



ULTIMATE GUIDE ON HOME IMPROVEMENT TIPS TO START THE NEW YEAR RIGHT



ABSTRACT

Starting the new year with a fresh and improved home sets the tone for productivity, comfort, and well-being. This ultimate guide provides essential home improvement tips to enhance functionality, aesthetics, and energy efficiency. From simple DIY upgrades to cost-effective renovations, these strategies will help homeowners create a more organized, stylish, and comfortable living space in 2024.

INTRODUCTION

The start of a new year is the perfect time to refresh and revitalize your living space. Home improvement projects don't have to be overwhelming or expensive—small changes can make a big difference. Whether you're looking to upgrade your kitchen, enhance your home's energy efficiency, or simply declutter and reorganize, this guide offers practical tips to help you start the year with a home that feels brand new.

I. 10 Practical New Year's Resolutions For A Healthier, Happier Life

New Year is the perfect opportunity to start a new chapter in your life. It's a new adventure, a new beginning, a fresh canvas to paint your life on.

Make the coming year your best one yet with these ten intentional new year's resolutions that are guaranteed to boost your happiness and wellbeing:

#1 Practice focused breathing



"Learning how to control your breathing is one of the most powerful and freeing neurohacks for managing all kinds of feelings and emotions," says Stuart Sandeman, transformational breath coach and founder of Breathpod. "There are several thousands of neurons within the brainstem that are in charge of auto-generating different types of breath—regular, excited, sighing, gasping, etc. These neurons also monitor the signal they receive back from the breathing pattern and relay the message accordingly to the Locus Coeruleus, a part of the brainstem which then triggers a physiological response," explains the breath coach. In layman's terms, your state of mind and emotions are closely connected to how you are breathing. "When you feel stressed, anxious or afraid, your breath becomes short and shallow which activates your sympathetic nervous system—commonly referred to as the fight or flight response. When relaxed and calm, the breath is slow and full and your parasympathetic nervous system is engaged, creating a rest and digest response," tells Sandeman. "By practicing slow, controlled, focused breathing you can send a signal of calm and relaxation to the mind and change the way you feel at any moment," he notes. Conscious breathing can also boost your energy levels, focus and creativity at work and everyday life. Moreover, "harnessing the breath can help unlock tension, alleviate unwanted feelings, tackle unresolved emotions and release physical, mental and emotional blocks," adds the breath-work expert. Here are a couple of easy-to-do conscious breathing exercises you can do anywhere, anytime:

#2 Read more books



Getty

There's a reason why highly successful people like Bill Gates, Barack Obama and Oprah Winfrey invest their time in reading books. They not only impart knowledge but also boost your productivity, sharpen your focus and memory, improve sleep and help you become more empathetic. Researchers also believe that reading may help prevent cognitive decline as it involves active mental engagement. Moreover, according to a study conducted by the University of Sussex, reading for just six minutes can reduce stress by 68%, making it a more effective way to unwind than listening to music or having a cup of tea. Nuff said. Here are some simple ways to cultivate a reading habit.

#3 Eat mindfully



According to a recent report by Daily Harvest, nearly half of Americans define their diet as “unhealthy.” In fact, 57% of Americans don’t even look at the amount of sugar, sodium or protein in their food prior to purchase. "Being mindful of the foods entering your body isn’t necessarily about counting calories or tracking carbs, but rather approaching food in a way that evokes an awareness of what nourishes the mind, body and soul," says Leslie Silverglide, co-founder and CEO of MIXT. "Having this awareness can help reduce binge eating and promote easier digestion, which ultimately increases the enjoyment of food and gives you full control of your diet," she adds.

#4 Learn a new skill or pick up a new hobby



Learning a new skill or activity can do wonders for your brain health. "Learning creates new neural pathways in your brain. The more you practice a skill, the more you increase the speed and strength of those neural connections. This process is known as myelination—it increases the white matter in your brain and helps it run more efficiently," explains Dr. Gina Delucca, a California-based licensed psychologist. Think of your brain as a muscle. You need to regularly exercise it to keep it functioning optimally, learning something new is a great way to do that. "Learning new skills and keeping your brain active can also help to protect you against dementia. In addition, learning can increase your psychological well-being by increasing your self-esteem and tending to the natural human desire towards growth," tell Dr. Delucca.

