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# Think Like a Designer to Update Your Home Like a Pro

(StatePoint) Inspiration is everywhere. From a field of yellow sunflowers to unique geometric patterns in the tile of a train station, the littlest things can spark the innovation behind some of the world's most iconic products and designs.

Over half of Americans (51 percent) say the inspiration for creating a product is important to them when purchasing an item for their home, according to a recent survey from Moen conducted online by Harris Poll among over 2,000 U.S. adults.

When updating your own home's décor, you can garner inspiration by discovering the creative influences of professional designers.

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inspiration just about everywhere. Pebbles in a stream sparkling in the sunlight have inspired smartphone interfaces, while talking comput-

ers on "Star Trek" have contributed to the creation of voice-controlled speakers.

Sometimes designers are inspired

by consumers themselves. For example, at Moen, a leading manufacturer of kitchen and bath fixtures, innovation is driven by what homeowners

say they want and how they interact with products. When determining the sensor placement for new MotionSense Wave touchless faucets, their design team was inspired by the way hands move around the kitchen sink. The fixtures feature a single-sensor hands-free activation on the base's left side, allowing users to turn the faucet on and off with the wave of a hand. "We also draw creativity from furniture, tools, architecture, music and museums,"

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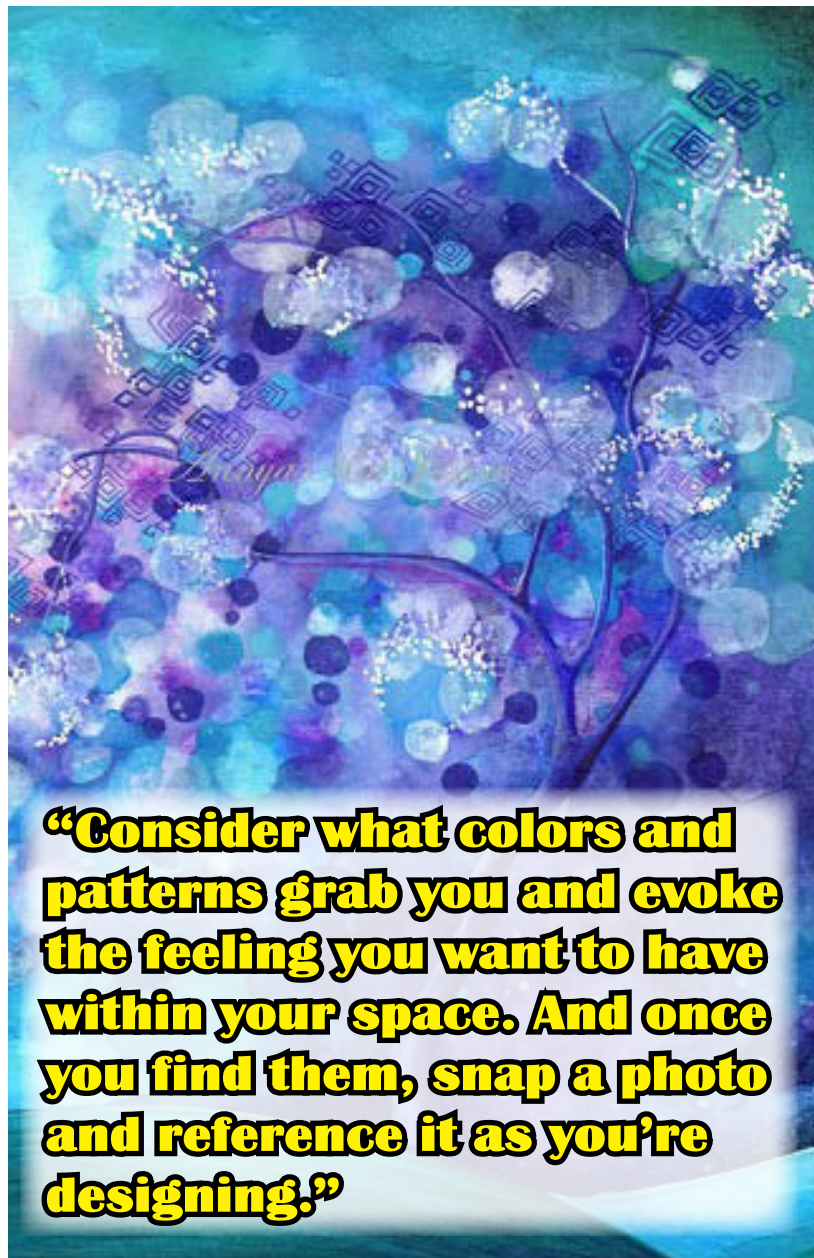
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**“Consider what colors and patterns grab you and evoke the feeling you want to have within your space. And once you find them, snap a photo and reference it as you’re designing.”**

says Steven Ward, Moen’s director of global design.

