。

• 2015年即将实施CaseTrust RCMA Joint Accreditation Scheme for renovation industry（消协-装修同业商联会保证标志鉴定计划）。

• 2015年即将实施Performance Bond Scheme（装修定金保险）。

2015年即将实施的以上两项计划，对装修承包商与消费者之间的关系发展创造有利条件。我相信两项计划落实后，新加坡装修业必定提升到更高的水平。

我也很高兴看到，多位属于青壮年的装修业企业家，高层管理人员加入了本届理事会。我希望他们三十而立，新加坡装修同业商联会成立30多年来，始终秉持创会宗旨，团结带领广大装修商，大力促进装修商与消费者关系发展，关心支持我国的经济社会建设，积极投身于会务和社会公益事业，维护装修商与消费者权益，传承和弘扬新加坡文化，取得了一个又一个成绩，成为大多装修商的一面旗帜。

让我们排除万难，同甘共苦，迎来今日与未来的辉煌。我感谢创会先辈们以及历届理事会的领袖前辈的无私付出。

谨此祝愿新加坡装修同业商联会向成功与胜利迈进。

洪静源
荣誉顾问
新加坡装修同业商联会



**Madam Mary Mark,
Honorary Secretary,
RCMA**

麥鳳儀
总务

With this occasion of the publication of Case-Trust-RCMA Home Design Book, I, as the Honorary Secretary of Singapore Renovation Contractors and Material Suppliers Association (RCMA), extend my very best wishes to all new home owners and owners renovating their houses, a happy and successful renovation process staying and living in a beautiful and comfortable home.

Being the Honorary Secretary of RCMA for a long time, the publication of this home design book and the value it represents is of great significance to the Singapore renovation industry.

In the past ten years, we have implemented programs to improve the quality and management level of Singapore renovation industry, and have made some considerable progress in our common struggle.

We work with the Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) to develop and implement the following two programs:

- to be implemented in 2015: CaseTrust RCMA Accreditation Scheme for the renovation industry
- to be implemented in 2015: Performance Bond Scheme

The goal is to upgrade the renovation industry's quality and management level and reduce renovation disputes, so that consumers are assured that their legitimate rights and renovation deposits are protected.

In addition to institutional protection, it is also very important that consumers know who are the black sheeps of the industry.

In the present era of mobile Internet and social networking, people are inter-connected in real-time. Social forces could be harnessed to expose businesses and persons who deliver sloppy work and poor quality of service, including those who use deceptive advertising, such as initially advertising ridiculously low pricing and so-called promotional price and then hard sell and coerce customers into signing ridiculously high priced contracts and packages. These black sheeps would be identified and blacklisted on social media as bad record companies and operators with contractual disputes.

Still, we the Singapore Renovation Contractors and Material Suppliers Association have many things that remain to be done:

The problem of succession is significant. RCMA continues to introduce new programs and in cooperation with partners, provide useful and appropriate support to new member.

This is what we must continue to do in order to achieve the leadership succession. Thankfully, the majority of current management committee members are also in their youthful prime. They would be prepared to take over eventually, with a readiness that is right, we are confident they will show brilliant results.

I say thank you to all my fellow committee members, RCMA members, officials of government agencies, customers and administrators of public institutions for giving me full support and encouragement in the past difficult and yet very rewarding ten years.

I wish forever prosperity to the people of Singapore. Wish Singapore be eternal forever!

Madam Mary Mark
麥鳳儀
Honorary Secretary, RCMA



**Mr Dean Lim,
Honorary Treasurer,
RCMA**

It is a great honour to be elected and appointed as Honorary Treasurer of RCMA Management Committee (MC). Being one of the new and younger members of the MC, I hope to share and learn from other members, tap on the wisdom of the senior members and also work together as a team to upgrade the renovation & design industry to a higher level. As home renovators, our main objective is to serve home owners by building their dream homes with quality, so that they will be happy with our renovation works.

I am a firm believer of core business values, such as vision and mission which pilot a very important direction that can help business to do well and also create satisfaction for the home owners. The renovation industry should promote and practice high standard code of practice. Staff and new staff of member companies should be required to attend improvement courses, such as Code of Practice organized by the relevant authorities and RCMA, as part of their fulfillment requirement for renewing yearly RCMA member accreditation.

If Singapore renovation companies are promoted and known as following a high standard code of practice, it will be greatly useful for them going into the global business and market. The code of practice should work transparently to home owners so as to build mutual understanding and trust between one another.

To sum it up, the renovation industry can only improve by continued efforts of RCMA as well as supports from government departments, agencies and consumer organizations.

Mr Dean Lim
Honorary Treasurer, RCMA



SFA President's Message for Case Trust Singapore RCMA Renovation Guidebook

Singapore Furniture Association (SFA) and Singapore Renovation Contractors and Material Suppliers Association (RCMA) for many years, have a good consultation and close interaction between our two trade associations. Both associations spared no effort to solve issues faced by our members, at the same time also made some contributions to the economic development of Singapore.

Singapore Furniture Association was informed that RCMA with support from the Housing & Development Board (HDB), BCA and the Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE), has implemented a series of measures to create a sound system to ensure fair business practices in the renovation industry including the establishment of a CASE TRUST RCMA JOINT ACCREDITATION SCHEME, a CASE accredited standard awarded to renovators who are committed to fair trading and transparency. This is to reduce misunderstanding and inconvenience caused by vague understanding by two sides, and also to enhance and raise the quality and standard of renovation industry to a higher level.

To further complement these plans, RCMA also published a "home design book" to provide better service to the consumers. These efforts not only will receive consumer's commendation but also are role model of learning for SFA. Singapore Furniture Association congratulates RCMA for successful achievement of its efforts.

Madam Song Mei Yong
Sincerely, President of Singapore Furniture Association,

新加坡家具商会和新加坡装修同业商联会多年以来都有着良好的磋商和密切的往来互动关系，两商会都不遗余力努力不懈的为会员处理解决所面对的事项，同时对新加坡的经济发展也做出了一定的贡献。

新加坡家具商会获悉新加坡装修同业商联会正配合建屋发展局HDB，建筑管理局BCA和新加坡消费者协CASE等建立了消协-装修同业商联会保证标志鉴定计划 CaseTrust-RCMA Joint Accreditation Scheme 一系列措施。建立健全的体制以确保装修商和消费者都获得公平的对待，减少因为模糊不清的理解而造成双方的误解和不便，同时也提升了业者的素质而把装修业水准提高到另一层次。

为了进一步配合这些计划，新加坡装修同业商联会还出版了《居家设计特辑》，持续地服务好消费者。这些努力，不但会得到消费人的赞许，也是我们家具商会的学习楷模。新加坡家具商会谨此祝贺新加坡装修同业商联会顺利达成宏愿。

新加坡家具商会会长
宋梅容



RENOVATION AND DECORATION ADVISORY CENTRE

装修与装饰咨询理事会

Block 165 Bukit Merah Central #08-3673 Singapore 150165 Tel: 6565 9929 Fax: 6565 3271
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Renovation & Decoration Advisory Centre

We congratulate the Renovation Contractors and Materials Suppliers Association (RCMA) for its dedication and continual efforts to promote the renovation industry and trade interests.

RCMA has been a close ally of Renovation and Decoration Advisory Centre (RADAC) and has strongly supported RADAC's cause to promote ethical and responsible practices in the renovation industry. This has contributed to the soundness and growth of some of today's more respected renovation companies.

As a free market economy, Singapore is open to the entry of new players into this industry. Competition is good provided both buyers and sellers have good knowledge of the product or service. Unfortunately, not all homeowners have the time or inclination to research and go into details. As such, they can easily fall prey to unscrupulous or inexperienced renovators. Consumers can best protect their interests by engaging responsible renovators with the relevant track record and experience like the accredited renovators of RADAC and members of RCMA.

RCMA's alliance with Case Trust to introduce a Performance Insurance Bond is welcomed and offers an additional avenue for consumer protection.

RADAC wishes RCMA well in its new endeavour.

Mr Ng Soo Siah, Chairman
Renovation and Decoration
Advisory Centre (RADAC)



Mr Thomas Chua, President of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Nominated Member of Parliament

PUBLICATION OF THE CASE-TRUST RCMA SINGAPORE RENOVATION GUIDEBOOK

新加坡中华总商会会长、官委议员蔡其生

新加坡装修同业商联会出版
CaseTrust RCMA Singapore Renovation Guidebook

Singapore has one of the highest percentages of home ownership in the world. With 90.3 per cent of Singaporeans owning their own homes, there is a constant need to enlist the services of interior designers, renovation contractors and suppliers of home accessories.

We therefore commend the Singapore Renovation Contractors and Material Suppliers Association, one of the SCCC's Trade Association members, for having signed an MOU with CaseTrust in August 2014 to establish CaseTrust RCMA Joint Accreditation Scheme for the renovation industry.

Following the signing of the MOU with CaseTrust last year, RCMA has taken another step further to build consumer confidence in the renovation industry by publishing this CaseTrust RCMA Singapore Renovation Guidebook, which will feature its members belonging to the whole spectrum of the local renovation industry. This is a positive move by RCMA to showcase a comprehensive range of products and services to new and existing home owners in Singapore.

I congratulate RCMA on the publication of its CaseTrust RCMA Singapore Renovation Guidebook and wish it every success as it continues to make exemplary contributions to Singapore's renovation industry.

在新加坡多达90.3% 的人拥有自己的住房，是世界拥屋率最高的国家之一。正因为如此，本地市场对室内设计、装修服务和家居用品供应有着很高的需求。

去年八月，新加坡装修同业商联会 (RCMA) 与新加坡消费者协会签署谅解备忘录，共同设立消费者协会保证标志 (CaseTrust) 鉴定计划，对此我们十分赞同。新加坡装修同业商联会也是新加坡中华总商会的商团会员之一。

新加坡装修同业商联会出版
《CaseTrust RCMA Singapore Renovation Guidebook》
则是加强消费者对装修同业的信心的另一项积极举措。这本刊物同时也能让受到认证的商家向本地的新屋主和现有屋主展示它们的一系列商品以及服务，可谓是一举两得。

我在此恭贺新加坡装修同业商联会刊物
《CaseTrust RCMA Singapore Renovation Guidebook》
的成功出版，也希望贵会能继续为新加坡的装修同业作出更大的贡献！

THOMAS CHUA
President
Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry

蔡其生 会长
新加坡中华总商会



A calligraphic congratulatory message written by Mr Ng Soy Ng, President of Singapore Building Materials Suppliers' Association. The message conveys congratulation of "Beautifying homes and benefitting the society."

RENOVATING YOUR HOME- SWEET-HOME

Article Courtesy Of CaseTrust

Renovation can be a costly and inconvenient business. Yet most of us do not mind the investment for the return of a cosy dream home. This dream however, can easily turn into a terrible nightmare if we engage the wrong people for the renovation job.

Over the years, the Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) received a number of consumer complaints about the renovation industry. Consumers usually complain about renovation works not being done correctly and that there were defects after the renovation, such as cracks in the wall or damaged flooring. Alternatively, the renovation works were not completed on time and in satisfactory condition as stated in the contract.

No. of cases involving the Contractors (Renovation) Industry

2013: 230
2014: 242
Jan – Feb 2015: 36

*Please note that the above number of complaints quoted refer to both filed and assisted cases. Filed cases are cases whereby consumers authorise CASE to handle on their behalf. For assisted cases, CASE will help the consumers to draft a letter for them to approach the vendors themselves.



Image Courtesy of Unimax Creative Pte Ltd

CASE 1

John* engaged a renovation company to paint his house. The agreed price was \$1,450 and he paid \$1,000 deposit. The agreement was to paint the living room, hall and the master bedroom in white and blue paint and the work commenced in mid-March 2014. However, the work was not satisfactory and the paint used was different from what was originally agreed upon. In view of this, John requested for a refund of \$1,150 for the incomplete work but the company refused. He then approached CASE for assistance and we negotiated with the company on his behalf and both parties agreed on a refund of \$800 as the final settlement.

CASE 2

Marilyn* engaged the services of a renovation company to renovate her house. She paid

the full contractual amount of \$36,588, and the renovation works were completed within a month. A few weeks later, she discovered that there were hidden issues pertaining to the piping, which in turn caused her toilet to be choked. She tried contacting the company for rectifications, but to no avail. Eventually, Marilyn approached CASE for help. After rounds of negotiations by CASE, the company agreed to rectify the issue of the choked toilet at no cost.

CASE 3

On 5th May 2014, Timothy* signed a contract with a renovation company to carry out renovation works for his house for \$35,000. It was agreed beforehand that all renovation will be completed in 3 weeks' time. However, as the renovation works were carried out, Timothy realised that the pace

was too slow, and not in line with what was originally agreed. Subsequently, there was no manpower supplied to carry on with the renovation work. On 24th May, he called the person-in-charge up and came to know that she had left the company. Timothy then tried to contact other staff about the delayed delivery, but was to no avail as well. He then approached CASE for assistance, and eventually the company agreed to resume and complete the renovation works on their end.

**Please note that names have been changed to ensure the privacy of the consumers.*

It definitely involves some difficult decision-making when it comes to transforming a house to your home. Despite having said that, we consumers can still “protect” our homes by equipping ourselves with the right knowledge and tips before engaging a renovation service.



Image Courtesy of Image Creative Design Pte Ltd

CASE would like to advise consumers to:

- 1) Ensure the contractor is registered with HDB. HDB has highlighted that contractors not registered with HDB are not allowed to carry out any renovation works in HDB flats, even if a renovation permit is not required.
- 2) Consider an accredited contractor from CaseTrust. In August 2014, CASE and RCMA signed a Memorandum of Understanding to jointly develop an accreditation scheme for the renovation industry. Consumers who patronise a CaseTrust-RCMA accredited contractor can look forward to added protection through a Performance Insurance Bond, which acts as a buffer for non-performance of contractors and provide greater peace of mind to consumers.
- 3) Request for quotations. Consumers are advised to obtain different quotations before committing to a renovation package so that they will be less vulnerable against misleading claims, false claims, overcharging and pressure sales tactics.
- 4) Read before you sign. Any document that needs a signature should be read through carefully [both front and back pages] before putting down one's signature.
- 5) Clear contract. The contract agreement should reflect clear itemised billing and listing of products and services. Consumers can also consider using the CASE Model Agreement on Home Renovation, which is available on CASE website.
- 6) Work out a schedule with the contractor. Ensure clear deadlines for completion and rectification works.
- 7) Payment for the contract agreement should be rendered progressively. Do not make full payment upfront.
- 8) Document outstanding defects. Consumers can take photos of outstanding defects, and compile a defects list after completion, so that they can be resolved systematically.
- 9) Know your dispute resolution avenues. Besides using our filed option or assisted scheme for consumers who have disputes with their renovation contractors, CASE also offers to arrange a mediation session for both parties to reach an amicable resolution. Alternatively, consumers may lodge a claim via the Small Claims Tribunals.



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Guide to Mattress Shopping

By Xiangyun Lim

FEELING OVERWHELMED AND CONFUSED BY THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF MATTRESSES OUT THERE? KNOW YOUR BASICS AND WHAT YOU SHOULD LOOK OUT FOR WHEN MATTRESS SHOPPING IN THIS GUIDE THAT BREAKS DOWN ALL THE FLUFF.

Mattress shopping can feel like buying insurance with the sheer number of brands and types, coupled with sales pitches you're not sure whether to trust. Online reviews can cause further confusion as there is no one-size-fits-all solution-what works for others may not for you.