#5 Be more kind to yourself



People can be hard on themselves for a variety of reasons. "For some, their critical inner dialogue may have been learned through their past experiences. Maybe they had a very critical parent or a toxic ex and they have internalized some of the negative things that were said to them," says Dr. Delucca. "While others might believe that their self-criticism keeps them motivated or makes them tougher. In the same vein, some might view self-acceptance as a form of coddling oneself or accepting defeat," she notes. This is why the first step towards cultivating self-acceptance is to understand what this term actually means. "Practicing self-acceptance is about accepting yourself as a human being who has strengths as well as limitations, imperfections as well as the potential for growth," explains Dr. Delucca.

#6 Break a sweat



Despite its proven benefits, over 75% of Americans don't get enough exercise for optimal health. Regular exercise doesn't just make you physically healthy but also improves your mood, stimulates creativity, enhances memory and increases your productivity, among other things. Also, research shows that spending as little as ten minutes on working out is good enough to reap its health benefits. So, renew your resolve to get more exercise this year. Go for long runs, swim, hike, try kickboxing, whatever floats your boat. And if you prefer staying indoors, here are some basic exercises you can do in the comfort of your home.

#7 Slow down



If you think always keeping several balls in the air makes you more productive, you might want to reconsider. "Multitasking might give you the illusion that you're getting more done and being more efficient. But in reality, your attention is divided, so your work quality might suffer and you might actually be less productive because you're distracted and prone to interruption," says Dr. Delucca. Similarly, overcommitting is also counter-productive and can contribute to high levels of stress. "When you make habits out of multitasking and overcommitting, you run the risk of putting your body into a prolonged period of stress which takes a toll on both your physical and mental health. This can contribute to the onset of burnout, body aches and pains, mental fatigue, sleep problems, anxiety, depression and many other health problems," tells Dr. Delucca. So, what should you do? It's quite simple really, slow down! "One way to do that is to literally slow down each individual activity you do and focus on only one task at a time," suggests the psychology expert.

#8 Get more sleep



Your sleeping habits have a huge impact on your physical and mental health. "Sleep represents a third of every person's life and it has a tremendous impact on how we live, function and perform during the other two-thirds of our lives," states the American Sleep Apnea Association. "It is indeed as vital as the air we breathe and the food we eat, especially for those with chronic diseases or compromised immune systems," it adds. According to the Centers for Disease Control Prevention (CDC), one in three adults don't get enough shut-eye. Frequently skimping on sleep can have an array of adverse effects on your health, including an increased risk of high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, dementia and heart disease. Bottom line: make sleep a priority. To help you get started, here are five simple tips to help you sleep better.

II. 6 Renovation Trends You're About to See Everywhere in 2025, According to Designers

Whether you're looking to make cosmetic changes to a single room or to rip out and replace the entire kitchen, you might be wondering what finishes, colors, materials, and components will bring these renovation and remodeling targets up to date.

Fear not, for we've asked designers to share what they see coming over the horizon in 2025. Over the last several years, there's been a lot of "safety" when it comes to color palettes, but that may change in 2025. Casey Keasler, founder and design

director of Casework, explains how people are tired of neutrals and want more personality in their spaces.

She points out that many of her clients are requesting color and some, in fact, plan to wash entire rooms in the new hues, from the walls and ceilings to the trim.

The choice of paint color varies by client, naturally, but all decidedly divert from the white, beige, and grey tones that have dominated the last decade (think purples, deep blues, greens, and certain pastels, instead.)

Keasler says that her clients are planning to incorporate color in kitchen cabinetry as well.

Once again, color choices will vary, but Briana Gershenzon, partner and chief of design at Renovation Sells believes greens will be popular.