### Seek Your Source of Ideas

Next time you’re updating your bath or restyling your kitchen, act like a professional by venturing outside the box to get your creative juices flowing, whether it’s turning to a favorite song or a piece of artwork. For example, 16 percent of Americans who have done a home design project look to the outdoors for inspiration when planning home design projects, while 15 percent look to architecture. May-

be you’re struck by the colors of the sunset in your family’s summer beach vacation photos or the amazing brick pattern you saw wandering through a historic neighborhood. Consider what colors and patterns grab you and evoke the feeling you want to have within your space. And once you find them, snap a photo and reference it as you’re designing.

### Curate Inspiration

Been a while since you took a vacation? Don’t live in an architecturally awe-inspiring locale? Social media is a great proxy. In fact, of Americans who have done a home design project, 33 percent look to social media for inspiration. Just like the pros, create a design plan for your space, but make it easy by using a site like Pinterest. Create boards for color combinations, materials and textures that attract your eye, so you

can define your ideal look. Many Pins are shoppable, making it simple to purchase your perfect home décor products with just a click.

While making design decisions, don’t worry about being “on-trend.” If you stay focused on what styles speak to you personally -- as well as the functionality your room needs to support -- you’ll create a space that feels uniquely yours.



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(NewsUSA) - Spring is here, and that means not only getting a jump on your cleaning, but also having a reason to check all areas of your house and garage for signs of pests that might have made themselves at home over the winter.

Take a tour through your house and try these simple steps suggested by Kari Warberg Block, pest prevention expert and founder of EarthKind and Stay Away natural pest-prevention products, for a few pest-proofing techniques for each and every room of your house.



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\* Outside: The best defense is a good offense when it comes to protecting the outside of your home from pests. Inspect the exterior of your house and patch any cracks or other openings that may have developed over the winter.

\* Living room: Keep ants from becoming unwanted guests in your living room by vacuuming the entry/ living room areas thoroughly to get

rid of any crumbs, and clean up any sweet, sugary spills which are the number one culprit for attracting ants in this area. Also, try a non-toxic ant repellent such as Stay Away Ants pouches. All Stay Away products are made in the USA from essential oils and plant fibers, so they are eco-friendly and have no known risks associated with use in the home.

\* Kitchen: Use





natural ingredients to keep your kitchen clean and repel rodents and other pests. Be sure to clean under refrigerators, stoves, and sinks because these are the areas where rodents frequently make their nests. Dog food is the number one attractant to hungry rodents. Try using a plant-based Stay Away Rodent repellent pouch, and you may avoid becoming one of the 21 million American homes invaded by rodents each winter (according to the National Pest Management Association). After pest-proofing your kitchen, proceed to the pantry, where moths might try to make themselves at home. Prevent problems by storing food in airtight glass, metal, or plastic containers; cleaning and checking packages for signs of holes; and placing a non-toxic Stay Away Moths pouch nearby.

\* Bedroom and Closet: Moths also can consider

closets a place to call home, but a Stay Away Moths pouch can keep them at bay. In the bedroom, the non-toxic Stay Away Spiders repellent offers a similar strategy. After vacuuming to remove any existing webs, use the repellent to prevent additional infestations.

\* Garage and Basement: These areas can harbor a variety of pests. To keep them out, avoid storing items

in cardboard boxes, which can attract rodents (they use cardboard to build their nests) as well as cockroaches (they like to feast on the glue). Also, repair any leaky pipes to prevent the development of mold and moisture.

Visit [earthkind.com](http://earthkind.com) for more ideas for safely pest-proofing your home.