It's crucial to equip yourself with the right knowledge for a savvy mattress shopping experience. For this guide, we went undercover as customers into various sleep boutiques and departmental stores to suss out these tips and tricks.

BEING A SAVVY CUSTOMER

Do your homework. Lots of it! That means researching necessary information and asking yourself what your needs and preferences are. Savvy shopping not only saves time, but also cuts through any potential hard-sells or sales pitches that are not of value.

Have a sense of the kind of mattresses you prefer. A good tip is using hotel room beds as a gauge. The more luxurious the hotel room, the softer and higher the beds tend to be (and vice versa)-take note of which beds left you waking up refreshed (or aching).

Go in with a budget. This helps narrow down the choices and field attempts by salespeople selling unnecessary add-ons and extra accessories.

Visit both sleep boutiques and departmental stores, though the former may save you from being overwhelmed by too many brands and types.

Pricing does not correlate with quality sleep. What you pay is what you get...but only up to a certain point. Additional costs usually stem from different technologies and branding, which may not be what you need.

Every individual has their unique needs and preferences. Different sleeping positions work better with varying mattress firmness and pillow heights. Those suffering from backaches and medical conditions will also need to pay attention to other factors. These factors can help guide the choosing process, but ultimately, each bed should be personally tested and tried.

This applies to children. Remember, a child's body weight differs from an adult. This means that It is crucial to have your child try the bed out him or herself.

If a store is willing to negotiate, it probably means that the display price is overpriced. So if you're shopping at authorised distributors and have a specific model you want, compare prices between different sleep boutiques and distributors for the best deal.

Be careful of bundle deals, especially if they include bed frames. The frame might be of a low quality that will undermine your mattress quality.

Don't rush! Take at least 15-20 minutes to lie on each bed, more if need be. Try different sleeping positions, and even consider bringing your own pillow and bolster.



DETERMINING YOUR NEEDS

First things first: How do you sleep?
What You Need to Know About Mattresses
A mattress basically is about two things: Support and Comfort.

Side	Back	Stomach
Softer mattresses cater more to side sleepers to reduce the possibility of numbness. Higher pillows also suit the contours of your neck and help the shoulders and back descend comfortably.	Back sleepers may find greater support for their neck and back on medium firm mattresses and medium high pillows .	To reduce strain on neck muscles, tummy snoozers can look towards firmer mattresses and lower pillows .
Are you a fidgety sleeper? You may require a mattress that recovers faster to its default shape and allows more flexibility in movement. Do you sleep alone, or with a partner? If you sleep with a partner, discuss and shop together for the mattress that will suit you both. For example, a light sleeper who sleeps together with a fidgety sleeper may require one that has less motion transfer so that movements will be less disruptive.		



Support	Comfort
Support comes from springs and coils inside, and determines the firmness of the mattress. Mattress thickness and individual body weight also impact the level of mattress support needed.	The comfort level is determined by the type of mattress padding. Materials usually range from cotton and polyester, to latex and different combinations of memory polyurethane foam.
<u>Coil mattresses</u> Coil mattresses rely on a spring system which move together as one unit. More common due to its cost effectiveness. <u>Pocket Sprung</u> Essentially springs sewn into fabric. pocket sprung mattresses offer more weight distribution than coil mattresses.	<u>Latex</u> Made from natural material and offers hypoallergenic properties. Compared to memory foam, it recovers much faster to its default shape, which may be better for fidgety sleepers. <u>Memory Foam</u> Memory Foam Memory foam moulds to body shapes and reduces buildup of pressure on joints. It also reacts and adjusts to body heat. <u>Hybrids</u> Hybrids and combinations of different foam types, or even latex and foam, are common.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHILE SHOPPING
In A Nut Shell:

Service	Look for salespeople who know their stuff and make you feel comfortable bed-hopping. In our visits, the best experiences came from service that guides instead of resorting to hard sell, and encourages taking the time to try out different mattresses. Tip: If a sales person starts talking about “coil counts”, or answer your questions with brochure descriptions, they probably don’t know what they are doing, or are trying to hard-sell a particular model. (Coil counts don’t matter as much as coil type and steel gauge.)
Bed Frames	The base of your bed is as important as the mattress. A good solid base provides the support required for the mattress to function optimally. Tony from Tilam King recommends avoiding bases made of slates as they are “bent, have gaps in-between them, occasionally causing the springs to be slanted while applying pressure on them.”
Warranty	Mattresses are built for the long-term, and most brands offer warranty ranging from seven years up to even 15 years. As with all warranty, read the fine print to be sure of what is included.
Promotions	Look out for promotions (GSS ’15 promotions are on till end July), but be wary of bundle deals that seem too good to be true—they probably are. Take multiple trips if you need to and purchase only when 100 percent certain.

- It’s important to note that there is no single mattress type or style that works for everyone.
- Recommendations and reviews can guide but not dictate.
- Pricing is not everything—a mattress that costs \$2,000 can suit you better than a \$20,000 one.
- Take time to equip yourself with adequate information, and be prepared to test beds to find the one for you (ladies, wear pants!).

For more stories visit www.cromly.com.



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Image Courtesy of U-Home Interior Design Pte Ltd



Image Courtesy of Inner View Design & Contracts Pte Ltd

SAFE RENOVATION WITHOUT COMPROMISING BUILDING SAFETY

Article Courtesy Of
Building and Construction Authority

Important points to consider during renovation.

If your renovation works require removing an existing floor or wall, for example for an open kitchen concept or when combining two rooms for a more spacious room, it is important to consider if this involves hacking structural elements of the building and whether such works require plan approval and a permit from the Building and Construction Authority (BCA).

More often than not, most home owners only rely on the advice from renovation contractors or interior designers on matters regarding hacking works and the necessary statutory requirements for carrying out such works. However, some of these renovation contractors may not be sufficiently competent to provide such advice.

Property owners, management corporations and managing agents who are responsible for the development, management or/and maintenance of buildings should therefore exercise their due diligence by engaging registered Professional Engineers (PEs) in civil and structural engineering discipline for technical evaluation and advice before carrying out any hacking of floors or walls.

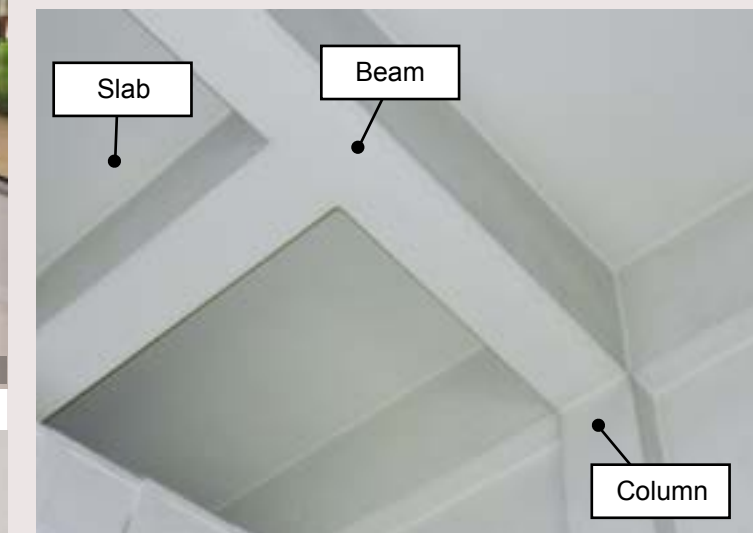


Image Courtesy of U-Home Interior Design Pte Ltd

Did You Know?

All building structures have to be designed by registered PEs who have to consider how to transfer the various building loads to its foundation safely. All structural building elements (i.e. floor slabs, beams, columns and walls, etc.) are designed to carry a certain load to cater for its intended building usage based on the PE's analysis during the building design.

Hacking the structural elements during renovation without first seeking professional advice is dangerous. The structural integrity of the building could be compromised as a result of the hacking works. Partial or even total collapse of the building could occur, with possible loss of lives and properties.



Slabs, beams and a column of a typical building

What should I do if the renovation requires hacking works?

Home owners should consult a PE prior to commencing the hacking works. The PE will refer to the structural plans and assess if the hacking will involve removal of structural elements. If removal of any structural element is involved, approval of the structural plan and permit from the BCA will have to be obtained first before such works can commence.

Hacking of structural elements without first obtaining approval and permit from BCA is considered an unauthorised work, and is an offence under the Building Control Act.

What to do if you suspect unauthorised hacking works?

As the home owner, you should stop all hacking works immediately and inform BCA. At the same time, the home owner should engage a PE to check if the structural integrity of the building is affected from the hacking works and propose temporary safety measures (e.g. propping to the building structures) and permanent rectification works if required. The home owner should arrange to carry out the temporary safety measures as advised by the PE without delay.

Home owners, renovation contractors, interior designers and PEs who are found guilty of authorising, permitting or carrying out unauthorised hacking works may be prosecuted under the Building Control Act and depending on the severity of the case, be liable on conviction to a fine up to \$200,000 or to imprisonment for a term of up to 2 years or both.



Building and Construction Authority

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Get Gritty: How to Do Industrial

By Samantha Echavez

WE LOVE THE INDUSTRIAL STYLE FOR ITS NO-FUSS, MINIMALIST, AND UTILITARIAN LOOK. HERE ARE WAYS ON HOW TO PULL IT OFF.

Forget the flamboyance of a retro-themed apartment or the quiet intensity of Asian interiors for once—if you are thinking of getting and decorating your own place, industrial is the design to aspire for. Think of an industrial-type pad as a prettified warehouse, the 21st century house of cool, a creative amalgam of metal, steel, wood, concrete, and other materials you normally find in a 19th century factory. This type of design is deliciously unpretentious; artists and other creative professionals get a kick out of holing up in their industrial lofts with their exposed plumbing system and unfinished ceilings, grained surfaces, and glorified proletarian feel.

Nothing says “I’m progressive, I’m a potential design genius who knows all the rage in architecture and interior decorating” than setting up your home industrial-style. Go ahead and get the utilitarian look down pat with these tips:

Go big. You know this: No space is too small for kickass decor. You don’t have to be stringent on design just because your place is too tiny it qualifies as a walk-in closet. In this case, though, it’d be ideal—operative word is ideal—to look for a place with large floor space, high ceilings, and floor-to-ceiling windows to achieve the warehouse vibe. (You know how the hardcore industrial enthusiasts do it? They scour the metro for abandoned warehouses and factories and make homes out of them.)

Keep it real. Industrial doesn’t believe in hiding stuff you normally conceal, like overhead pipes, beams, vents, and heaters. Industrial is supposed to be raw and rugged and badass, so don’t even think about drywalling over bricks with furring strips, building a cabinet to obscure your radiator, or covering your windows with fancy blinds or curtains. It’s all part of respecting the history of the industrial factories and buildings—back in the day, everyone was just focused on getting things done they didn’t bother with exposed ductwork.



Make it metal. How to instantly make your place hard-edged? Turn to metal, industrial’s choice of material. It’s sleek, clean, and functional. Hanging metal lamps, metal stools and cabinets, aluminium panels, and other accent pieces can “industrialise” any room. To keep it from looking too factory-cold and harsh, tone it down and mix it up with wood.

Work it with wood. “Soften” the metallic and steel motif in your house with wood. Use hardwood floors, expose your wood beams, get a reclaimed wooden bench, repurpose wooden crates and turn them into a nice centre table. Polish the wood but don’t overdo it! You don’t want your place to look so dazzling it loses its austere appeal. Industrial design likes to operate under the philosophy, “we are roughing it...but in style,” and good ol’ wood sends the message rather clearly.

Add a pop of colour. Industrial is naturally minimal and bare, so its colour spectrum ranges from black and white to a couple of earthy tones, from

grey to extremely grey—nothing too kaleidoscopic or Nicki Minaj-crazy. However, you need to bend the rule a little and add a piece of furniture or statement piece with a striking colour.

Don’t overthink. Industrial style is very forgiving. You can install a ladder right in the middle of the living area and it is okay. You can buy an ancient high school locker from the vintage shop and make it your wardrobe closet, and no one will make fun of you for it. Let loose and have fun.

You don’t have to be a legit artist to kill it at decorating your house industrial-style. First, you have to warm up to the idea that exposed pipes and radiators aren’t so bad. Second, you must believe that when bricks, concrete, wood, metal, and salvaged items get together, they create magic, a certain je ne sais quois. Yes, you can still splurge on expensive pieces of furniture and pair them with your repurposed and reclaimed items. Lastly: No one really wrote the book on industrial style, so feel free to experiment and figure out the interiors that would fit your idea of “industrial.”

Guide to Home Ergonomics

By Xiangyun Lim & Michelle Ong

IMPROVE THE LIVEABILITY OF YOUR HOME WITH THESE ERGONOMIC PRINCIPLES AND TIPS.

Ergonomics isn't just limited to office work or computers. Essentially the **science of designing the task to fit our physical bodies rather than the other way around**, ergonomics principles can actually be applied to every activity and task and especially at home. As the place for rest, recreation, and raising a family, it is important to reduce the output of redundant energy through good design and planning.

Start by doing a quick sweep of your home to determine if it is an environment **optimised for easy use, safety, and comfort for your activities**. This applies to even more minute details such as the lighting warmth and location, the temperature in your bedroom, and the height of tables, cabinets, and sinks. Think about the needs of your family: Do you have children and elderly? What are the activities often done at home? Is your home catered for these needs and activities?

It may not be easy to cover every detail, and needs and activities will also change over time. Once you get into the habit of paying attention

to the interaction between our daily activities and the environment, however, it becomes a natural process to make necessary changes for better living at home. Here are some tips for you to start:

APPLYING ERGONOMICS AT HOME

In the Living Room:

- Consider frequent activities your family engage in. For example, television lovers should invest in a comfortable sofa that has adequate support, and ensure the line of sight is aligned to the height of the television.
- If you do work in the living room, or arts and crafts with your children, make sure you have well-lit places.
- Use portable/desk lights to fill in inadequately lit areas.



In the Kitchen:

- The three main sites of activity in the kitchen would be the stove/oven, the refrigerator, the sink/preparation site. Minimise the distance between them for an efficient work flow, but not too much so that it becomes cramped.
- A good height for the kitchen cabinet is about 80cm, and the ideal height and depth of the toe kick (the recess at the bottom of a base cabinet) is 8cm x 6.5cm.

In the Bedroom:

- Ensure the best quality of sleep with the right mattress and pillow.
- It is ideal to have digital screens far away from your bed. That includes the television, phone docks, and even digital clocks.
- Keep your bedside table close enough for you to easily reach it without stretching too much.
- Curtains and blackouts can help to keep the room quiet and dark.
- White noise from fans and coolers can also help mask surrounding noise.



For Children:

Applying ergonomic principles for children is especially important not just for optimal physical and spinal development, but also to instil lasting good posture habits.

- Pick the right mattress and bed for deep, quality sleep integral to development and growth.
- Invest in a backpack that is ergonomically-designed to reduce the stress and pressure of carrying heavy loads. Look out for one that is lightweight, employs a backcare system that distributes downward force, and encourages dual shoulder carrying.
- Internal book traps will also help prevent the counter force of books falling back, holding them in vertical position and closer to the child's back.
- An ergonomic table is worth looking at especially if you have more than one child, as the adjustable height and angle can cater even through their growing years.
- Different tasks require different tabletop angles. For example, reading would need a wider angle to bring the material up to eye level, whereas writing would be done on a lower tabletop adjusted at a narrower angle.
- When using technological products, remind your child to take posture and screen breaks every 20 to 30 minutes.