“In previous years, we saw deeper evergreen tones making a statement on kitchen cabinetry, but homeowners are craving a more serene palette,” she says.

For this reason, she predicts that there’ll still be some deep greens, but more homeowners will gravitate toward organic and earthy greens for the cabinetry in 2025. And, she adds, these greens are a natural pairing for the next trend on this list: warmer metal finishes like brass.

Most pros believe that accents, hardware, and fixtures in brass tones are here to stay. In particular, Keasler feels there’ll be a shift from matte black—which has been popular in recent years—to unlacquered brass and chrome.

“Matte black lacks durability and just doesn’t wear well, so we’ll put it in lighting, but not plumbing fixtures and hardware, or anything else that’s touched frequently,” she says. Not to mention, the unlacquered metals will naturally develop a beautiful patina over time and use.

Backsplash Updates

There might be a move away from kitchen backsplashes with standard white subway tiles in a typical brick offset layout to something with a little more character, according to Regan Baker, founder and principal designer of Regan Baker Design.

She believes there’ll be more use of bespoke, custom tile with texture and dimension, colored tile, or patterned tiles featuring geometric or classic 20s-era designs. And, if subway and square tiles are still around, they’ll be in a stacked or other less common layout.

Some homeowners may skip tile on the backsplash to match the countertop material, predicts Keasler. But just as with the color palettes getting bolder, the designer says that instead of neutral quartz surfacing homeowners will opt for marble or marble look slabs for both the countertop and backsplash. While a matching slab backsplash is more minimal aesthetically, there’ll be an emphasis on pronounced veins.

"Anything that's got more color, contrast, and drama to it," Keasler says.

Matching Ceiling Luminaires

Gershenson explains how duplicate light fixtures aren't only for kitchen islands anymore. Gershenson is noticing a trend of repeated or matching ceiling light fixtures in open-plan spaces to define areas of the home while creating visual continuity.

"When selecting the repeating fixtures, keep the overall form simple and clean to ensure the space doesn't feel too busy," Gershenson recommends.

She also says that some homeowners will swap out pairs or groups of four recessed can lights in typical ceiling grids for mini flush-mount fixtures to add personality and warmth to spaces.

Paneling and Millwork

2Walls and ceilings are about to get makeovers. Keasler says that clients are asking for wood paneling, whether for whole walls and even ceilings or for wall sections such as through wainscoting.

Gershenson feels that homeowners are increasingly looking for detailed millwork—as opposed to the clean-lined square baseboards and trim that have been trending for years—including wainscot paneling, custom casings, and layered moldings.

"It creates an upscale base layer of character and dimension that you can build on with furnishings and textiles," Gershenson says.

III. 10 budget backyard ideas that will transform your small outdoor space



Staring at your backyard and thinking it looks a little...blah? That's totally understandable. When you don't have a lotta dollar, it can be a li'l bit daunting trying to sort out your patio area. But trust me — you don't need to spend a lot to get your backyard looking totally aesthetic.

When you're living in a small space such as an apartment, having a decorated outdoor space is def a good idea. Aside from providing fresh air (apartments can get stuffy, people!), it also gives you extra space to host and relax.

With just a few easy tricks, you can turn your outdoor space into a total haven, where you can host all the al fresco dinners. I'm talking cute planters, cozy seating, flowers, and more. These are all low-cost options, with some even being totally free. *Legit.*

These budget backyard ideas are gorgeous and easy to recreate

As well as being kind to your bank account, these ideas are all renter-friendly, so you don't need to stress about upsetting your landlord. For some of the ideas that require decor pieces, I've also rounded up buys so you can bag the look on a dime.

The prices below were correct at the time of publishing this article.

1. Consider a temporary pool



A temporary pool is a great way to add some life to your backyard without investing a load of money (or backyard space). This above-ground one is super cute, but for those renting, you might want to consider something smaller, such as an inflatable pool. These are so easy to set up and take down and look majorly stylish, too.