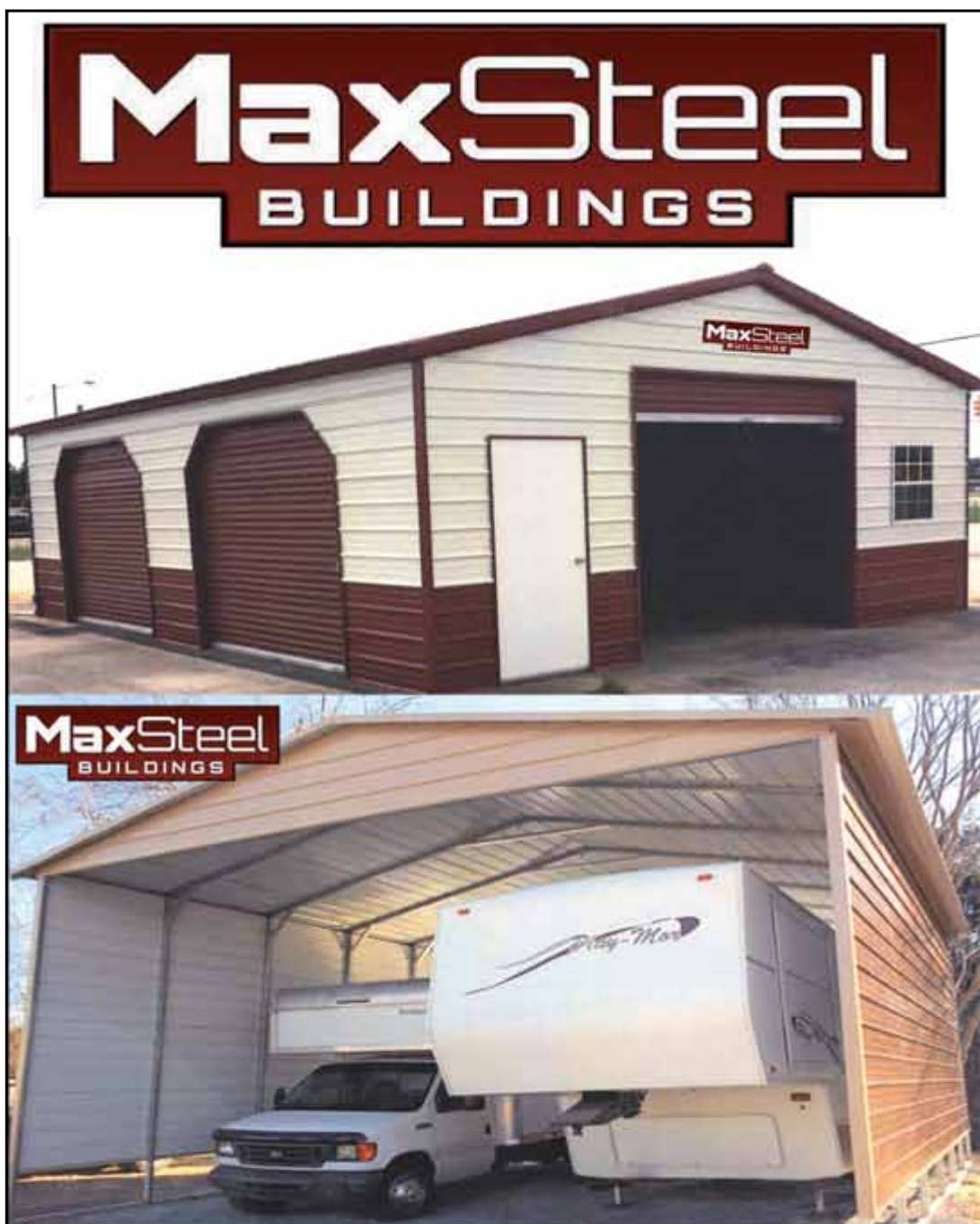


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# 4 RULES FOR a MORE ORGANIZED HOME

(StatePoint)  
There are plenty of reasons why people obsess over organization and resolve to master it at home. Household items become easier to find.

Rooms all of a sudden seem bigger and more welcoming. Each walk past a tidy linen closet -- where there was once an avalanche waiting to spill forward -- comes with a small sense of accomplishment.

Whether you're after smarter storage or looking to

cut clutter, success begins with a thoughtful approach.

## THINK SMALL

While it's fun to dream about a large-scale routine reset, smaller sustainable actions are key to lasting change. Take it one room or even one drawer at a time to keep momentum positive and to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Doing so also allows you to focus, leading to



more creative solutions for taking advantage of underutilized areas. For example, you may find using over-the-door organizers to be a great way to free up space in home offices and craft rooms.

## SAY “NO” TO CLUTTER

Everyone has items they keep around for no real reason that aren't particularly meaningful and don't serve a purpose. Being able to objectively identify these items makes everything easier. Paring down possessions doesn't have to be painful. That cardinal shaped cookie jar that you've always

been on the fence about? It would make an incredibly thoughtful “just because” gift for an ornithology-obsessed aunt. Often, less can literally be more: Consignment shops and eBay make it easy to turn four or five pieces of furniture you “kind of like” into one piece you absolutely love.