MIDCENTURY MODERN MARVEL

Midcentury modern furnishings look right at home in this minimalist space filled with well-planned storage options. Eames chairs surround a glass-topped table that may either be used for dining or working. Built-in closets and cabinetry are often floating on walls or fill the space from floor to ceiling. Handles and pulls are also either nonexistent, or disappear into the closet doors by mimicking the closets' vertical orientation.

More shelving and worktops are hidden behind sliding doors, so that one's clutter may easily be covered up after the workday. Wood in different tones and grains keep the look from feeling too clinical by adding warmth and visual interest.



“Wood in different tones and grains keep the look from feeling too clinical by adding warmth and visual interest.”

WARM CONTEMPORARY SPACES

Marble and reflective surfaces add a delicious contemporary gleam to interiors, but wood will always be a classic choice to add warmth to any space.

In a dining room filled hard lines and angles, mirrored walls and a drop ceiling visually enlarge the space. Sleek, leather chairs and a marble-topped dining table with sculptured chrome legs complement the contemporary feel, but wooden stair treads contrast beautifully with all the room's shimmering touches.

Wood-panelled walls, pillars, and even a ceiling rose of sorts keep this glass-covered living room from looking too space-age, while a walk-in wardrobe also covered in head-to-toe wood laminate keep things interesting.



“Marble and reflective surfaces add a delicious contemporary gleam to interiors, but wood will always be a classic choice to add warmth to any space.”

ORIENTAL CHIC

Red is a popular hue for interiors, but when added in small doses to a room furnished with traditional elements, it adds that elegant Oriental touch.

In a master's suite, colour is added via an antique side table, artwork over the bed, the large area rug, and a bowl filled with red potpourri. Another painting in fiery, sunset red livens up sitting areas in muted grays and browns.

Another area rug in front of a grouping of camel-hued armchairs in the hallway pick up shades of red from the artwork, tying the whole look together. The red vases on the console keep the glass-walled hallway from looking too modern.



“Red is a popular hue for interiors, but when added in small doses to a room furnished with traditional elements, it adds that elegant Oriental touch.”

LUXE LIVING

HDBs are known for clear-cut corners and space-constrained design, but design firm Ciseern proved otherwise with this 5-room HDB flat that looks every bit as luxurious as a high-rise condominium. A touch of glam was incorporated via reflective surfaces, a moodier palette, and beautiful accent and ambient lighting. The limited space is also maximised via creative room layouts—creating cosy pockets of differently functioning areas in the bedroom, or unexpected elements like a private bar in lieu of a dining room. As well, small spaces like a galley kitchen and bathroom are visually enlarged with the help of a clean, all-white look, or mirrored mosaic tiles.



“A touch of glam was incorporated via reflective surfaces, a moodier palette, and beautiful accent and ambient lighting.”

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SLEEK AND SWEET

Sleek and contemporary succinctly describe this five-bedroom HDB flat designed by D'Trenzo Interior. Glossy cabinets and gleaming tiles dominate, while concealed lighting adds just the right touch of a cosy ambience.

Feature panel walls that play on lines and texture frame media centers and TV units, while furniture mostly share simple forms with rounded corners. In the red, black, and white kitchen, a drum-shaped pendant lamp with cutout stripes contrast nicely with the mostly solid surfaces, as do the Bombo stools' curved shape against the kitchen's largely boxy outline.

A blue, white, and gray grid on closet doors adds a playful element to a little boy's bedroom and study.



"Sleek and contemporary succinctly describe this five-bedroom HDB flat designed by D'Trenzo Interior."

BUILT IN BRILLIANCE

When space is at a premium, it pays to come up with clever built-ins to furnish your home. Instead of using bed frames and headboards, sleeping alcoves house the bed, shelves, drawers, a TV unit, lighting fixtures, and even a work desk—all in one area of the bedroom.

The living room also features plenty of built-in storage behind cabinet doors left in their natural wooden stain. Black shelves provide a nice contrast against the wood, and beautiful bulb drop lamps over the dining table act as a complementing focal.

Everywhere else in the home, floating cabinets do away with the mess of furniture legs and limbs. A warm, neutral palette makes the urban space look more pleasant and homey.



“A warm, neutral palette makes the urban space look more pleasant and homey.”

PATTERNED SPACES

These spaces by Luck Ann highlight the many ways one can play up surfaces like walls and floors.

Bespoke kitchen cabinets feature a curlicue pattern that makes you look twice—or thrice when you notice the white overhead cabinets with the same surface print.

In the bathroom, a wall with a leaf print is partnered with floor tiles where repetitive pebbly shapes figure.

Lighting also emphasizes coloured surfaces like backsplashes and the kitchen counter. In another home, glass walls cleverly enclose a dining area, but still gives one a complete view of the surrounding areas.



“These spaces by Luck Ann highlight the many ways one can play up surfaces like walls and floors.”

TEXTURED PLAY

Layering a variety of materials for wall, floor, ceiling and even furniture treatments makes for very remarkable interiors.

An all-brown living room hardly looks monochromatic when it plays with a multitude of textures—via tufted leather seat backs, polished wood furniture, a brick wall, wood laminate cabinets and drawers, and a velvet couch with nailhead trim.

Closet wood-plank doors with visible grains contrast beautifully with mirrored and carved accents. Different machuka tiles lend a touch of la Boheme in this small bathroom, where clutter hardly makes a difference when hidden behind built-in mirrored cabinets.



“Different machuka tiles lend a touch of la Boheme in this small bathroom, where clutter hardly makes a difference when hidden behind built-in mirrored cabinets.”

COLOUR PUNCTUATION

Slick white or neutral spaces can be punctuated with a little bit of colour to keep things from looking too drab. A combined dining and living area makes use of mostly white furniture—from the roomy sectional sofa to the dining chairs and drop lamps—but are layered with touches of black and brown via the entertainment center wall, columns of black drapery, throw pillows, and even furniture legs.

A bedroom receives extra space, albeit visually, via mirrored closets, but a couple of pillows in plum and powder blue keep it from looking too neutral.

Pillows and fabrics pick up some of the blues from the abstract artwork in the hallway in this narrow white-and-wooden bedroom.



“A bedroom receives extra space, albeit visually, via mirrored closets, but a couple of pillows in plum and powder blue keep it from looking too neutral.”

BUILT-IN BEAUTY

Built-in doesn't necessarily have to mean boring. These rooms designed by Impress 21 show that built-in cabinetry, closets, and other furnishings actually make small spaces more efficient.

A huge bookcase behind a sectional sofa acts as both room divider and storage, with glass doors to conceal the clutter within. An L-shaped niche behind the TV is used ingeniously as an additional shelf, while floating cubbies act as great display shelves for small sculpted figures or photo frames.

In the bedroom, a "fake" wall hides TV cables and cords, and also provide display space for personal knick knacks.

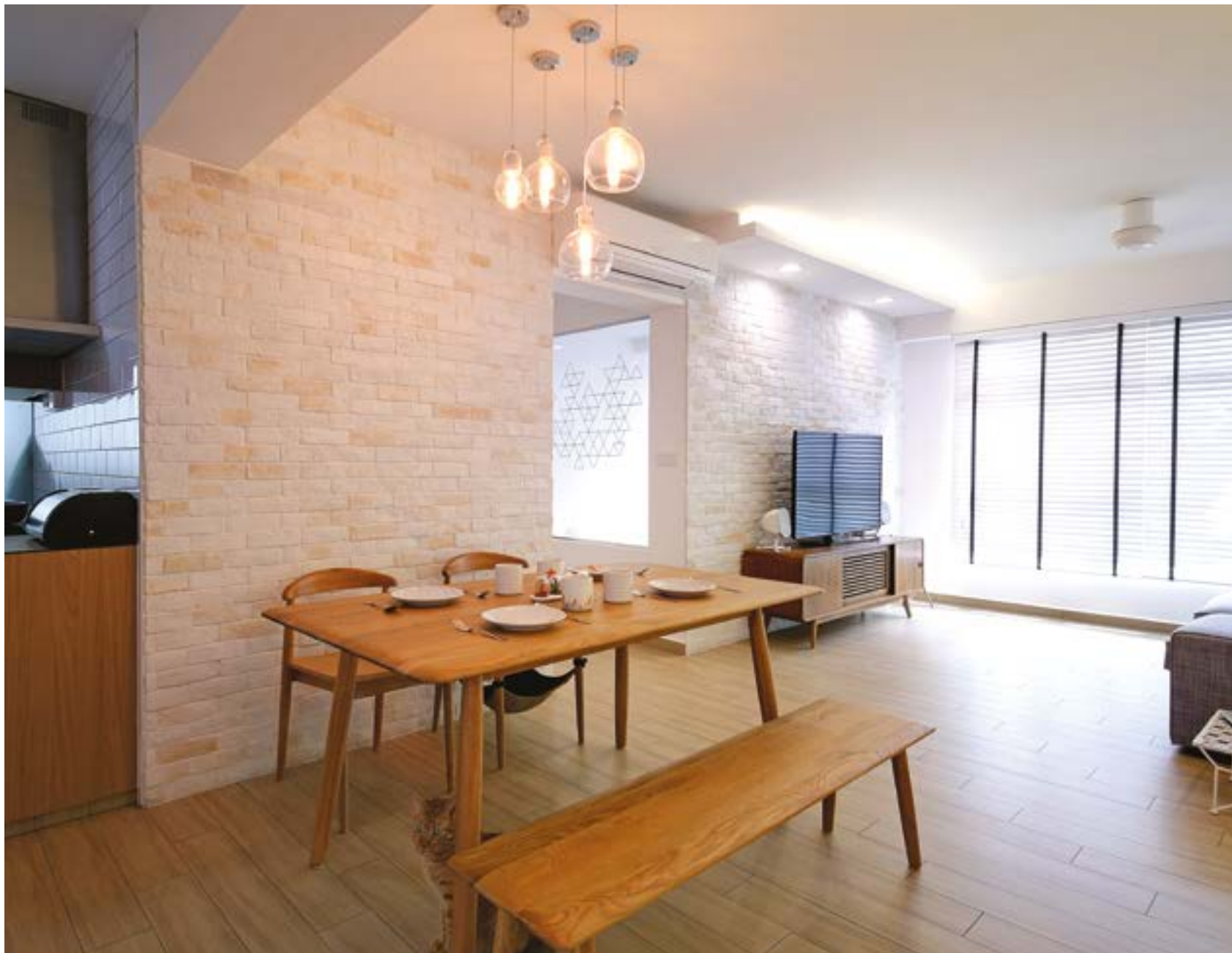


"These rooms designed by Impress 21 show that built-in cabinetry, closets, and other furnishings actually make small spaces more efficient."

SCANDINAVIAN COOL

Natural materials are often the go-to choice when homeowners prefer a cosy and inviting abode. Whitewashed brick and wood come together in this contemporary apartment designed by Renozone, with its clean, Scandinavian-cool aesthetic.

The furnishings follow a midcentury-modern shape, but are updated in natural matte finishes. The dining area features glass pendant lamps in varying lengths, to compensate for the higher ceiling height. Wooden countertops stand out nicely against white kitchen cabinets, and a glass divider cleanly separates the laundry area from the cooking area. Subway tiles are used in both the kitchen and bathroom, but beehive-shaped black and white tiles are used to offset the shower area from the lavatory.



“Whitewashed brick and wood come together in this contemporary apartment designed by Renozone, with its clean, Scandinavian-cool aesthetic.”

MIX AND MATCH STYLES

It's no longer taboo to mix up different design styles. Country elements go well with contemporary interiors, like this living room featuring mod niche shelves and basket-weave furnishings.

The cosiness and warmth of the dining area—courtesy of the rattan dining set and grandfather's clock—gets a surprising glamorous touch via the intricately designed chandelier and the recessed lightings on the ceiling. Bricks on the feature wall provide a rustic appeal.

Warm wooden floors and indoor plants also add a little more of the cottage-style touch.



“Country elements go well with contemporary interiors, like this living room featuring mod niche shelves and basket-weave furnishings.”

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A TOUCH OF INSPIRATION FOR MY NICE HOME

Article and Photos Courtesy of the Housing & Development Board.
Source: www.mynicehome.sg

Do you often visit furniture retailers' showrooms even if you don't plan on making any purchase? Apparently, a lot of Singaporeans do, going by the weekend crowds that pack some showrooms. For me, I'll almost always head to the themed areas – where one can get ideas on how a kitchen can be done up according to a certain theme, or the on-trend hues that you can do up your home furnishings. I may not be renovating my home now, but I can always look to professionally-designed showrooms for future inspiration.

For more design inspirations, there is a new showflat in town, and it is not just another showflat for HDB home owners. The revamped version of the former Habitat Forum, the new My Nice Home Gallery opens today with five different showflats within, modelled after existing HDB flat layouts – 2-room, 3-room, 4-room, 5-room and a Studio Apartment.

Here's a sneak peek of what you can expect from the new My Nice Home Gallery:

DESIGN THEMES FOR ACTIVE LIFESTYLES



1. Different Themes for Different Folks

Need design inspiration for your own home?
Or uncertain if a decor theme would turn out well?

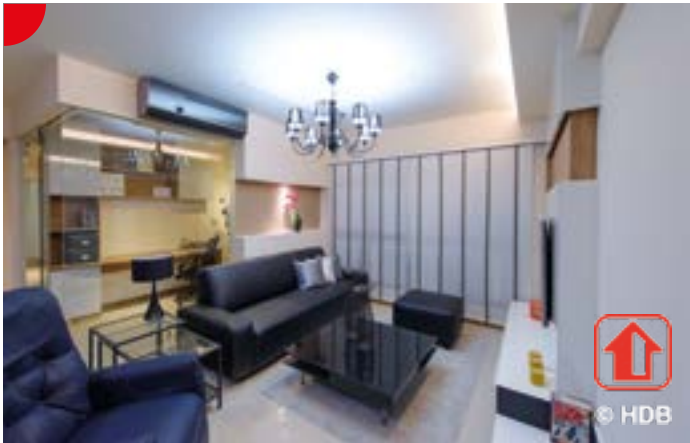
No worries. Just pop by the Gallery which has each showflat decked out in a different theme.

Pssst ... we heard that there are themes – tropical, sporty, classic contemporary, nature inspired and understated elegance, but we'll let you explore and discover which showflat is renovated according to which theme.

MODERN INTERIOR DESIGN THEMES
FOR EVERY BUDGET AND FAMILY TYPE



“If you need more ideas, there’s a screen at the Home Design Ideas wall within the Gallery that features crowd-sourced photos of nicely renovated flats submitted by HDB home owners.”



2. New and Interactive Features

The ‘Design a Home’ application enables you and your family to design your dream home interior decor and take a photo of your composition! Sounds cool, doesn’t it? It would be something that the entire family could take part in.

Also, if you wish to find out more details of each showflat and how it has been fitted out, all you need to do is to use the Showflat Kiosk located at the entrance of each flat to view the information, for example, the type of multi-functional furniture you can install in your bedroom.



+ Design your ideal home and take a family photo!



+ An interactive kiosk outside each showflat contains useful information and tips

3. Engaging Elements for the Family

Besides the Showflat Kiosks, families with children would be happy to know that there is a play area for the young ones, while adults engage in discussions about their flat renovations. This play area is situated in an ‘outdoor’ themed part of the Gallery that is complete with carpet grass, a wooden trellis and vertical planting.



+ Vertical greening and seats near the entrance of the Gallery



+ Video walls and QR codes on different topics can be found around the Gallery

“I know where I will be heading to for design inspirations for my nice home. What about you? Check out the new Gallery at the HDB Hub today, or visit our MyNiceHome website for more updates!”