2. Make pallet patio furniture



Crafty queens, I've got a super cool DIY idea for you here. Learning how to make pallet furniture is a great option if you're hoping to add seating to your backyard or patio without shelling out a ton of cash. It's super easy to build and actually looks really stylish with the right cushions and outdoor pillows. The best part? It's basically free if you're patient enough to scroll through your local online marketplace.

3. Use an outdoor rug to cover up a dated patio



Stuck with a patio that you can't change, but that needs to be zhuzhed up ASAP? DW, there's an easy fix. Cover it up with an outdoor rug! You don't have to worry about getting one made with custom dimensions — you can just grab a big rug or even layer a few smaller ones to create a funky pattern.

4. Use string lights to create a cozy atmosphere



Bright outdoor light fixtures are worse than The Big Light IMO, as they can be way too harsh on the eyes and can even attract gross bugs come nighttime. Instead, opt for a couple of strands of string lights, so you can live your fairycore fantasy to the max. Not only are they inexpensive, but they're also soft enough to create a seriously relaxing place for evening summer chats.

5. Make DIY planters



Dreaming of your own tomato girl summer? You might not be able to get away on vacay, but you can turn your small patio into a tropical oasis by getting creative. If you're hoping to grow your own veggies or plant flowers, start saving your tin cans, candle pots, and coffee containers — these all make surprisingly aesthetic, boho-vibe planters that can withstand the outdoors.

6. Add a hammock



Want to get your tan on but CBA with lying down on hard concrete? A simple hammock is a really cute way to create a chill zone in your small backyard. It doesn't

take up much space, is easy to set up or remove, and offers the perfect spot for a summer's day power nap or reading sesh.

7. Build your own trellis



Love flower power and want to turn your garden into a cottagecore dream? A trellis is an easy and budget-friendly way to add visual interest to a backyard or garden. Try building your own with a couple of 4-foot x 4-foot panels and wooden lattice, and then weave pretty flowers in the gaps such as roses, wisteria, and honeysuckle. So gorgeous.

8. Paint old outdoor furniture



Is your wooden outdoor furniture looking dusty and boring? DW, bestie: You can actually turn it into something real cute. Sand it off and paint it to give it a whole new look. This yellow set is really beautiful and bold, but you could go for a pink shade if you're in your Barbiecore era, or even a beige shade if you're more into quiet luxury vibes.

9. Start a rock garden



Li'l zen moment? Oh, I'm so here for that. Rock gardens are a super cost-effective way to give your backyard a cool, relaxed look. It's so easy to build a rock garden without spending hardly anything — just pick up some nice rocks of varying sizes and shapes next time you're on a big hike or at the beach, and you're halfway there. Add in a few well-chosen plants like mosses and succulents, and your DIY rockery is ready.

10. Up your soft furnishings game



Make your outdoor furniture look even more inviting by adding soft touches to your chairs and benches. Pillows and blankets are both good choices for sprucing up your

backyard ensemble and infusing texture, warmth, and color into the space. Throws are an especially great idea, as you and your guests can snuggle under them if the evening gets chilly.

IV. 5 Smart Home Upgrades that Can Make Every Day a Tiny Bit Easier

Even if you're not tech-savvy, there are several smart home features that can transform your life. A smart home uses electronic devices or online apps to control equipment that is usually manual, such as lighting, security systems, door access, heating, and even basic appliances. Internet-enabled devices offer automation, which helps stave off decision fatigue and all kinds of family friction (no more telling the kids to turn off the lights or worrying that a door is locked when you're out of town).



From simple keypad security panels to Bluetooth-connected devices throughout your home, here are five ways to use smart home tech to make everyday life a little easier.

1. Entertainment Upgrades

Streaming Netflix, Hulu, or Amazon Prime is even easier when connected to automation technologies that integrate audio, video, and sound distribution systems across multiple rooms. Multi-room Wi-Fi home audio systems let you play DJ

throughout your home—with full control over the sound. This is ideal for families with distinct schedules and styles. Lullabies in the baby's room at night, soft rock for a teen wake-up in the morning, and daily news podcasts in the kitchen over coffee—everything is possible when these playlists and settings are programmed for your entire house.