## KEEP a PLACE FOR EVERYTHING

Nobody likes wasting time gathering or searching. Make storage more convenient and efficient by streamlining. Items frequently used

together should be kept together, from coffee supplies to vehicle maintenance tools.

## Make a Plan

Create a schedule so nothing is overlooked. Knowing which project is next gives you time to prepare and purchase any storage items you might need. When scheduling, designate specific rooms and spaces for certain seasons. For example, the first warm days of spring are made for cleaning out the shed or garage.

More organizational inspiration can be found by visiting [improvementscatalog.com](http://improvementscatalog.com).



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## Shopping For Yard Equipment: Things To Know

(NAPS)—If you're like most people, when spring comes, you're ready to get outside and make your yard both beautiful and functional. Maybe you're aiming to have the best yard on the block, want to install an outdoor family room, or want to expand your space for entertaining. Perhaps your kids or pets could use a better space for play and roam. Regardless of need or want, now is the time to get "back-yard ready."

### The Tools You'll Need

"Completing big outdoor jobs is always easier with help from outdoor power equipment," said Kris Kiser, president and CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI). "The right outdoor power equipment can help you get the work done faster and can help you safely maintain your yard." These tips from Kiser can help you select the machinery you

need to get the job done.

- Plan your needs. Draw a sketch of your yard. Include any major features such as trees, bushes, an herb or vegetable garden, flower beds, lawn furniture, play or sports equipment, an outdoor patio, or birdbath. Note where maintenance may be required. Will bushes need to be trimmed back from your home or garage? Do you want to put in some flowering bushes or a tree? Are you



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planning to install a fence and more grass because of your pet? Now list the tools and equipment needed to take care of your yard and what will make the job easier.

- Consider equipment needed. Visit your garage or shed and find all your lawn and garden tools. Wheel out your mower and get out other equipment. Look it over and make a list of what's needed or could be upgraded. Repair anything that needs attention or identify where a newer or other machine is required. If you have a large vegetable garden, you need a cultivator or tiller. If you have a large lawn, an upgrade to a riding lawn mower might make mowing easier. A string trimmer might make caring for bushes or trimming grass near a fence line easier. A pole pruner can help trim back limbs that are too high to reach safely with



a saw and a leaf blower can clear leaves faster than a rake.

- Research equipment online before you buy. Think about efficiencies of scale. The right equipment can mean more time for other activities and make doing yard work more enjoyable, too. Doing online research in advance can help you pick the right equipment for the job. Outdoor power equipment can be gas, electric or battery powered and technology is rapidly affecting

product design. There are even robotic lawn mowers available today. Equipment may be sized to handle a smaller job or a massive one. Ultimately, your decision should be based on your needs.

- Ask questions. Talk with the staff at the store or ask online about the equipment. In the store, ask to pick up and hold equipment to determine its "fit" for you. Discuss safety features and ask about fueling and care instructions.

Find out how often equipment may need to be serviced.

- Make a plan for storage and maintenance. Store your equipment in a cool and dry place. It should typically be serviced at the end of the fall and the beginning of the spring. Put service dates on your calendar with a reminder.

For safety information and to find out which manufacturers make various outdoor power equipment products, go to [www.opei.org](http://www.opei.org).

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# Deck Design 101

## Tips for planning a perfect outdoor oasis

(Family Features) Timing can be everything, especially when it comes to planning an outdoor living space. By getting a jump-start on planning, you can afford yourself time to complete the process with maximum creativity and minimal stress.

surface. Wooden substructures can split, warp and shift over time, leading to an uneven surface in the deck boards. Dimensionally stable steel offers durability benefits over wood, plus greater design flexibility, sustainability, safety and fire resistance.

with various deck configurations and design combinations. In three simple steps, the tool can help you choose the right materials for your project and design a customized outdoor living space before ever raising a hammer or raising a board.

### Choose the Right Materials

When selecting materials, invest in decking that can hold up against the harshest weather and messiest cookouts. High-performance,

low-maintenance composite decking offers superior durability and long-lasting looks. It can also outperform both wood and PVC alternatives over time.

With a wood deck,

the cost of regular sanding, staining and painting compound considerably over time. Over the life of a composite deck, the reduced maintenance costs of simple soap and water cleanings

can add up to a greater return on investment - not to mention the value of all the time spent enjoying your deck rather than maintaining and refinishing it.



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Try these expert tips and tricks of the trade to help make your dream deck a reality.