+ The Gallery also has feature walls with QR codes and videos for visitors to access relevant information and tips on HDB living such as indoor gardening and community bonding.

Designing Your Outdoor Space

HOW TO MAKE YOUR OUTDOOR AREA MORE AWESOME

Whether it is the balcony of your flat or a traditional backyard, an outdoor space easily adds value to any home and provides a myriad of benefits. You automatically get an enlarged living space, you can set up outdoor gatherings, you acquire an ideal reading nook, you soak up the sun—basically you enjoy the respite and relaxation the outdoors offers in your own private sunny spot. It's a must, then, to keep it well-maintained and pleasantly designed. Even if your budget is tight and your space is small, you can spruce up your outdoor space with these simple decorating tips.

1. Make it suitable to your lifestyle needs

A foremost consideration before redecorating your outdoor space is determining the needs of your family. Will it be used, primarily, for Sunday gatherings and parties? Will it be for your kids who need an ample room to play and run around? By pinning down your needs, it will be easier to makeover your outdoor space and make it functional for everyone.

2. Bring plants in

What is a balcony or patio without plants? Enliven your outdoor area by placing potted plants and flowers that will not only add colour but also depth to the space. You can also create boundaries with the help of

plants. In lieu of walls, use hanging planters. You can also use grass or artificial tufts for your outdoor flooring.

3. Get your outdoor furniture and accessories ready

If your outdoor space is open to the elements, get weather-resistant furniture, like rattan chairs. You can also opt for resin or plastic furniture, spray-painted for a more upscale look and style. Add pillows, throws, and candles for that extra charm. Also, to keep up with the theme of nature and to achieve a rustic look, decorate with flower planters, garden signs, birdhouses, and even watering cans.

4. Light it up

Turn your balcony or patio into a magical spot with night lights that wonderfully sparkle in the dark. Get festive holiday lights, candles, or low voltage outdoor lights to make your outdoor area aglow



The Basics Of Contemporary Scandinavian Design

By Camille Besinga

FIND OUT WHAT MAKES AN INTERIOR TYPICALLY SCANDINAVIAN, AND COP THESE IDEAS FOR YOUR OWN HOME.



The term “Scandinavia” typically refers in history to the three kingdoms of Denmark, Norway, and Finland. In the world of interiors, Scandinavian design is a 20th-century, post-World War II creation from those three countries—and which gained widespread popularity from the ‘50s down to the ‘70s.

Characterised by simplicity, minimalism, and functionality, Scandinavian design comprises basic elements that are very easy to integrate with other design philosophies. It acts like a bare canvas or a neutral palette. You may also use it on its own and still come up with an interior that is beautiful with a subdued elegance and lived-in simplicity.

Below are the basic elements of Scandinavian design:

1. Clean, simple lines. Notice this room is devoid of fancy cornices and intricate carvings and trim. Everything is straightforward, from doorways to shelves, and corners. Even the curved lines of furniture are simple and pared back.

2. Light. This kind of design originated in a place where harsh, dark winters are common. Therefore, natural light is always preferred, to bring as much of the sunlight indoors as possible. Windows are either wide or plentiful.

3. Gallery-white walls. Whether filled with artwork or left bare, white walls add to the crisp, clean look of a Scandinavian home.

4. A neutral colourway. Apart from white walls, furnishings and accessories take on elegant neutral shades, like black and cool greys.

5. Wood. This natural material will always be found in a Scandinavian home—either on the floor, walls, furniture, or even functional items and accessories. Light-coloured wood or stains are preferred over dark ones.

5. Functionality. More often than not, most of the items in a Scandinavian room serve a particular function—or even two or three.

For more stories visit www.cromly.com.

10 Aromatherapy Oils For Your Home

By Jerni Camposano

FILL YOUR HOME WITH YOUR FAVOURITE SCENT, THANKS TO THESE ESSENTIAL OILS.

Picture yourself entering your favourite spa. Don't you just love the aroma of essential oils that greets you as soon as you walk in? It rejuvenates and relieves stress almost instantly. That is the power of aromatherapy. How about creating that same ambience in your home?

Indulging in aromatherapy brings wonders to the body, mind, and soul. Roberta Wilson, in the book *Aromatherapy: Essential Oils for Vibrant Health and Beauty*, defined aromatherapy as the "practice of using naturally extracted essences of aromatic plants to promote the well-being of your body, mind, and emotions. Aromatherapy offers a natural approach to wellness that can infuse your life with a new sense of vitality, vibrancy, and pleasure."

Essential oils used in aromatherapy can restore balance and harmony in a person, "while adding depth, dimension, and definition" to his life. The scents of these essential oils can put you in a better mood as they calm the body and soothe the soul.

Enhance your home's overall mood and turn it into a fragrant sanctuary with a little help from an oil diffuser or an oil burner. Let the fragrance of essential oils fill the corners of your living space with its relaxing—even healing—scents.

We've listed down some fragrances, their benefits, and which parts of the house you should best diffuse each specific scent.



Lavender

- * Eases anxiety
- * Calming effect
- * Eases insomnia and promotes deep sleep
- * Associated with feelings of contentment

Use in...

- * Master's bedroom
- * Kid's room
- * Guest room



Chamomile

- * Creates a relaxing atmosphere in any room
- * Soothes irritability
- * Eases depression
- * Fights insomnia, resulting in calm slumber

Use in...

- * Kid's room
- * Master's bedroom
- * Living room



Peppermint

- * Strong physical and mental stimulant
- * Helps in concentration
- * Allows you to stay alert and awake
- * Aids intestinal spasms, indigestion, and irritable bowel syndrome
- * Antibacterial properties (complements homemade cleaning products)
- * Natural pest deterrent

Use in...

- * Study room
- * Home office
- * Library
- * Bathroom
- * Kitchen
- * Garden



Eucalyptus

- * Increases energy
- * Increases brain activity
- * Clears up nasal passages and opens up airways

Use in...

- * Home gym
- * Game room
- * Kids' play area
- * Entryway/ Foyer



Lemon

- * Increases concentration
- * Improves ability to memorise and reduces mistakes

- * Calms emotions
- * Produces clean smell in usually dirty areas

Use in...

- * Study room
- * Home office
- * Library
- * Kitchen
- * Storage area



Pine

- * Provides invigorating and clean feeling
- * Relieves congestion and acts as expectorant
- * Reminds you of Christmas and holiday season

Use in...

- * Living room
- * Fireplace
- * Attic



Rose

- * Boosts self-esteem and confidence
- * Antidepressant and mood-boosting effects
- * Increases feelings of love and romance

Use in...

- * Bedroom



Cinnamon

- * Stimulates appetite
- * Improves digestion



Lemongrass

- * Decreases exhaustion
- * Relieves you from stress, fatigue, and headache
- * Soothes irritability
- * Relieves mental exhaustion and jet lag
- * Acts as insect repellent

Use in...

- * Living room
- * Bedroom
- * Entertainment room
- * Garden
- * Patio/Balcony



Vanilla

- * Increases mental clarity
- * Helps improve digestion
- * Tranquillising effect
- * Calming effect that provides relief from anxiety, anger, and restlessness

Use in...

- * Bedroom
- * Kid's room
- * Guest room
- * Patio/Balcony



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[^]Energy study by Dr Lee Siew Eang, NUS

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* Based on a 2014 study by ZEB Technology Pte Ltd for the public agencies in Singapore



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TradeHub 21, 8 Boon Lay Way #01-17 Singapore 609964

Email : gallery@citygas.com.sg

Website : www.citygas.com.sg

Decor Tips For Newbies

HERE ARE QUICK DESIGNING TIPS FOR YOU, FIRST-TIME HOMEOWNER!

By Samantha Echavez

Here are some simple designing tips to help get you started. We've covered the basics, and they're not as hard as you think.

Consider who else is living with you. Think of the other members of your family before making big designing decisions. Says Heather J. Paper, author of Decorating Idea Book, "The most beautiful decorating scheme will fall flat if it's not designed with specific family members in mind. The natural wear and tear that comes from children at play, for instance, has to be considered when selecting new furnishings. Tough-as-nails chenille fabrics are obviously a better choice than delicate silks."

Prioritise colour. Colour dictates your house's overall mood, so make sure you choose one that a) reflects your personality and b) complements your style. Because there are so many colours to select from, start with your favourite and work around its various tints and shades.

Go for a theme. "In any successful scheme, there has to be some kind of unifying theme that runs through the room, blending everything together. That's where harmony comes in. Of all design principles, it's perhaps the most vital. Without it, a room lacks cohesiveness," says Paper.

It's all in the (small) details. "Once you have the big picture of your room squarely in sight—including major pieces of furniture and colour choices—it's time to concentrate on individual elements. Do this by simply starting from the outside of the room and working in. Using the patterns and colours in your upholstered pieces as inspiration, select window and wall coverings that will provide the best surround for your scheme. If you want the pieces of furniture to stand out, take an 'art gallery' approach and treat the windows and walls in a subdued way," Paper says.

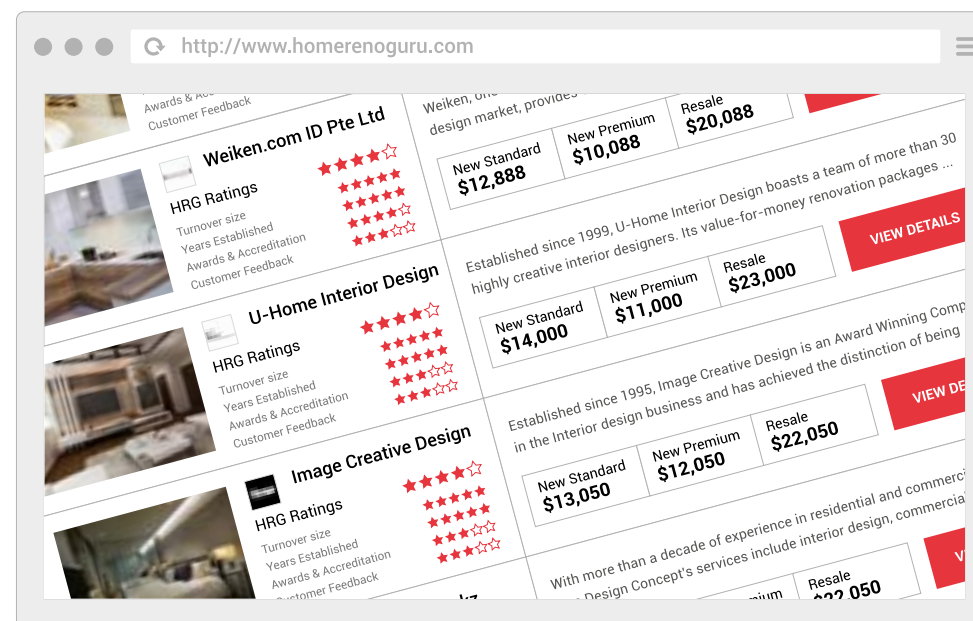
Have a ball. Decorating your space means shopping for pieces of furniture and accessories, bonding with your family as you prettify the place together, browsing through scores of mood boards that can easily make you heady with excitement. "As you work through the decorating process, whether you're working on one room or an entire house, take time to enjoy the experience. That's especially true once you get down to the finishing touches. More than anything else, accessories speak to others of your tastes, your travels, your personal experiences, and your family."

For more stories visit www.cromly.com.



The Better Way To Compare Renovation Packages

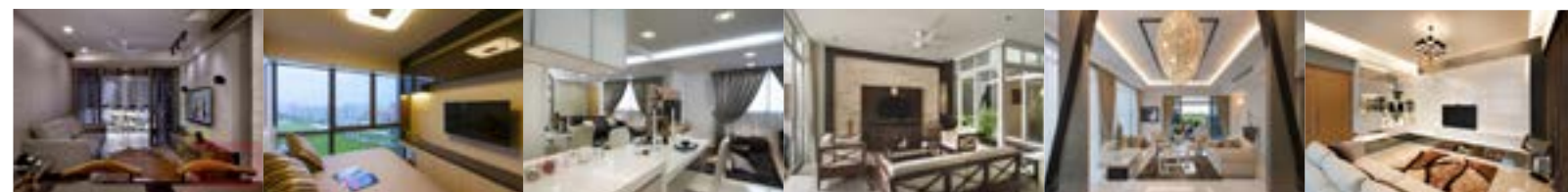
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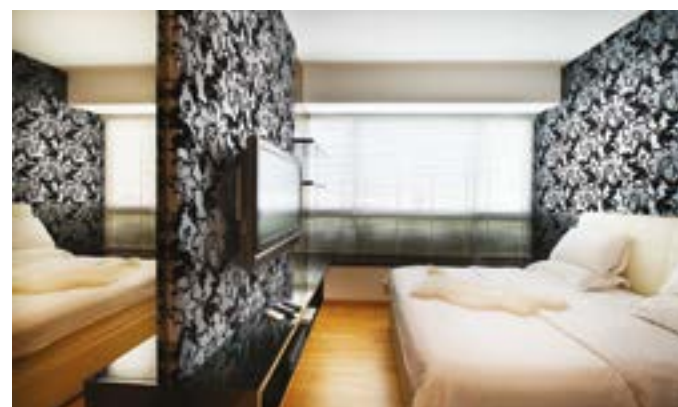
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Easy Bedroom Updates

MAKEOVER YOUR BEDROOM IN SIX EASY AND QUICK STEPS.



There are plenty of ways to revamp a space without breaking the bank. What about transforming your bedroom into a stylish sanctuary and making it look and feel like new again? The trick is to introduce little changes here and there.

1. Paint the walls

It's one of the easiest and cheapest ways to give your bedroom a brand new look. Deciding on the paint colour also means figuring out the overall mood you'd like to create in this cosy space. Here's a suggestion: instill a sense of the extraordinary and paint one wall in a shade brighter or darker than the rest.

2. Change the lighting

Lighting is one element that instantly alters the overall mood and style of any space. Replace your dated pendant light with something more fab and

functional. You can also install a dimmer switch to provide mood lighting and ambience.

3. Hang black and white photographs

Shake things up a bit in a boring room and show off your shutterbug skills by mounting your black and white photographs on the wall. Not

only does it amp the overall look of the boudoir, it also shows off a lot of personality.

4. Dress up your window

When deciding on what type and design of curtain to hang, think of its purpose: is it to keep unwanted light out (or allow sunlight in), provide privacy, or create a romantic ambience? Your choice on the fabric, colour, and length will all depend on this.

5. Add occasional furniture

Make your bedroom extra inviting by furnishing it with other furniture pieces, like a plush bean bag or an armchair. Position it by the bay window to create an instant reading nook.

6. DIY your headboard

Add impact to your sleeping area by accentuating it with a headboard that you yourself made. Salvage an old item like a door and convert it into an eye-catching focal point in your bedroom.

For more stories visit www.cromly.com.