Functional features let you turn the music down or off from one room to the next and use voice commands to pause or play your favorite shows or tunes. Once you get used to this sort of sound management system, it's hard to go back to manual searches.

2. Smart Climate Control

If you tend to wake up in the middle of the night because it's too cold or hot, consider a smart ventilation system or smart thermostat. A climate control system adds both comfort and luxury, not to mention many restored hours of precious sleep and relaxation. Equipped with sensors that monitor the temperature of each room of your home, these systems automatically regulate the temperature in each space according to the settings you establish. Some can even measure the temperature outside and adapt to weather changes.

Better still, these systems can work with air filtration systems that can cleanse CO₂ and other particles while offering increased or reduced ventilation based on how many people are in the room. Unlike other systems that you must remember to set on a physical panel, these can be controlled by an app on your phone, so there's no need to worry if you forgot to turn off the air conditioner before you left for vacation.

3. Leak Detection

One thing that keeps homeowners up at night is the fear of water leakage. A slow drip can trickle for a long time before becoming a major problem. For less than \$1,000, you can purchase a Wi-Fi water sensor or water shutoff control that prevents the unthinkable. These small devices identify leakage right away and alert you to close the water supply if required. While these systems don't fix the leak itself, they buy you time to have a plumber come out for pipe repairs rather than needing to hire a major cleanup crew to replace damaged furniture, appliances, and potential mold associated with flooding.

All year long, these leak detection systems also help decrease water waste and save money on your utility bill. Some even provide real-time data on water quality. More advanced water management systems can even facilitate recycling water—a major environmental win.

4. Lighting and Window Treatments

Smart lighting is one of the best home automation features. This entails more than just switching the lights on or off. A smart lighting system lets you automate mood

lighting. You can alter the color and brightness to suit your needs. For people who suffer from mood disorders, automated sun lamps can be a game-changer.



Additionally, lighting controls can be integrated with window treatments, such as smart blinds. A smart lighting system can raise or lower electric blinds according to the time of day or sunlight outside. The same goes for dimmers. Sensors can detect your presence or absence to control the ambient lighting in each room, so you can save on energy bills and ensure optimal illumination in every corner of your home.

5. Security Solutions

Traditionally, home security systems report break-ins or disasters to the nearest emergency first responder. Smart security systems do much more. Long-life battery systems can last up to two years and track indoor, outdoor, and doorbell activity. New smart security systems are ideal for homes with exposed porches, where inclement weather could ruin traditional camera systems, and vacation homes that are vacant for long stretches.

These intelligent systems work to prevent crime, not just report it. Some even use facial recognition to separate guests from strangers. Whether you want to watch the kids playing in the backyard or identify the people who keep stealing packages off your stoop, smart security systems are a must-have for modern families.

V. 2025 New Year's Resolutions For A Clean Home

The New Year is synonymous with joy, hope, new beginnings and, drum roll please, Resolutions! Some of us may look forward to making new resolutions, while others may absolutely dread the activity. Regardless of how we feel about it, most of us try to make resolutions involving various areas of our lives – health, sports, work goals, etc. Cleaning resolution is hardly something that will pop up in your mind, but is a good one to keep nevertheless.



Why, do you wonder? Well, a clean, organised home is not something that is just good to look at; rather, it can boost your mental health, improve focus and may even help you feel motivated enough to keep the rest of your resolutions.

This article will delve into some of the more **practical cleaning resolutions you can take to maintain a clean home environment all through the New Year of 2025.**

From hiring professional help like Vacate Cleaning Perth to doing regular decluttering or even making systematic cleaning routines, these resolutions will be ones you'll be able to stick to. So, let's dive in and learn more about them.

1. Commit to a Decluttering Routine

One of the easiest ways to maintain your home organisation is by keeping on top of clutter. Adopt a habit of regular decluttering instead of making this a monthly habit. Dedicate a few hours every week to sort through the items you own (one category of items like clothes, stationary, utensils, etc. or one area at a time like kitchen, wardrobe, cabinets, etc.). And divide them into what you need, what you don't use anymore so can donate, and what you need to throw away.