### Lay a Solid Foundation

Don't skimp on the substructure. Often overlooked, the substructure can have tremendous impact on performance and appearance. For maximum strength and stability, opt for steel framing over wood in order to achieve a consistently flat decking

### Get the Right Tools

In addition to magazines, TV shows and social platforms offer outdoor living ideas and inspiration. There are also a number of online tools designed to help guide you through the planning process, such as the Trex Deck Starter, which can help anyone at the outset of their deck building adventures. It provides a user-friendly way to experiment

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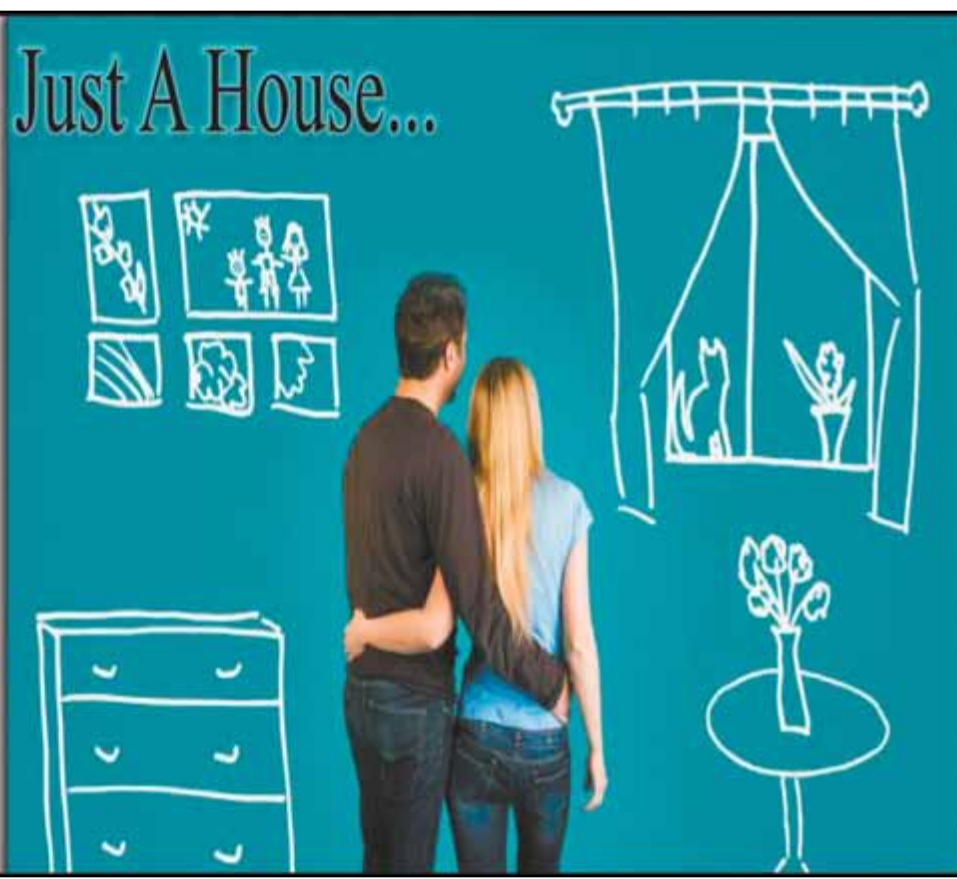
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### Add Safety and Style with Railings

Railings can be one of the most visible parts of any deck so it should be considered at the same time as the deck boards. A good rule of thumb is to use the “three C’s,” which are: coordinate, contrast, customize. For example, crisp white posts and black aluminum balusters coordinate beautifully with gray deck boards, delivering an elegant look and feel. For a beachy vibe, opt for a contrasting look with all-white railings. Or go completely custom with sleek, black aluminum railings to create a space that’s both modern and inviting.

### Incorporate Personal Touches with Accessories

Have fun exploring the many design elements that are available for customizing your deck. Things like built-in seating, planters and storage, as well as add-ons such as a pergola or outdoor furniture, which can add comfort, character and convenience to your outdoor living space. Further personalize your space with a variety of deck and landscape lighting fixtures. Set up path lights to

brighten walkways and use spotlights to showcase trees and architectural features. Easy to install and energy efficient, an option like Trex Landscape Lighting can help keep your outdoor enjoyment going long after the sun goes down.

For more inspiration and tips for designing your dream deck, visit Trex.com.

### DESIGNING YOUR OUTDOOR SPACE

Before any work can get done on the deck of your dreams, designing comes first. It’s important to have a plan in mind before diving in so that you have a vision of what you want your deck to become.