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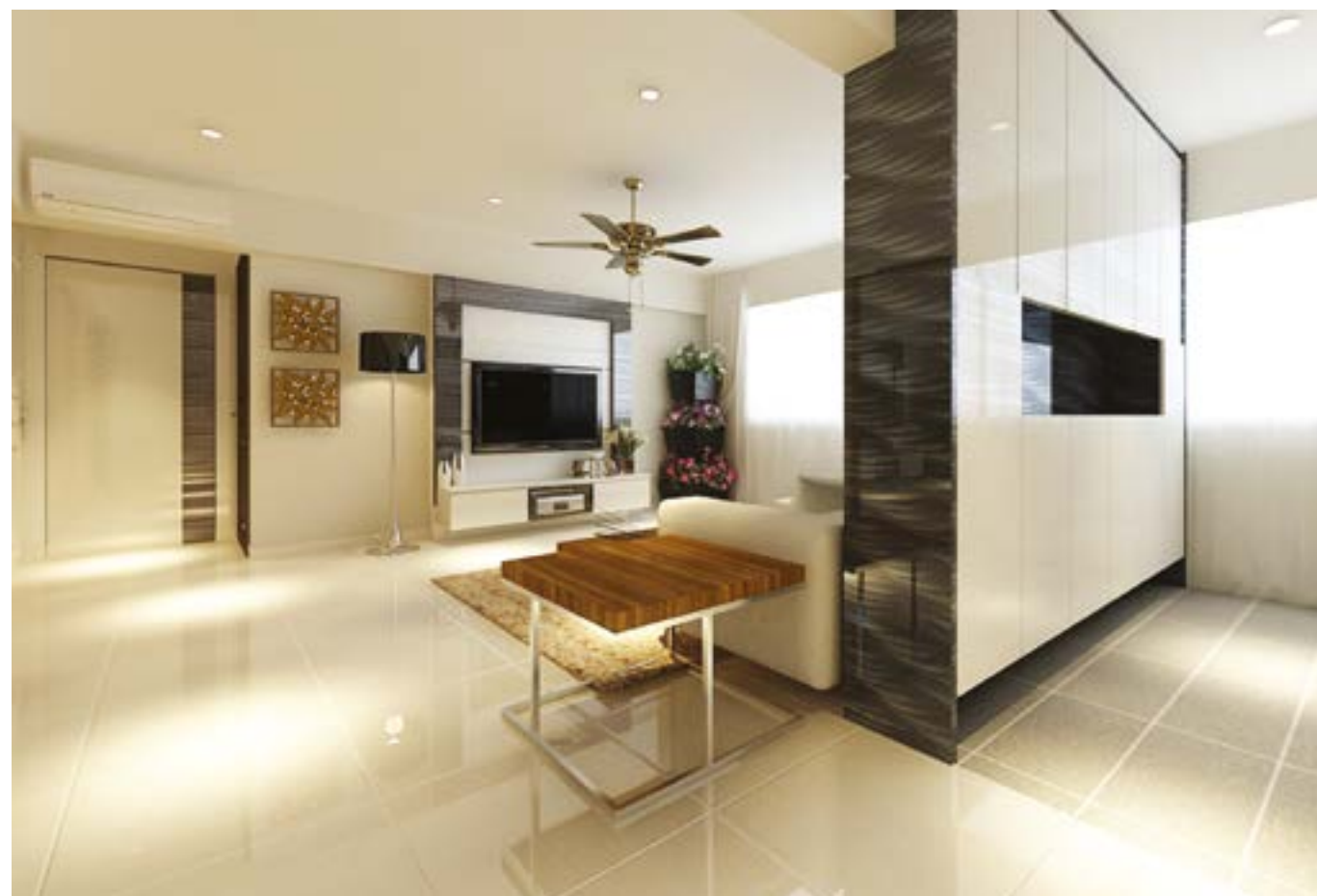
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Energy-Saving Tips For Your Cooling Appliance

By Samantha Echavez

KEEP CALM, STAY COOL, AND SAVE ON ELECTRICITY.



Fact: Air conditioner eats up your home's energy. About 40 percent of your electricity bill comes from these home-cooling devices. However, reducing your energy consumption isn't as easy as ditching your old air conditioner for an energy-efficient one, though using an air conditioner with an efficiency rating of A or 10 should be a good start. Here are tips on how you can lower your bills by as much as 50 percent:

Know what energy efficiency is about. Energy efficiency is not just a matter of choosing the right kind of appliance for your house. It's knowing how everything works and how effectively so. Check out appliances that no longer work, that need updating. Is the thermostat functioning or is it too old it's no longer capable of conserving energy? How is the insulation in the walls, floors, attics, and doors? Do your curtains provide enough coverage or does the sunlight enter your house aggressively it impedes the performance of your fan and air conditioner? Start analysing your answers and work from there.

Check the size of your air conditioner. Bigger air conditioner doesn't automatically mean better. In some cases, it ends up as the wrong choice because it performs less efficiently and uses up more energy than a properly sized unit. Hire a professional to find out if your air conditioner's size fits the specs of your room.

Learn how to care for your AC. Here's a couple of TLC tips: Instead of constantly switching your air conditioner on and off, let it run for a long period of time. To get your thermostat functioning properly, keep it away from lamps or TV sets. Turn off the air conditioner if the house will be unoccupied for a long period of time—look for a programmable thermostat, so it'll turn on and off automatically. Shade your air conditioning units, but don't block the airflow. We all love the cold, but don't reduce your thermostat setting to a colder temperature as soon as you turn on the air conditioner.

Choose electric fans, if possible. Fans are definitely more energy-efficient, as they maximise the cool air around the house. They're best to use at night when the outside air temperature is cooler than the one inside. Go for a ceiling fan as it spreads the cooled air more efficiently and effectively.

For more stories visit www.cromly.com.



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Open image of Door



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Various types of iron, wood, aluminium doors and windows.

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OPEN-SPACE LUXURY

This landed home designed by Unimax Creative features a tall, deep structure with an attention-grabbing façade and open-plan layouts within. The bedroom, entertainment center, study, tea table, kitchen, walk-in vanity, and bathroom all share the same floor, separated mostly by open-backed shelves, consoles, and area rugs. Reflective cabinet doors conceal kitchen appliances, resembling the black glass walls of the shower area.

The ground floor takes on a cooler appearance with its black, white, and gray palette. Sculptural items like curvy metal art, a figurine lamp, and even the suspended glass chandelier lend a sexy sophistication to the space.

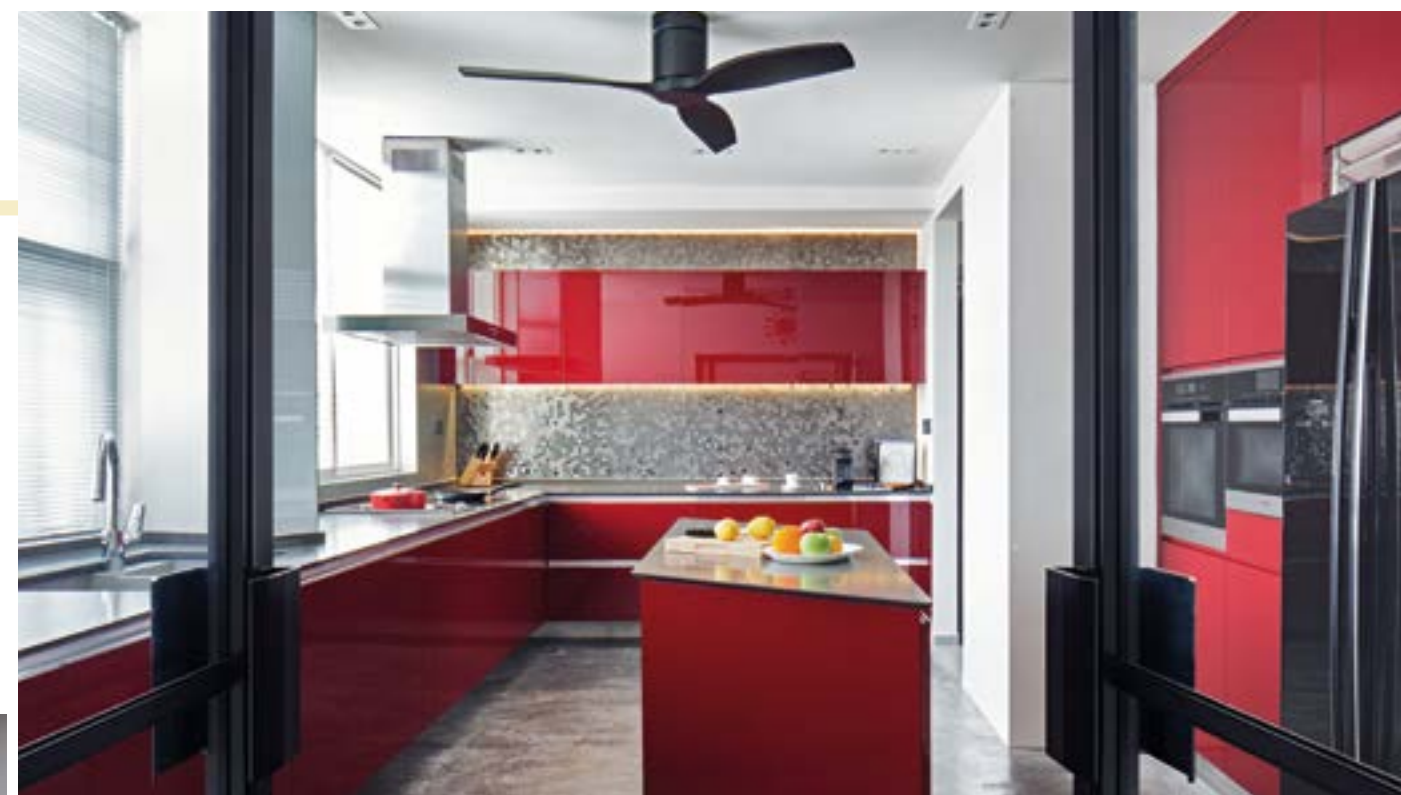


“Sculptural items like curvy metal art, a figurine lamp, and even the suspended glass chandelier lend a sexy sophistication to the space.”

CONTEMPORARY COMFORTS

Wide windows and spacious rooms allow for several casual furniture arrangements in this home. Closets built into one long wall maintain a clean and clutter-free environment, while lounge chairs and roomy couches invite one to relax and recharge.

A mosaic backsplash breaks up the glossy red cabinets in the kitchen, while black and steel appliances ground the overall look. In the bedrooms, metal rails are used in lieu of walls so that sunlight from the balcony may still reach the hallway. A cove in the wall adds visual interest with its mosaic tile surface lit up by recessed lights.



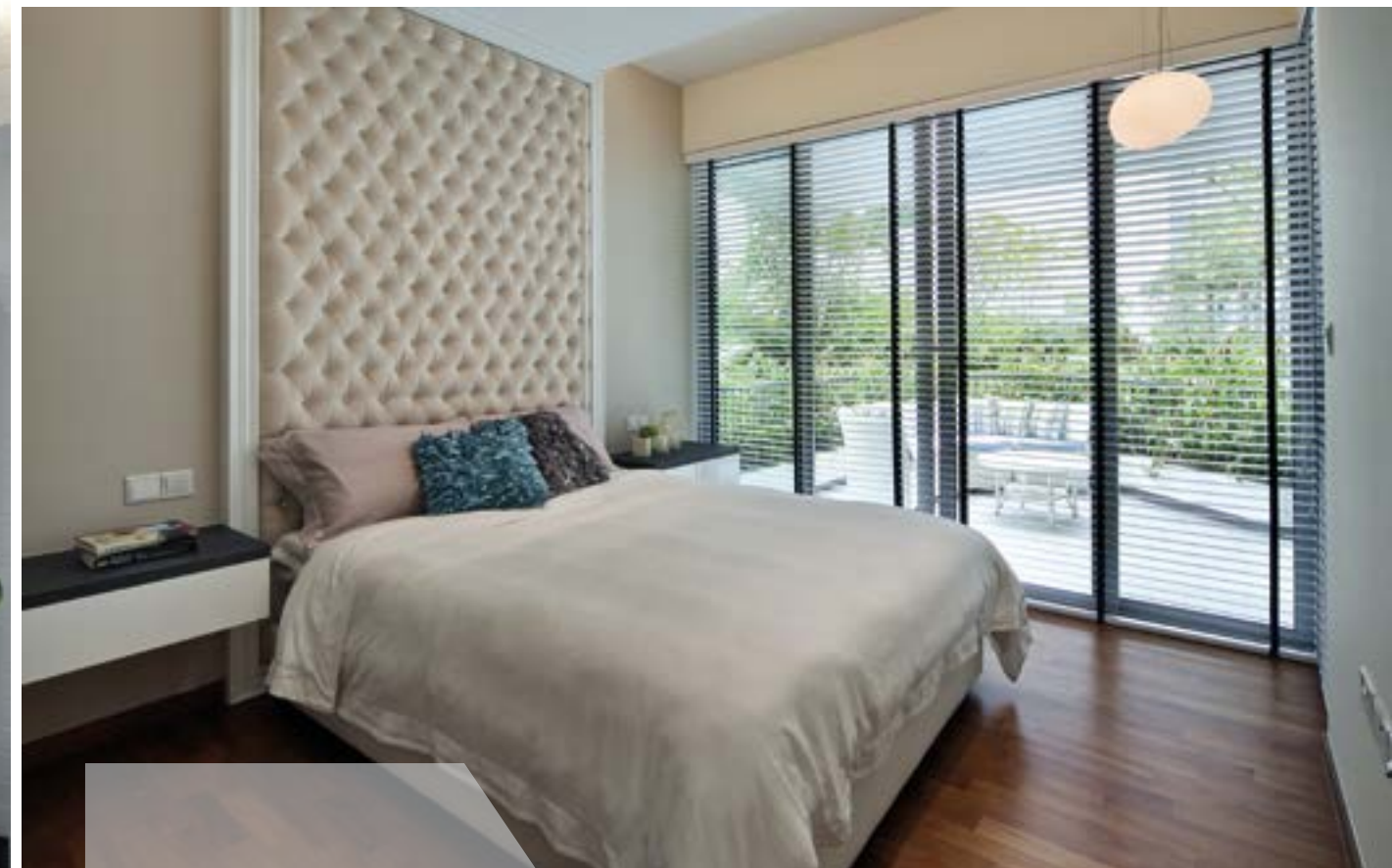
“Closets built into one long wall maintain a clean and clutter-free environment, while lounge chairs and roomy couches invite one to relax and recharge.”

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CONTEMPORARY IMMACULATE

A contemporary living space gets a chic upgrade with a clean white palette accented with a few black and gray elements. Straight lines dominate, but are tempered by curves—like the round pedestal dining table and its accompanying Panton S chairs. Grids highlight certain areas and furnishings, such as the black trim around the handle-less cabinets, a feature wall covered with white subway tiles, the niche shelves in the living area, as well as the ceiling fan with wooden blades. Framing adds an interesting visual element that keeps the all-white space from looking too boring. The light, airy feel is continued in the bedroom, where floating night tables flank the bed, and a tufted headboard built into the wall is again framed by white wood trim.



“A contemporary living space gets a chic upgrade with a clean white palette accented with a few black and gray elements.”

LIGHTS FANTASTIC

This home designed by One Design Werkz capitalises on amazing lighting to open up the space and make certain areas a spectacular focal point. In the bedroom, the bed literally takes centre stage—in lieu of a bed frame, it is mounted on a platform lit up from beneath, and flanked by impressive chandeliers. Another bedroom also makes use of cove lighting, under-bed lighting, and reflective surfaces to brighten up the space. Downstairs, furniture appear mostly in a state or repose, with lounge chairs and sofas suggesting one to kick up your feet and relax after a hard day's work.



***"This home designed by
One Design Werkz capitalises on
amazing lighting to open up
the space."***

WHITE IS MIGHT

An immaculate palette does wonders in making any home look bright, clean, and spacious. This condo by Wing Khiong Construction boasts of gleaming white floors and walls.

The living area is defined by wallpaper, a stone-clad entertainment system center, and a glamorous chandelier. Both the roomy sectional couch and area rug are in a moody gray colour, but are made more interesting with contrasting textures.

A galley kitchen also features pristine white cabinets punctuated here and there by stainless steel appliances and an old sewing machine base upcycled into a small dining table.