This will not only help you in creating more space in your home, but it will also help you enhance the sense of order and calm. By keeping areas clutter-free, you'll be able to experience a cleaner and more serene home.

2. Set up a Weekly Cleaning Schedule

We all feel inspired and mesmerised by those picture perfect clean homes on Pinterest and Instagram, but behind those immaculate living spaces lie, consistent efforts and persevering. So, if you want to have a Pinteresty home, you need to create a cleaning routine of your own to follow through daily. For this, break all the tasks into manageable parts and assign them to specific days in the week. E.g., Monday – dusting and vacuuming, Tuesday – mopping floors, etc. By creating and sticking to a schedule, you can prevent the dirt and grime from building up in your home, making all your subsequent cleaning sessions easier as the days progress.

3. Deep Clean Key Areas Every Month

Most areas of your home can be maintained with regular tidying or surface cleaning. The same can't be said about other areas, for example, carpets, upholstery, windows, etc. These areas require a more specialised cleaning and need to be dealt with at least once or twice a month. As a sample, in January you can try shampooing your carpets, while in February you can dedicate some time to scrubbing the grout in-between the tiles of the Bathroom.



If time is an issue, you can get paid services like the ones available with the best vacate cleaning Perth, to aid you in the more time-intensive tasks involved with maintaining your home. For instance, you can hire their services if you are planning to vacate your property and want to restore the home to its initial conditions. Even if

you are not moving and simply want your home to look its best, paid services might be a godsend.

4. Make Organisation a Priority

Keeping your home tidy becomes quite easy when everything you own has a designated place to stay. To help you in your organisation, you can invest in organisers like storage bins, shelves, drawers, closet dividers, etc., to keep all your items neatly stacked and arranged. If your organisers are made of opaque materials, then you can use labels to make it easier to understand what items are kept in the box or drawer. This way, you'll have an easier time accessing what you need.

Even after meticulous planning, we may need to reassess our storage solutions. This is simply because with our changing needs, everything else in our home also needs to change to make sure it's functional for us. For instance, if the number of people in your home has increased, you may need to purchase a shoe rack to prevent the shoes from piling up in the entryway. You may also need to add a few baskets in the living room to store all your remote controls, magazines or even toys.

5. Adopt Eco-Friendly Practices

With the growing environmental concerns the New Year may be the perfect time for a switch to more sustainable cleaning habits. You can start by investing in more eco-friendly cleaning agents that are free from harsh chemicals and safe for both you and the planet. If you don't want to spend a lot of money on these, you can even try creating your own DIY solutions for cleaning like vinegar and baking soda, both of which are highly effective as well as budget-friendly. You can also invest in reusable cleaning tools like microfiber cloths instead of using disposable wipes. Such kinds of small changes can significantly reduce the amount of waste you create, and can help reduce some of the load we put on the planet while still achieving a sparkling home.

6. Don't Neglect the Outdoor Spaces

Along with the home's interiors, the exteriors also deserve the same attention to detail. To create a more welcoming environment and subsequently increase curb appeal, you can sweep the porches and patio, clean the windows, trim the bushes in your garden and mow the lawn. Set aside some time each season for these areas to remove any debris that may have piled up or any bush that may be starting to look too wild for your liking. For renters, these steps can get you bonus points from your landlord if you're preparing for vacate cleaning in Perth and help you in securing your bond in its entirety.



Like every New Year, 2025 can be the start of a new chapter in your life. So, why not try and achieve something different with this one. Let's start with an angle you hadn't thought about before. Give your new time a new boost with these cleaning accomplishments in your bag.

CONCLUSION

A well-maintained and upgraded home not only boosts comfort and functionality but also adds long-term value. By following these home improvement tips, you can create a fresh, stylish, and efficient living space to support your goals for the new year. Whether through small DIY projects or more significant renovations, taking steps to improve your home now will set the stage for a productive and enjoyable year ahead.

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