For example, you might envision your deck as a spacious place to host family and friends with room to mingle, while others may prefer a small, quiet space for reading a book or enjoying the peace of the outdoors. Different sizes, shapes, colors and other factors can all have an outsized impact on the final look of your deck, so take all factors into account before getting started.

Try these starting points for the ultimate deck design:

### Choose a Deck Plan

From classic rectangle to beveled-edge to scenic overlook, an online tool like the Trex Deck Starter features a library of proven, ready-to-build deck designs. For a space that defies pre-made plans, you can also opt to create a custom deck plan to fit the layout of your home.

### Choose Your Color

The right decking color can enhance your yard’s scenery, complement your home or make your deck stand out. Match your surroundings with natural tones, blend in with your home’s exterior by matching the trim or consider bold colors like a spicy red for a deck color that pops.

### Frame Your Space

The right railings can pair with your decking to safely frame your space, enhance your view and open even more design possibilities. Based on your decking color, the experts at Trex can help make it easier by offering designer-curated decking and railing duos. You can also customize your railing, making the design your own from start to finish.



## 6 Home Décor Trends to Make a Style Statement

(StatePoint) Is your home décor starting to feel a bit stale? Spruce up your interiors with some of the hottest home design trends for 2018 -- from customized cozy to natural textures to retro touches.

Here are some stylish ways to incorporate new trends, from one of the nation's most sought-after celebrity interior designers, Taniya Nayak.

**1.** Create an Oasis: Make your home a tropical

escape all year long. Add floral or banana leaf accents to form a staycation-worthy "at-home paradise" no matter the temperature. Nayak suggests pairing pops of metallic gold with plush greens and crisp white to build a look that is sophisticated, yet fun and exotic.

**2.** Keep it Simple: In 2018, Nayak encourages DIYers to "go big or go home...in the simplest way imaginable." An easy way to accomplish

this is to paint your baseboards, trim or window mullions a dramatic contrasting color, like black against a white wall, for an effortless, yet powerful effect. And when it comes to achieving clean, sharp paint lines, one of Nayak's vital, go-to tools is a premium painter's tape, like FrogTape brand painter's tape that delivers the sharpest paint lines possible. Treated with patented PaintBlock Technology, FrogTape is a fool-proof way to get professional-



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looking results and eliminate the need for touch-ups.

**3.** Incorporate Natural Touches: This trend is all about nature's textures -- think wood grain, geodes or ocean waves. One way to incorporate this look is to combine earthy tones like browns, beiges and deep blues with vibrant neon colors to generate the effect of the northern lights around the home.

**4.** Get Back to the Future: Give what's old a modern, futuristic update to achieve this trend. Try painting a vintage chair with a pop of color, like the Sherwin-Wil-

liams 2018 color of the year, Oceanside, a combination of rich blue with jewel-toned green. This creates an eye-catching masterpiece that seamlessly integrates into both retro and modern home décor. Introducing bright colors to antiques produces a beautiful new spin on a classic look.

**5.** Design it with Love: What's "in" in home design this year? Creating warm and cozy spaces that are customized just for you. This is the true essence of DIY. Painting an accent wall in a pastel color, like lavender, will set a relaxed and comforting tone in the




room. From there, add in some personal pieces like a soft woven blanket, a macramé wall hanging or ivory

plates on a wall to transform any room to "your" room.

**6.** Embrace New

England Prep: This style embraces the timeless combination of crisp white linens and navy blues, but what really gives a room an authentic New England vibe is the addition of camel-colored leather décor accents. Nayak recommends adding monogrammed pillows to a leather accent chair, or whitewashing your brick fireplace to create a look that never goes out of style.

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Visit FrogTape.com for more trend information and inspiration.



# 8 Tips for Maximizing Garage Storage

**“Needs can change over time, so invest in storage that can be used for a variety of items in multiple ways.”**



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(StatePoint) Most people are pressed for garage space, regardless of the size of their house, from DIYers overwhelmed with tools to moms searching for places to store holiday decorations.

Toter, a leading manufacturer of carts, cans and containers for use in a wide range of home and work waste management and storage solutions, is offering the following tips

for making more of precious garage space.

- Keep trash in its place: To keep trash and odors contained, select a mobile trash cart with a tight-fitting lid that's compatible with your haulers' pickup requirements and comes with a warranty. Some manufacturers also offer cart and can liners and deodorizers to keep your garage smelling fresh.