“An immaculate palette does wonders in making any home look bright, clean, and spacious.”

HOON HOE BROTHERS

Established in 2004, Eagle Design is specializing in interior designs and renovation works. It's subsidiary company, Hoon Hoe Bros Renovation & Trading, are both owned by Mr C H Tan who has enjoyed a solid reputation in the renovation trade for over 30 years.

Eagle Design maintains a strict policy that each and every project shall be rendered the highest level of service and strives to sustain its consistency. No project is too small or too big for us.

Eagle Design has her own in-house factory which allows for any customized furniture & carpentry works. At Eagle Design, you are presented with a wide variety of themes and concepts.



"Eagle Design maintains a strict policy that each and every project shall be rendered the highest level of service and strives to sustain its consistency."

HIP HANGOUT

Simple, clean, and unfussy—but with a whole lot of hip attitude.

This condo in Woodlands designed by Rezt n Relax Interior relies on walls painted in different hues within the dark grey palette, and a hip, let's-hang attitude.

Uncomplicated pieces in wood furnish the rooms, sticking to straightforward lines and angles. Still, a minimalist approach is used in the furniture, showcasing sleek and thin forms and shapes. A chalkboard wall is a cool feature, reminding one of favorite cafes and hotspots, and is a great activity for occupants, whether to write or draw on, or to read.



“Simple, clean, and unfussy—but with a whole lot of hip attitude.”

CLEAN SOPHISTICATION

Beautifully furnished in a sophisticated industrial style, this home designed by Sky Creation exudes plenty of style, warmth, and modern conveniences, despite its use of raw organic materials. Warm wood is used throughout via flooring, as well as some pieces of furniture.

Black lines emphasise horizontal space as well as ceiling height, and along with brick accented walls, add textural interest to the space. Iconic midcentury modern pieces of furniture provide a touch of vintage without looking too dated, and in fact give an overall effect of cool comfort and style.



“Black lines emphasise horizontal space as well as ceiling height, and along with brick accented walls, add textural interest to the space.”

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ASIAN CONTEMPORARY

Traditional Asian elements don't just belong in old homes or sacred sites. This Bayshore condo effectively fuses a quintessentially Oriental vibe with a clean, contemporary canvas. In the bedroom, an oil painting of blooms from a tree is reminiscent of sakura in the springtime, and at the same time adds an interesting textural component to one's sight line.

Chinese-style armchairs are used in a sitting area beside a tall, contemporary bookcase, which still mimics the chairs' reddish wood finish. Sheer curtains conceal without adding weight to the traditional furnishings.

A nook right in front of the balcony pays homage to the Prince of Enlightenment, simply adorned and allowing the home's occupant to pause before viewing the modern city outside the windows.



"Traditional Asian elements don't just belong in old homes or sacred sites. This Bayshore condo effectively fuses a quintessentially Oriental vibe with a clean, contemporary canvas."

CLEAN CONTEMPORARY

Condominium units often have limited space that require ingenious designing to create specific zones for various uses.

One way is by separating differently functioning areas with furniture, like a three-seater sofa, or a small entertainment bar with clean, fluid lines to delineate the dining space from the living area.

The problem with storage is resolved via built-in shelves and cabinets, as in the living room and bedroom, where cabinets by the window also double as additional seating. Vertical space is also utilised for functional décor, like a padded headboard to highlight the bed, or an interesting wall clock to fill up an accent wall leading to the kitchen.



“The problem with storage is resolved via built-in shelves and cabinets, as in the living room and bedroom.”

Your Step-by-Step Guide to Renovating Your Kitchen

UNDERTAKING A KITCHEN REDO BUT DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START? READ ON AS WE TAKE YOU THROUGH EACH STEP OF THIS SEEMINGLY CHALLENGING HOME PROJECT.

Planning a kitchen renovation (or any reno project for that matter) can be pretty overwhelming—there's so much to do, so much to consider, where oh where does one start?

Clare Steel, author of the book *Step-by-Step Home Design & Decorating*, says, "The sheer number of components involved in redesigning a kitchen means that it requires particularly careful scheduling. The majority of your time will probably be spent preparing for the kitchen to be fitted, but if you do this job properly, the rest of the refit should run smoothly."

Use our notes below as your guide to get you started.

Step 1: Work on your dream kitchen layout.

When fixing your kitchen, remember that it's not just about placing your appliances and furniture where you wish. You have to consider following a proper work triangle so as not to make working, cooking, or populating the kitchen so difficult. Take note as well what budget you're willing to work with; it's better to determine this as early as now, so that you'll have a guide on how much to spend and what specific elements you'll need to purchase.

Step 2: Think of how to light your kitchen.

Lighting is crucial in the kitchen, as it is a room that requires you to clearly see what you're doing—especially when you're slicing those vegetables.

Step 3: Consult a kitchen designer or contractor.

Once you've determined the above, you have a choice on whether to work directly with a contractor, or have a kitchen designer work with you. Going with the latter may be a pricier option, but well worth the investment as he or she will be able to advise you on what would work with your preferences. When hiring a contractor, you should also check that your choice contractor is a registered renovation contractor.

It's also important to note that at this point, you should already have an idea on what appliances will go into your kitchen, in case you plan on replacing your old ones. This will help the kitchen designer determine the size of cabinet units to place in the room.

If you choose to go with the reno on your own, be prepared to do most of the legwork. It may be more difficult, but still definitely fulfilling once you've seen the end result.



Step 4: Order your cabinet units.

When you've finalised the plans for your kitchen, have the cabinets manufactured either by your own fitter, or by the kitchen company's fitter. The latter, again, can be more costly, but also does away with the hassle of figuring out how to install certain units. Note that manufacturing may take a few weeks (to as much as a few months!), so consider this when planning your timeline.

Step 5: Start demolishing old cabinetry.

While your cabinet units are being made, take the time to start demolishing old cabinetry in your existing space. Before you start, however, make sure that you already have the proper demolishing and building permits you'll need to take on the reno project. You'll also need to follow specific safety guidelines and measures when tearing down built-in furniture or walls.

Step 6: Install electric cables and pipes.

Once your kitchen is bare, have a specialist begin on electrical wiring works and plumbing. Check if you've got enough electrical sockets (for kitchens, it's recommended to have sockets behind appliances and on worktop level).

Step 7: Lay the kitchen floor.

Now's the time to have your supplier or contractor lay the flooring material. Ceramic tiles are one of the most popular materials for kitchens, but you can also use natural stone, treated or engineered wood, marble, or moisture-resistant laminate, vinyl, or linoleum. If your floor is not level, it has to be levelled properly by an expert. Discuss your options with the supplier you're hiring for this specific job.

Step 8: Prep the walls.

Once the wiring and plumbing are done, cover up walls with plaster, and your preferred wall covering. A few coats of paint is recommended, or you can also choose to cover up with tile. Consider also your ceiling and other woodwork in the kitchen, such as window trim or moulding.



Step 9: Expect delivery of kitchen.

Around this time, check your schedule for when cabinet units will be delivered and installed. Follow up with your fitter on the delivery date, and when your kitchen arrives, free your schedule up to check if all units have indeed been manufactured to your specifications. If some parts have been damaged, ask your fitter to replace them immediately.

Step 10: Install cabinet units and countertop.

When you're sure that all the cabinetry and appliances have been delivered, have the fitter install the units and worktop first. This may take a few days to over a week.

Step 11: Fit the sink, faucet, and appliances.

After installing the cabinet units, you may have the fitter or contractor install the kitchen sink/s and taps. While appliances normally can be installed by homeowners, it is best to have a professional connect and check all appliances. Again, make sure that you are following safety guidelines and measures provided for by the government.

Step 12: Install the backsplash, if using.

Your kitchen is now looking almost done. If you plan on using backsplash for the wall behind your cooking hob or the sink, install it now. Measure them before fixing in place so that you can account for spaces like electrical sockets.

Step 13: Finish wiring, plumbing works, and install light fixtures.

If you haven't installed light fixtures yet, do so now. Your ceiling may need touch ups after this task, but it's nothing that a little paint won't solve.

Step 14: Take care of final details, like cabinet hardware and other decorative elements.

You can finally take care of the finishing touches at this point: cornices, moulding, knobs, handles, hinges, etc. Once those are done, you can also begin decorating your kitchen, and placing your pots, pans, utensils, plateware, glassware, and other tools inside the drawers and cabinets.



50 Tips and Tricks for Home Gardening

BRINGING NATURE INTO YOUR HOME ISN'T AS HARD AS YOU MIGHT THINK. WHETHER YOU'RE LOOKING TO GET STARTED, MAINTAIN, OR GROW YOUR GARDEN, HERE ARE 50 HANDY TIPS AND TRICKS TO HELP.



Getting Started

1. Decide the kind of home gardening you wish to venture into: herbs; vegetables, indoor plants, or even succulents.
2. If you feel intimidated, start with micro-greens—they can be grown and harvested in about two weeks.
3. Kitchen scraps can also be unexpected starting points: bok choy, leeks, onions, potatoes, even pineapples!
4. These vegetables only require water—no excuses not to start right now!
5. Don't limit your choices—even grapes can be grown in our tropical weather.
6. Check if your seeds are still good for planting by placing three to four seeds on a wet paper towel, kept in a warm spot in your house. If no sprouts appear within a couple of days, it may be time to look into getting new seeds.
7. Use egg shells as starter pots—halve them and poke a hole at the bottom before filling it up with soil and seeds. Place the eggshells in a carton for stability. Once your seedlings appear, you can place them into soil; the eggshells will decompose into extra nourishment.
8. Citrus fruits work well, too.
9. In case you have neither, newspaper can be folded origami-style for an bio-degradable alternative.

Potting And Soil

- When your plants are ready, you can move them into a more permanent home.
10. Commercial potting mix can be expensive. You can make your own—it also allows you to formulate and experiment with the nutrient content.
 11. Remember to keep the potting mix; you can still reuse it.
 12. Mix nutrient-rich coffee grounds to your potting soil or compost pile (perfect excuse to chat up your neighbourhood barista too).
 13. Not sure what kind of containers you should get? Here are 50 ideas.
 14. You can also check out these shops for some plant pot purchasing.
 15. If you have fallen in love with a particular pot that's too deep, place a layer of pinecones or wine corks to add some height without unnecessary weight.
 16. You can also hide a sponge below; it will collect excess water for the plant to continue drinking from lest you forget to water it.
 17. If your pot tends to leak too much soil, line the bottom with a coffee filter.
 18. You can put your glass cake dome to good use for your indoor terrariums. Covering your small potted plants helps speed their growth, too.

19. Add a splash of colour to your plant pots (you could even go Pollock-style).
20. Don't throw the egg carton away—it makes for a great accompaniment to egg-shelled succulents.
21. Want something fancier? Try mini copper planters.
22. You could also simply paint them to look like copper.
23. Have ties you were planning to throw? Don't.

Building Your Garden

24. Repurpose a wine holder as a handy (and pretty sleek) indoor herb garden.
25. Pallets make for quite the perfect garden. Find a good size and it's ready for immediate use.
26. Vertical gardens are a great solution for space—and you might already have the materials needed. Possibilities include shoe organisers and gutter pipes.
27. Not enough ideas? Find more vertical gardens you can have.
28. Vertical gardens are not limited to plants and herbs—with succulents, they also function as wall landscaping at home.



29. If you're feeling crafty, you can make this beautiful hanging garden, suitable for the indoors.
30. Reuse gallon jars for water cans that don't leak.
31. Keep your garden organised by marking your different plants on garden stones.
32. Store your gardening tools in a mixture of oil and sand (1:10 ratio). This helps to keep the metal conditioned and safe from rust. Martha Stewart said so.

Maintaining And Growing Your Garden

33. Share your love for smoothies by making your plants a banana peel shake. They'll love the phosphorus and potassium.
34. If the idea grosses you out, you can simply bury your banana peels under one inch of soil at the base of your plants.
35. Don't pour the water away after boiling or steaming vegetables—use it to water your vegetable plants. Yes, the circle of life.
36. Rice water is apparently another great fertiliser!
37. If you're going to be away from your plants for more than a week, use these tips to keep them watered.
38. If you're brave (or desperate) enough, diapers apparently work.
39. Keep garden pests at bay with beer poured into empty bottles buried in soil, with the rims at ground level. Slugs love them and will certainly drop in for a drink—but not back out.
40. Beer also does a dual job of promoting green growth, particularly for those brown spots on lawns.
41. If you're growing tomatoes, water them with a mixture of Epson salt and water (2 tablespoons to a gallon). This helps feed them extra magnesium and calcium, minerals the plants are more prone to deficiency in.
42. If the roots are growing out of the pot, it's time to repot your plants. Find out how in this step-by-step guide.
43. If your herbs are starting to look poorly, check out this herb guide if you have all the requirements ticked.
44. Time to harvest your herbs? Learn about the "One Third Rule" and the corresponding harvesting time periods for different herbs here.
45. It's also time to find out how you can use your fresh herbs for cooking. Herbs can also be used in teas.
46. Preserve extra herbs by freezing them with olive oil in ice trays, or use them as an excuse to make your homemade pesto and vinaigrettes.
47. Propagate your own succulents—they make for great gifts.
48. Document or share your gardening journey, or follow these local gardening blogs: The Curious Gardener, Dream and Grow It, and Nicky's Kitchen.
49. If you would like to keep more plants that your home can handle, there are vertical racks available for rental.
50. Bored of your current urban plants? There are many other ways to incorporate greenery into your home. Just check out Urban farmer Cynthia's green oasis in Bishan!

Dos and Don'ts of Budgeting For Your Renovation

By Samantha Echavez

HOW TO ALLOCATE YOUR BUDGET, WHAT TO SPLURGE AND SCRIMP ON, AND OTHER THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN BUDGETING FOR YOUR HOME RENO.

"Renovating is as rewarding as it is miserable," says Alex May, author of *Planning Your Perfect Home Renovation*. The miserable part she's referring to are the sky-high costs, of course.

This is where smart budgeting comes into play. Danielle Teo, interior designer from Rezt n Relax, shares important tips:

1. Do allocate your budget according to this guideline:

- 65 percent for construction and labor
- 15 percent for furniture
- 15 percent for equipment and appliances
- 3 percent for accessories and accents
- 2 percent for miscellaneous items

This means, if you have a budget of \$30,000 for a 3-bedroom resale flat, the allocation would be:

- \$19,500 for the actual renovation
- \$4,500 for furniture
- \$4,500 for appliances
- \$900 for accessories and accents
- \$600 for miscellaneous items

2. Do add 10 to 20 percent more to your original budget.

Unexpected problems may crop up when you knock down a wall, lift the floorboard, or remove a ceiling.



3. Do consider your interior style before setting your budget.

"Homeowners who are going for Victorian design will have to buffer 30 percent more compared to other concepts—the reason being the trimmings and beadings of the carpentries are essential in this type of design. Plus, they have to buy classic furniture pieces to go with the interior design. [As opposed to contemporary] going for a traditional style significantly increases the cost of renovation and also the budget for buying furniture," says Teo.

4. Do plan the carpentry works for your home, and establish your needs and wants. "Needs are the essential items, like kitchen cabinets, wardrobes, and shoe cabinets. If you're on a strict budget, focus on the needs first," adds Teo.

5. Don't splurge on items that are not necessary, like built-in display cabinets and extra storage cabinets.

6. Do splurge on a good quality kitchen top and good quality carpentry materials and hinges. "They will lengthen the shelf life of the carpentry, especially in the kitchen, which is the most commonly used room and is the frequent place for wear and tear in most Singaporeans' home."