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• Invest in a multi-purpose job box. Most people tend to have the wrong size toolbox for their needs. Consider the shape, capacity and compartments needed for your tools. Rolling options are great for work done only at home, while a job box may be better for those who do work elsewhere. If portability is important, look at lighter-weight options. New plastic job boxes, such as the Toter Hard-



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the area where an automatic door goes up and down. Peg boards for tools and stackable totes are also good choices.

• Build up, not out: Ceiling storage racks are an excellent way to use what would otherwise be dead space. Many racks are designed to fit directly above

• Choose multi-purpose storage: Needs can change over time, so invest in storage that can be used for a variety of items in multiple ways. For

example, large, durable totes can hold lawn gear, tools or camping equipment.

• Think mobility: Being able to move containers within the garage is important. However, the ability to move them into your vehicle and hit the road quickly also makes life a lot easier.

• Protect items: Moisture and pests cause problems in even the cleanest garage. Look for durable storage containers with tight-fitting, critter-resistant lids.

• Categorize: Assign and color-code dedicated areas for each type of item -- tools, decorations, lawn equipment, etc. -- to avoid the hassle of searching.

• Allow room to grow. While it can be tempting to stuff every square inch, try to leave room for future additions. To ensure everything deserves the space it's occupying, do a yearly purge of unneeded or unused items.

For more information on finding the right storage solutions for your needs, visit [toter.com/storage-solutions](http://toter.com/storage-solutions).



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# Spring into Lawn and Garden Care

(Family Features)  
If cooler weather has you longing for sunny days outdoors, take heart. Once spring rolls around, you can safely begin the annual cleanup to prepare your yard for months of warm-weather enjoyment.

Start by evaluating your lawn. Look for bald spots where grass has grown sparsely and needs reseeding, or uneven areas that may need to be filled and leveled.

Before you take steps to correct any problems, you'll need a clean slate. Clear the yard of any leaves, rocks or sticks that may have accumulated then cut the grass as short as you can. Use a thatching rake to remove dead roots and grass. Break up the soil in bare spots to create an environment that will be hospitable to new seed. Add lawn soil to level the surface. You'll also need to apply an herbicide



to treat weed-infested areas. Allow the weed killer to work for about a week then rake again to remove dead weeds.

Then you're ready to over-seed or spot seed, depending on your lawn's needs.

Your climate will determine the best grass variety for your yard. Be sure to select and apply a fertilizer that is consistent with your grass type and water thoroughly to promote deep root growth, which can help your lawn

withstand extreme conditions as temperatures rise. Your lawn isn't the only part of your yard that needs attention during the spring months, though. Your garden and flower beds may need some care before

they, too, are ready to burst with new bounty and color.

Begin by clearing your garden and beds of any debris like leaves and other matter that piled up during months of neglect. Gently turn the soil and work in fresh fertilizer.

Before your plants and flowers are in full-growth mode

is the ideal time to make repairs. Check edging for any damage, replace rotted woodwork and complete any other maintenance tasks.

As for the plants, prune before the first buds sprout to minimize stress. You can also start indoor seeds, and early spring is the time to divide perennials and plant some hardier vegetables, such as onions and potatoes.

The warmer months may still seem far away, but getting some of your lawn and garden care underway now can make those warmer, sunny days feel closer in no time.

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# 5 Easy Ways to Update Your Home Office for Greater Productivity

(StatePoint) If you work from home, you likely spend a lot of time in your home office, which makes its design just as important as the rest of your home. If it's not up to par, it's time to bring new life to the space.

A few easy updates will help you feel more comfortable and inspire you towards greater productivity.

**1.** Let in light. Update your window treatment to maximize natural light and get more direct sunshine, and swap out drab lamps for eye-catching fixtures that offer brighter light. Make sure your office is a

well-lit place where you can see what you're doing without straining your eyes.

**2.** Update your tools and equipment. Having up-to-date tools makes working in your home office that much more efficient and enjoyable. Swap out older technology with newer models and editions offering the latest advancements, such as Casio's HR-170RC next generation compact printing calculator. It has a host of features, including two-color printing (red/black), a tax calculation function, a clock/calendar and a power adapter.

**3.** Decorate. Ditch the bare walls and add an interesting focal point -- whether it's a tapestry, cool shelving or an art print that matches your interests and inspires you creatively.

**4.** Go green. It is said that certain plants and flowers can promote health at home. Add some plants or fresh cut flowers to your

home office to reap the benefits.

**5.** Get organized. Flight clutter and make important items and documents easier to locate with organizational tools like filing cabinets, folders and bins. A clean and tidy work zone will help you to feel more on top of your work, and may encourage you to form other great habits.



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# Appeal to House Hunters With Smart Home Upgrades

(StatePoint) From smart thermostats to remotely controlled showers, connected homes are all the rage for today's homeowners and those looking to make a purchase, providing easy opportunities to boost your profit when you sell.

Over half of Millennials (57 percent) believe that smart home technology is a good investment in their home, according to a recent survey by “Better Homes and Gardens.” Upgrading to include connected items can make your home more appealing to

this “next generation” of homebuyers in particular. If you're looking to sell, here are some of the latest and greatest smart home upgrades to have on your radar.

## Climate Control

Your thermostat is responsible for

half your energy bill -- more than appliances and electronics -- so make sure to choose one wisely. Consider installing a smart thermostat, which learns your temperature preferences, and can save energy by turning heating and cooling on and off, based on the weather outside, your home's energy profile and more. Potential homebuyers will love the energy savings, as well as the ability to control the thermostat from anywhere with their devices.

## A Hands-Free Faucet

Imagine the convenience of having a kitchen

faucet turn water on or off, without a touch. Faucets with hands-free technology, such as Moen's MotionSense Wave single-sensor models, allow users to easily activate the faucet with the wave of a hand. Great for when your hands are too full or messy to turn on the faucet, the technology also minimizes the spread of dirt and germs, since there's no need to touch the faucet to start the flow of water. It's just the type of smart upgrade to attract house hunters of all ages -- and easy on the wallet, with options available for under \$300.

## Bright Lighting

Smart lighting dimmer and sensor systems allow you to turn lights on and off remotely with a smartphone, and can be customized to perform certain actions, such as slowly growing brighter as you wake up or turning off automatically when you leave your home -- providing added convenience and customization for prospective buyers. These systems are especially useful when you're traveling-- allowing you to turn your lights on and off remotely, so your home doesn't look empty while you're away. Picture showing potential buyers how they can control all of the lights in the home with one device, or turn off the lights after they're snuggled up in bed -- and get ready for the offers to roll in.

can make a big difference for your family now and for future homebuyers. To provide the ultimate in personalization, select a system such as U by Moen, the first Wi-Fi/cloud-based digital shower on the market, which allows users to precisely set shower temperature and flow with an in-shower digital controller, or from the smartphone app. Plus, it can be voice activated with products like Amazon Alexa, for a connected home experience.

By swapping just one or two items -- like your thermostat or a builder-grade kitchen faucet -- you can achieve a sleeker, smarter home. And while the return on investment varies for each product, they're all sure to appeal to tech-loving homebuyers whenever you choose to sell.

## A Digital Shower

An updated bathroom is a huge selling point for potential buyers. If you're planning a renovation, enhancing your space with a digital shower



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# Innovative New Looks for Your Kitchen Renovation

(StatePoint) Renovating your kitchen? Think about making updates that will add beauty and functionality to one of the most important rooms in the house. Here are a few innovative new looks and ideas to consider including in your plans.

## Add Geometry

Geometric tile designs can create a bold modernized look in your kitchen, whether you're adding a backsplash or redoing

the flooring. Get creative by adding a mosaic design as trim around the perimeter or as a central point of focus.

## Create Your Focal Point

Enhance any kitchen with an impressive new range that combines the functionality and green energy features of a modern appliance with the charm of old-world design. If you want an opportunity to tailor this look to your own specifications, consider those from

ILVE. Known for their handcrafted Italian appliances, they have added even more ways to customize their ranges with a new, traditionally inspired solid door option for the ILVE Majestic Collection. Completely windowless, this model features a decorative country-style handrail on the oven door(s) and is available in a range of sizes and colors, from neutral tones like gloss black and matte graphite, to custom statement colors like ultramarine

blue or ruby red.

Three trims -- brass, bronze and chrome -- give homeowners even more options when creating a look for the kitchen that is truly their own. For more information, visit [ilveappliances.com](http://ilveappliances.com).

## Get Cozy

Create a lounge in your kitchen with some furniture that lets you kick back and relax. A nook that contains a loveseat or couch, along with a small bookshelf and side

table, may become your new favorite place to look through cookbooks or read a few pages of a novel while you're waiting for the dough to rise. If possible, create this area in a sunlit corner of the kitchen that's convenient to where the main cooking action takes place,

so that those giving the chef a little company will have a comfortable place to sit and chat with their host while they finish up the meal.

Innovative new looks for your kitchen can transform the space into one that's more functional and beautiful.

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