7. Don't forget that the cost for wall hacking depends on the per foot run of the wall that's needed to be demolished.

8. Do consider keeping the flooring of your resale flat. "Ask your designer to check the condition of the existing flooring. If it's in good condition, you might not need to hack. This will save the cost tremendously," says Teo. "If the condition of the existing flooring is good, the homeowner can choose to overlay with high end resilient flooring or other alternatives in the market." Take it from Matthew Elton who decided to keep the flooring of his shophouse. If it's a new unit, overlaying is also a better option.

9. Don't compromise the quality of material. If it's dirt-cheap, chances are, it's not of good quality, and will just give you more problems in the future.

10. Do compare prices for interior designers, electrical appliances, and furniture.



Revamp Your Kitchen Easily By Michelle Ong

TRANSFORM THE LOOK OF YOUR KITCHEN IN FIVE EASY STEPS.

You don't have to tear down all your walls to create an inspiring kitchen. Include these small additions and tweaks to better your kitchen.

1. Add mirror

You don't usually see mirrors in kitchens, but you'd be surprised to find that it's really useful in spreading light around the kitchen. If you don't already have much natural sunlight to play with, including a mirror is even more important because it reflects whatever light you do have.

2. Removable wall decoration

You don't have to tear down any walls that you don't like. Wall decals are a quick and cheap way to add that "wow" factor to your kitchen and can cover any walls that you don't like.

3. Display your kitchenware

If those chic, natural-looking floating open shelvings are what you wish to have, you can fake the look by taking a few down from your upper cabinets to show off your neatly organised kitchenware. You can

also add hooks under your cabinets to display your cup collection or colourful kitchen tools. Another way to decorate your walls is to add textiles like aprons and towels.

4. Include additional storage

A messy kitchen not only makes an ugly kitchen—it makes for a non-functioning kitchen. Include extra storage like knife blocks, pot holders, and add drawers to make your kitchen life easier when it comes to organising. Other forms of storage include carts, prepping foldable tables, and racks.

5. Remove unnecessary hardware

Boring knobs and pulls can drag the look of your kitchen. Considering updating your cabinets with a modern look by exchanging your old knobs and pulls with chic-looking metal handles or simply take them off to get a brand new kitchen look!

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Bed-ucation: 13 Bed Styles You Can Choose From

By Jerni Camposano

YOU NEED NOT LOSE SLEEP OVER WHICH BED STYLE YOU SHOULD GO FOR. WE DID ALL THE RESEARCHING FOR YOU.

We totally understand. Getting out of bed is extra hard in the morning, as we want to spend a few more minutes under the sheets. If we have a choice, we surely would love the idea of just lying in bed the whole day without worrying how many times we have to hit that snooze button.

Our love affair with our bed starts from the moment we choose its design. So it is very, very important that you know the different options available for you. You don't have to settle for the traditional bed as there are many other options. Read on.

Cantilevered Bed

Floating off the wall, a cantilevered bed leaves the space below it completely open. The absence of support legs underneath it allows for a clutter-free area. Also called a floating bed, it maximises floor space in small rooms. It is often found in modern, minimalist bedrooms.

Poster Bed

With four posts on all corners, this type of bed gives the room a dramatic and romantic ambience. It provides an opulent and elegant touch to an otherwise boring space. But the four-poster bed does not

suit all types of rooms. For one, its bulky features can overwhelm a small sleeping area.

Canopy Bed

A canopy bed takes the drama and romance a notch higher, thanks to the swirl of fabric that drapes from the posts of the bed. This type of bed is also a frequently-requested style from young girls because of its whimsical, fairy-tale look.

Floor Bed

Say goodbye to bed frames with a floor bed that lets you go back to the basics. Get rid of clutter and inessential stuff by opting for this type of bed, which is also an easy way to decorate a simple, minimalist room.

Bunk Bed

Bunk beds are probably one of the most successful space-saving solutions created. It occupies the same area of a single bed but can accommodate more than one person. This is usually found in homes where a number of kids have to share a bedroom. And yes, these are popular in dormitories and boarding houses.



Trundle Bed

Another trick to double your bedroom's sleeping capacity is to go for a trundle bed. It is a smaller sized bed placed underneath a larger, traditional bed, and which can be pulled or wheeled out. When you have a guest, simply pull out the trundle. When not in use, just push it under the bed and you can use the space for other needs.

Platform Bed

The base of a platform bed is a solid frame consisting of wooden slats or latticed structure. This low-profile bed does not take up a lot of space so it is perfect for rooms that have limitations in square foot. It is also affordable but does not mean that it cannot be stylish. It just takes a little creativity to up the design ante of your platform bed.

Futon Bed

Futon is a padded mattress that originated in Japan. Versatile and functional, a futon bed can both serve as sofa and bed. It is also easy to store as you can just fold it away if you need to use the space it occupies.

Captain's Bed

Create more room without losing valuable storage by choosing a Captain's bed. It combines a bed and a dresser so there is additional underbed storage to help you organise your stuff. Built-in drawers and/or shelves allow for a clutter-free look for your bedroom.

Daybed

Functioning both as a seating unit and a sleeping space, daybeds are truly a worthy purchase. During the day when you just want to lounge around, the daybed can be your buddy. When you want to call it a night, the daybed awaits you and is ready to take you to dreamland.

Sleigh Bed

A sleigh bed makes a bold style statement. Resembling a classic sled, the sleigh bed features a headboard and a footboard. It is larger than the average bed so do check your floor area before deciding to buy this type of bed.

Murphy Bed

The Murphy bed, named after its founder William L. Murphy, was born out of a need for more space in a small apartment. Also known as wall bed, pull-down bed, or fold-down bed, the Murphy bed is specially designed to be tucked away into a closet or cabinet when not in use.

Loft Bed

The loft bed looks like a bunk bed, except that it is raised slightly higher to create more space underneath. Some loft beds have a second bed, desk, play area, or closet underneath. Others even have a kitchen and dining area below the sleeping area.

HDB Gardening Guide: Plants to Grow Indoors and Outdoors

By Jerni Camposano

SO YOU’VE DECIDED TO GROW YOUR GARDEN. NOW, WHAT TO PLANT? WE HAVE A LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS, AND TIPS ON HOW TO CARE FOR THEM.



Air Plant



Sansevieria (Mother-in-law's tongue)



Fittonia



Pilea



Areca Palm

With the growing interest in eating homegrown natural food, there is an increased awareness of vertical gardening and farming in HDB in recent years. For Cynthea Lam of Super Farmers, she became involved with urban planting because she loves experimenting with herbs and vegetables that she can eat and use when she cooks for her family.

Although there is a challenge in the quest for a good gardening spot in most Singaporean homes, Cynthea advises to inject a subtle accent of greenery into your space. Plants, after all, improve air quality and add charm to your abode.

Cromly chats with Cynthea to give homeowners recommendations on which plants to have indoors and which ones to grow by their corridor.

5 Plants for Indoor Garden

1. Air Plants
2. Fittonia
3. Pilea
4. Sansevieria (Mother-in-law's tongue)
5. Areca Palm

These plants, especially Sansevieria and Areca Palm, have properties that help filter the air in the household by removing the harmful oxides and formaldehyde present in the air we breathe. Make sure you have these air-purifying plants around when you have projects like installing carpets or painting walls as these activities release chemicals that pollute indoor air.

Basic Care Techniques

Air plants can survive on the moisture in the air. However, they would still require regular misting **once or twice a week**. Occasionally, give your air plants a bath by dipping them in water before slowly picking them up to dry.

If air plants live in an air-conditioned environment, they would need to be soaked in water for **two hours every two weeks**.

For the rest of the plants on the list, they only require basic TLC. Bring them closer to the window every now and then for some filtered sunlight and water them at least three times a week sparingly.



Mint Plant



Basil Plant



Thyme Plant



Rosemary Plant



Oregano Plant

5 Plants for Outdoor Garden

1. Mint
2. Basil
3. Rosemary
4. Oregano
5. Thyme

"For this list, I'm picking herbs for outdoors because I'm a farmer!" gushes Cynthea. "As with all herbs, sun is necessary especially for rosemary that thrives in full sun."

Another perk of growing these herbs right in your own residence is being able to use them when preparing food. After all, food is always better when properly seasoned with herbs and spices.

Growing plants outdoors, however, will require more time and effort for homeowners. Although there is a wide selection of plants you can have in your outdoor garden, you also have to remember that there is a limited square footage by your corridor, and you don't want to invade your neighbour's space.

Basic Care Techniques

All these plants are easy to care for as long as the watering is done thoroughly.

At least once a day, water the plant until it gushes out of its pot (and into the ground, or else, onto catchment trays below) to ensure that all parts—most especially the roots—have received hydration.

Once every 2 weeks, fertilise with natural fertilisers like worm castings. Be careful though not to overdo as you don't want the roots to burn. Place fertiliser on the top of the soil, and through constant watering, the roots will receive the required nutrients in right amounts. **Important reminder: Never stir the fertilisers into the soil!**

The best fertiliser for your house plants? Water from your fish tank so do not throw the water right away!

"All my plants that have been watered using fish pond/tank water have thrived much better than those who only received normal tap water. And if you can, always leave the tap water out in a pail for 24 hours before using it to allow the harmful chlorine, fluorine, and chloramine to first dissipate before using it," suggests Cynthea.

Pinching the herbs also helps them grow bushier and taller as it allows them to divide and produce even more leaves. Pinch from the top and pinch off some big, mature leaves but leave some big leaves intact as they act as solar panels that capture sunlight for photosynthesis.

"Pinching is perfect because we typically don't need too much of herbs when we cook," adds Cynthea.

Make Your Home Look Happy

By Samantha Echavez

SPRUCE UP YOUR HOME AND WATCH YOUR HAPPINESS LEVEL SHOOT UP.



These tiny tweaks offer big-time, mood-boosting rewards. Turn your place into a liveable wonderland with these tips:

Colour me happy. Don't be afraid of bright colours. Paint your bedroom wall red or the entire room yellow... or if you can't make that commitment yet, try using a bright and bold colour as an accent. "Your environment is essential to your mental balance," says Leatrice Eiseman, author of *Colors for Your Every Mood: Discover Your True Decorating Colors*. "There is no place where the influence of color is felt more keenly than in the place you call home. The right color and color combinations will stimulate and relax your senses, release happy memories, reflect how you and your family feel about each room, and how you relate to each other there."

Let the sunshine in. We love shutting the curtains and hibernating in our dimly lit room, but this time, part them open and welcome the sunlight with open arms. Rethink your window treatments and ditch the heavy drapery. Build a sunroom. And if you want to bathe yourself in bright and beautiful natural light the entire day, install a skylight.

Grow a green thumb. You will find yourself smiling the minute you step out of the house and into your own garden. There is nothing quite like seeing an assortment of plants, flowers, butterflies, and other vividly radiant insects right at your own backyard. Gardening will not only dress up your home instantly—it will also help you burn calories and reduce your stress levels.

Repeat after me: "From now on, I will live clutter-free." For once and for all, kick clutter away from your life. It will surely turn your house into a breathable and vibrant space. "A messy and disorganised house is not inviting; it is not a place for you to relax and rejuvenate. Instead, it demands that you spend time and energy on trying to make some sort of improvement," says Sandra Felton, co-author of *5 Days to a Clutter-Free House: Quick, Easy Ways to Clear Up Your Space*. "You deserve better than that. You can have a home that refreshes and inspires you."

Display artworks you love. It's no Monet, but take pride in hanging that funky piece of artwork you bought from a side street. Look for perky photos and paintings you can hang on your wall.

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Jazz Up Small Spaces in 12 Easy Ways

By Samantha Echavez

CHECK OUT THESE SPACE-SAVING SOLUTIONS.

No matter how cosy and intimate, small apartments frustrate us at times. There are just so many brilliant decorating ideas we want to implement but we can't because, well, there is no space. Good thing, interior designers and experts have been scouring for ways to maximise space-challenged homes. Here are some of them:

Pick a pattern. "Boost the wow factor of a diminutive space by covering a focal-point wall with tone-on-tone wallpaper. To avoid nail holes in the paper, hang art with removable mounting strips," says Samantha Thorpe, editor of *100 Decorator Ideas: Big Style for Small Rooms*.

Neutral furnishings + colourful accessories = winning combo. Pieces of furniture and walls in neutral colours reflect light, making a small space appear bigger. Keep the look from going stale by adding colourful accessories, like a brightly painted sofa or area rug in wild prints.

Keep the ceiling classy. The easiest way to glam up your small living room? Add a glitzy chandelier. "This antique crystal fixture, which is large in proportion to the space it illuminates, makes a dramatic statement," says Thorpe.

Show some curves. Says Thorpe, "Adding round elements to an angular room creates eye-pleasing flow." Balance the straight lines of your sofa and shelves with an oversize ottoman or round coffee table.

Go flexible. "For flexibility, skip a traditional rectangular coffee table in favor of smaller, portable pieces," says Thorpe. Instead of getting the

usual long table, look for square side tables that can sit together or be moved around.

Yes to monochromatic colour scheme. "Sticking with a monochromatic colour scheme is an easy way for the colour shy to reduce visual clutter and create a pulled-together look," says Thorpe.

Scale, scale, scale. If you chunk too many small pieces in your room, your room will feel like it's closing in on you. "A few oversize furnishings can make a small space appear larger," says Thorpe. Try this for your living room: Stick to two large pieces of furniture, like a sofa and a chaise lounge.

Forget not the windows. "To add height and drama while capitalising on natural light, hang drapes high and wide around windows—try about three inches below the ceiling or crown moulding. Amplify the illusion of a tall window by hanging a blind right under the curtain rod," advises Thorpe.

Look for double-purpose furnishings. Display a coffee table or ottoman that also serves as a storage unit. Check out our story on multi-purpose furniture here.

Vertical stripe does it. Says Thorpe: "Stretch the visual height of a room with vertical stripes."

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Living Room Checklist

By Samantha Echavez

GIVE YOUR ENTIRE HOME AN INSTANT LIFT BY MAKING YOUR LIVING ROOM SHINE.



Give your entire home an instant lift by making your living room shine. The living room, by default, is the centrepiece of every home. This is where you receive guests, watch television, and convene with family for post-dinner gabfests.

Turning your living room into a lovelier space entails discarding broken furniture and outdated accessories, adding sparkly and statement-making pieces—basically making sure your space meet this checklist of essentials:

1. Comfy and cosy sofa

It's the star, the focal point, the main attraction of any living room, so you could say that yes, this is non-negotiable. Look for a sofa that meets your lifestyle needs: Will you use it sparingly, i.e., will it be only reserved for receiving guests? Or will the entire family converge here night after night? Whatever purpose it may serve, make sure the sofa you get comes in high-quality and durable fabrics and classic and clean colours.

2. Coffee table

After scoring the sofa, look for a coffee table that complements it, and is functional and stylish. You can have a round coffee table, a classic glass table top, or a softer and puffy ottoman. Clutter is something we don't like in any living room so use this coffee table to neatly display a couple of coffee table books, vase, or magazines.

3. Cabinet

Television, photo frames, hardbound books, travel curios, Chinese porcelain ornaments...how will they exactly fit inside your living room?

Plan your living room storage: open shelves for your cherished possessions, media cabinet for your television and other electronics, and sideboards to keep clutter away.

4. Good lighting

Because the living room is an intimate space, lighting has to be inviting and at the same time functional. Create layers of light, with each layer serving its own purpose: task lights for reading, ambient lights to invoke a mood, accent lights to emphasise other features in your living room. Want a grand statement-making space? Throw in a classic chandelier.

5. Rug

An area rug creates a bold stylish statement in any living room. Before selecting one, consider the traffic in your living room and your lifestyle. If kids and pets are around, steer clear from high-priced ones and choose one with darker colours and patterns. No kids and pets? Then, splurge away!

6. Accents and Accessories

Display treasured home accessories, artifacts, and objet d'arts in your living room—they make your space more intimate and personal. Whether it is a prized artwork or a beautiful Oriental vase, these accents will provide a luxurious finishing touch to your living room.

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12 Clever Ways You Can Use Your Attic

By Jerni Camposano

TURN YOUR ATTIC INTO A PAGE FROM A DESIGNER'S PORTFOLIO WITH THESE INSPIRATIONAL IDEAS.



The attic is often relegated as a space to hide clutter because of its away-from-it-all feature. But it is a highly functional space, not to mention very cosy. Architectural details such as exposed beams and beadboard ceilings are also easily highlighted if the attic is converted into a completely liveable space. Show off the beauty of your attic by taking stock of these design ideas, and translating them into your own almost-rooftop space.

Bedroom

Whether it's for the kids or your guests, the attic is a great place to convert into a bedroom. Dormer windows and slanted ceilings create a cosy, intimate ambience.

Living room with loft

If you've got an attic with a high ceiling, then it's possible to squeeze in two rooms in one space: a living room and a loft-type bedroom. The example here makes use of a log-cabin theme; exposed beams, tree-trunk posts, and hanging lamps all make the attic feel like a great escape into the mountains.

Library/Reading room

If you need peace and quiet while poring over a favourite book, the attic is a great place to hide. A skylight lets plenty of sunlight in, not to mention afford you an awesome view.

Entertainment room

Turn the attic into an entertainment room where the family can bond over movies and popcorn. With furniture laid out theatre-style, it'll really feel like you have your own private cinema.

Game room

A pool table in this tiny space? You betcha. It'll feel like your own personal billiards bar.

Bathroom

Check with a contractor on how you can install plumbing into your attic space, so you can have your own private, spa-like bath.

Art room

Because it is so far from your home's central spaces, the attic is also the best place to get your creative juices flowing.

Craft room

...Or why not convert it into your crafts room, so you have an area to create your next DIY masterpiece, and the space to store all your crafty tools and equipment?

Gym room

Too tired after a day's work but still need to hit the gym? Just go up the attic and sweat it all out.

Playroom

As the kids grow older, more and more toys are added into their collection. There's no way you can fit all their toys in their bedrooms, so convert the upstairs space into their very own playland.

Home office

An attic is also that extra room you just needed to house your home office in.

Walk-in closet

If you've ever dreamed of having your own walk-in closet but don't have enough space in your master bedroom, then look no further. The attic could very well be the spot where you can have the walk-in dressing room of your dreams.

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Itty Bitty Ways to Update Your Home Without Blowing Your Budget

By Camille Besinga

JONESING FOR A SPACE UPGRADE, BUT DON'T FEEL LIKE SHELLING OUT A LOT OF \$\$\$ TO DO IT? THESE EASY, QUICK FIXES WILL DO THE TRICK.

1. Change out the throw pillows.

Throw pillows are those tiny details that make a big impact on a particular space, especially if the colour or print of the throw pillow cases are bold and bright.

2. Place a mirror in a light-deprived space to bounce off any available light.

Narrow spaces and rooms with few or no windows need a reflective surface so that whatever light becomes available may bounce off it and are distributed throughout the room.

3. Paint kitchen cabinets.

What a big difference paint makes to your space. This trick is not just limited to kitchen cabinets; painting an accent wall in a living

room or bedroom, for example, will completely reinvigorate a blah space.

4. Rearrange furniture.

Switching up the furnishings and changing up the room layout does wonders in transforming the way a room looks.

5. Replace generic light fixtures with something more eye-catching.

Light fixtures are generally easy to remove and replace, so pick a lamp set that goes well with the look or style of your room, instead of the generic bulb that came with the space, and instantly up the style ante.

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Design Ideas That Will Make You Want to Start Building A Home Gym

By Samantha Echavez

THE BRAND NEW YEAR IS THE PERFECT EXCUSE TO BEGIN DESIGNING YOUR VERY OWN GYM AT HOME. HERE'S TO THE ROAD TO HEALTH AND FITNESS!



Healthier habits usually occupy a high spot in anyone's New Year's resolutions. Eating right, losing weight, getting fit—just some of the items listed down year in, year out.

Don't set yourself up for failure this year. Get in shape right in your own space by (finally) setting up a dedicated room for fitness. At least, you never have to leave home to break a sweat.

Using the ideas below, start building the home gym of your dreams.

1. Glass floor-to-ceiling windows create a relaxing atmosphere by allowing you to enjoy the scenery while you sweat it out.
2. A home gym is already a lavish and luxurious addition to any pad. Imagine adding a dipping pool in it and all we can just say is "Wow!"
3. Got a small space? No problem! Get the many benefits of working out even with square footage limitations. In fact, experts suggest you start small with your home gym and purchase equipment that will help you achieve your fitness goal at the moment.
4. Deciding on which room to transform into a fitness haven? Try spaces that are usually unused and disregarded: the basement and the attic. They provide a peaceful and quiet retreat for those who take their exercise seriously.
5. Plants help boost oxygen levels and clean indoor air. So their presence is most welcome in your home gym, where a lot of strenuous activities take place. Here are some plants you can bring in to any indoor space as they grow with or without much sunlight.
6. Get buff in a no-fuss and minimalist ambience. Embrace the industrial chic look in your home gym. Not only is this theme cost-saving, it is also easy to maintain.
7. If exercising outdoors is your cup of tea, then move the gym equipment to the patio or balcony and have a grand time breaking a sweat.
8. Who says you can't prettify this room in the house? Fitness freaks spend considerable hours in this space so beautiful decors and furnishings will surely be the extra boost to stay motivated. Elegant chandelier and curtains brighten up this room.
9. Transform your home gym from boring to breathtaking by adding a splash of colours to its interior. This room is playful and fun but still very conducive for getting your workout groove on.
10. The home gym is there for a purpose. Whether you're shedding off some pounds, toning your muscles, or mastering your yoga poses, it's always good that you have a view of the most important thing in the mirror: yourself. This way, you can also track your progress and know how much more work is to be done.
11. Even with all the equipment and training machines set up in your home gym, you will always need motivation to keep you going. An inspirational wall mural will do the trick.

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6 Ways To Use Red In Your Space

By Samantha Echavez

READY FOR RED? WORK THIS BOLD AND BRIGHT COLOUR INTO YOUR HOME.



You like playing safe, especially when it comes to colours. Why would you splash your walls with magenta paint when you could settle for the calm, fool-proof, and trusty whites? However, injecting red into your living room, dining room, or boudoir brings in a number of aesthetic advantages. It is a great colour choice when your room is devoid of interesting architectural details. It's eye-catching, and it clues your guests in on your fiery (read: non-boring) personality.

"Sometimes just accenting a room with red is enough to change the spirit," says Anna Kasabian, author of *The New Home Color Book: Decorate with Color Like a Professional Designer*. "Some people like red but tend to shy away from it in their decor because it's a big color and makes what they feel is too strong a statement. If you'd like to use red but don't want to overwhelm your space with it, consider introducing it in a way that will bring out the qualities you admire. Take a step back and think about how you can take the color and gently weave it into your rooms."

"The great thing about red is that its range is very dramatic, which gives you many opportunities to use it in different rooms and create distinctly different moods. Deep, dark, rusty red can create the perfect warmth for a library or establish an elegant mood in a dining room. On the other end of the red spectrum, the palest of pinks combined with moss green and yellow can be the perfect backdrop for an ultra-feminine dressing room," adds Kasabian.

Ask yourself what kind of red you want for your space—red is very easy

to tone down or tone up anyway. Here are some tips on how to use this brazen hue:

Start with upholstery. For a quick touch of red, get a red velvet chair or an entire red couch. "Choose a pattern with other colors, and work off that as your palette," Kasabian advises.

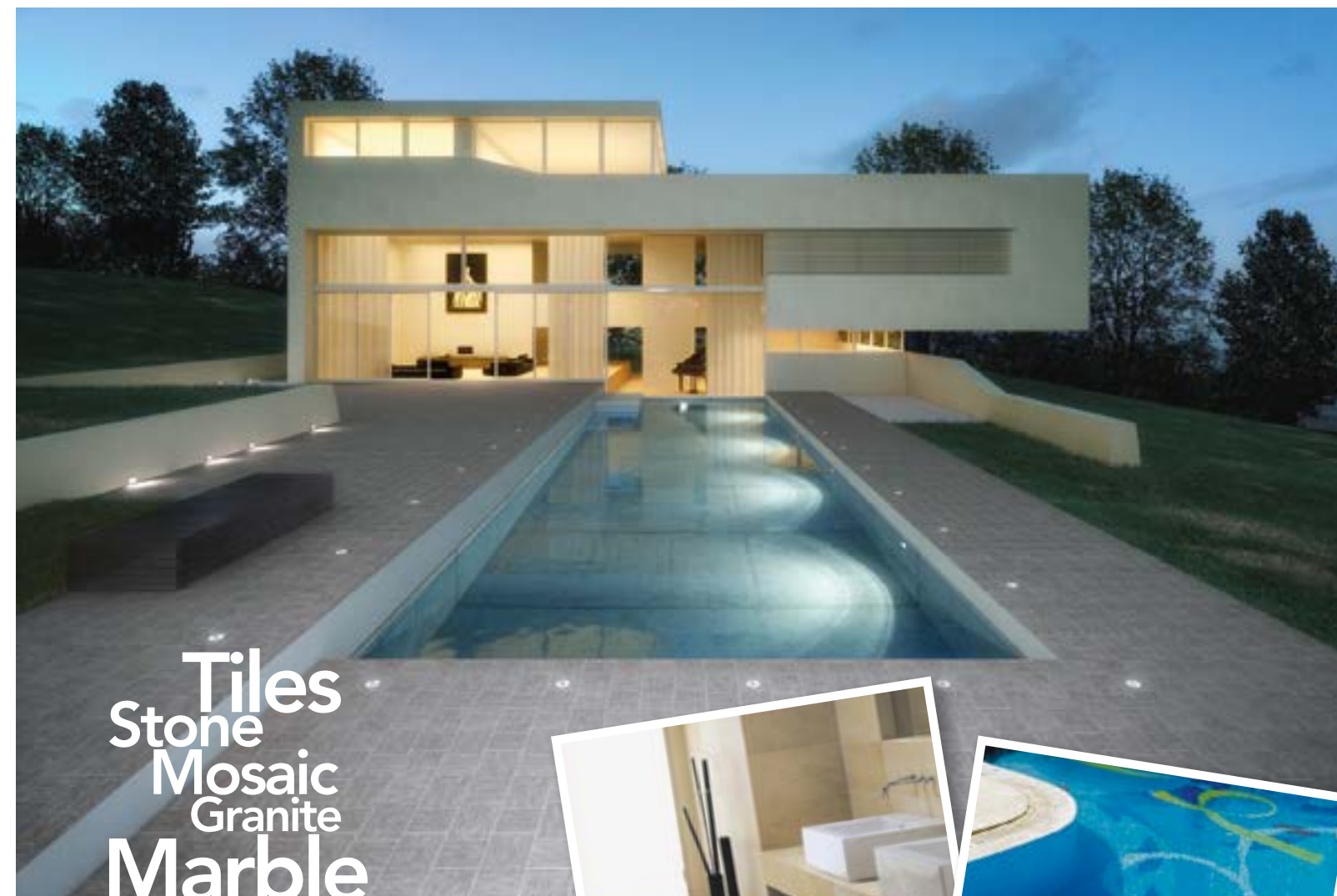
Take it to the wall. "As an accent, choose one red for one wall and create a scene that shows off an elegant table and glass vase," Kasabian says. Here's a challenge: Paint an entire room fire engine red and balance the boldness with furnishings in dark blues and crisp whites. Dramatise window treatments. "Drama comes through loud and clear if you paint your walls linen white and frame your windows in an apple red. Accessorize with rugs that blend rich red tones with warm hues or cool, depending on the mood you want," Kasabian continues.

Jazz up a room with paintings in red. If you can't go all out with red just yet, display artworks that have red as the main colour.

Make your floors fancy. "Work with red only in your rugs and build a palette from the ground up. The warmth and drama can build up and around the room."

Try these colour combinations. Pair red with green, or with blue.

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Tiles
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Mosaic
Granite
Marble
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Project



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Quick Bathroom Makeovers

By Michelle Ong

CHANGE UP YOUR BATHROOM WITH THESE SIMPLE TIPS.

Bold tile floors, new fixtures, luxury cabinets, and claw foot tubs are the things dream bedrooms are made of. Unfortunately, not all of that is accessible to all of us. There are, however, some creative (and simple!) things you can do to make your bathroom extra special.

1. Get creative with fixtures

An easy way to give your fixtures an immediate upgrade is to give it a shine and buff so that it looks as good as new. Otherwise, add accessories with beautiful metallic finishes to add that special touch to your space.

2. Dramatise your walls

To give your space that extra drama, simply play around with colourful accessories like that bold shower curtain or add beautiful art to your walls. Don't just stop at one—create colourful collages on your walls to give it extra impact.

3. No-fuss upgrade for your walls

You don't have to disguise your wall even if it comes with tiles you don't like. You can try softening it with other colours. For example, if you have pink tiles you really don't like, you can try painting your walls with a light warm grey. You can also add mirrors, lamps, and accessories with soft curves to give it a gentle look.

4. Brighten a bathroom that's too dark

The easiest way to liven up things is to put in extra light—include plenty of candles and lamps into your space. You can also try giving your bathroom some life by adding some greenery to it. Don't worry, we're not talking about nightmare moss—try shade-loving air plants that don't require much maintenance.

5. Work on the small details

Sometimes, the simplest solution to recreating your space is not to tear the whole thing down but to clean up the small details that may be making your bathroom dirtier or older-looking than it actually is. Replace that old-looking mat or shower curtain to give your room an instant upgrade.

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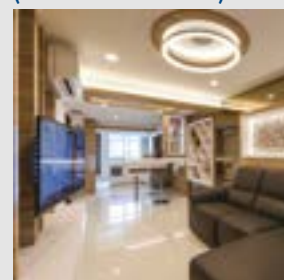


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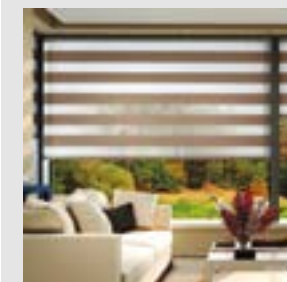
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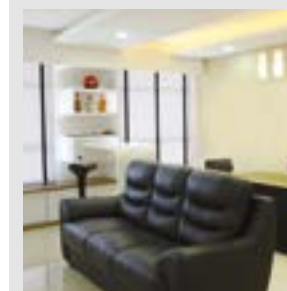


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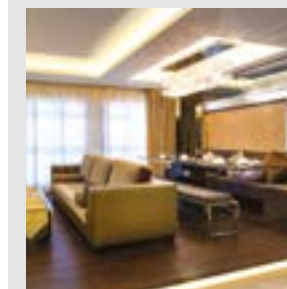
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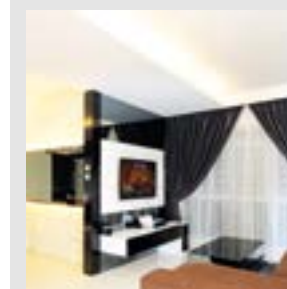


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