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BIRE WAR COM COMFORT SPECIALIST 9060 Hwy. 79 N. • Springville, TN • 731-644-2794 • indoorcomfortonline.com Heating & Cooling, LLC

(StatePoint) Transformative home renovations don't need to be complicated, nor do they need to cost an arm and a leg. There are plenty of affordable  $\,\cdot\,$  STONE PATIO: A DIY projects you can do in a weekend to add beauty to your home's indoor and outdoor spaces. Here are a few to consider:

## · INSTANT AMBIANCE:

Most often associated with party decor, string lighting hung above back patios and decks can be used to create everyday ambiance. As for how to string the lights, the possibilities are endless. You may prefer taut, clean lines, slack zig-

zags or concentric circles. Just be sure to use weatherproof lighting designed to withstand the elements.

drab concrete patio, pool deck, garage floor or walkway can be an eyesore. Whether your concrete is older and looking stressed, shedding its latest coat of paint, slippery, stained -- or new, but just gray and lifeless, there's a very easy way to spruce things up that doesn't require replacing the materials or involving a contractor. With a pre-mixed, factorytinted stone coating system, such as the patent-pending SpreadStone Decorative Concrete Resurfacing Kit, just about anyone can add authentic stone character to any concrete floor or wall. It not only boosts aesthetics, but also adds traction for safer walking surfaces. The real stone coating performs well in all climates, standing up to water, snow, salt, UV exposure and extreme cold

"The best part? Application is fast and simple and you

and heat.

don't need to be an artist to achieve great results," says renovation expert, James Carey, cohost of "On the House," a national home improvement show.

## · MOUNT SHELVING:

Installing floating shelves onto otherwise bare walls adds coziness to living spaces while creating smart storage. The lightweight, easyto-install Ambrosia Maple Rustic Mantel Shelf from Ornamental Mouldings & Millwork is a good choice, as it can be used as either a stand-alone floating shelf or fireplace mantel, and can be left as-is or stained to complement other elements in the room.

## · STONE COUNTER-

**TOPS:** Have you always wanted real stone countertops but didn't want to spend thousands on a complete remodel? You can now roll a new stone surface over any existing countertop made of laminate, cultured marble, concrete, wood, tile and other solid surface with the high-performance

SpreadStone Mineral Select Countertop Refinishing Kit from Daich Coatings.

Available in 10 colors, all of which

feature mineral accents and highlights found in natural mined rock, the proprietary stone technology gives an elegant, environmentally-

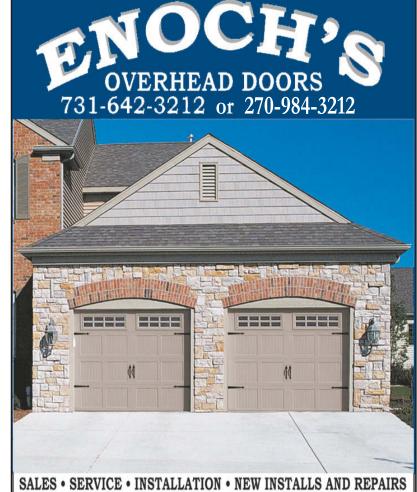
friendly facelift to surfaces in kitchens, bathrooms and other home interi-

"If you can use a roller and paint-

brush, you can create a new stone surface using this product," says Peter Daich, president of Daich Coatings. "It's an affordable, simple alternative to putting in a new stone slab and looks just as great."

Unfortunately, there are many homeowners who avoid desired renovations, assuming that in order to make a true impact, they'll need a huge budget and a lot of time. The truth is that there are transformative DIY updates you can execute affordably in just one week-





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(NewsUSA) -Mudrooms - transition spaces between the outdoors and the indoors that provide storage for footwear, wet clothes, sports gear, and other paraphernalia not wanted in the house - have

grown in popularity owner," says Linda as American homes have become big-

"While mudrooms are not a new amenity, they've moved up on the list of must-haves for today's homeJovanovich of the American Hardwood Information Center, www.hardwoodinfo.com.

"As the amount of residential squarefootage dedicated to mudrooms has

& Associates, a Minneapolis-based home-building firm that installs myriad mudrooms, agrees: "For example, working with Peterssen/ Keller Architecture and Eminent Interior Design, we



"Solid hardwood builtins not only provide the customization needed in what are sometimes awkwardly configured spaces, but also create the opportunity to bring the warmth and character of natural wood to what is first and foremost a service room."



grown, so has the attention paid to their design and aesthetics. Solid hardwood built-ins not only provide the customization needed in what are sometimes awkwardly configured spaces, but also create the opportunity to bring the warmth and character of natural wood to what is first and foremost a service room."

Bob Near, renovation division director at Streeter

recently completed a large mudroom with red-birch cabinetry, part of the makeover of a dated 1980s house. The client wanted a mid-century look, as if the room had been built in the 1960s, so its design is very clean." One wall is entirely floor-to-ceiling storage concealed behind plain slab doors: the other comprises a row of six locker-roomstyle open cubbies serviced by a single full-length bench.

"The client also asked for unstained wood rather than painted cabinetry, for reasons of durability and aesthetics," Near continues, "First, they felt a clear polyurethane varnish would hold up better than enamel paint to the wear and tear imposed by four active boys. And second, they wanted to give the somewhat austere space a more earthy, homey feel."

Easily applied by hand, the oil-based satin finish had the added advantage of deepening the tone of the red birch without changing its color, an important consideration because the wood had been carefully selected for its not-too-pink, not-toogreen hue.

As a whole, the project could serve as a terrific checklist of best mudroom practices: With six cubbies, there's one to assign to each member of the family, who'll then have an easily accessed set of hooks on which to hang wet weather gear; a stretch of solid bench on which to sit and take off dirty boots and shoes that can then be quickly stored in the deep cubbies underneath; a handy drawer for smaller items that might otherwise get lost;



and all delivered in a beautiful, redbirch package. Find a better example of flawless function

married to fabulous form if you can. Visit www.hardwoodinfo.com for more about mudrooms and other applications and products using American hardwoods.



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# Outdoor Spaces Offer Style And Comfort

(NewsUSA) - If you enjoy relaxing and entertaining on your porch or patio, you are not alone. Today's homeowners love being outdoors, and design professionals are being tasked with creating extravagant outdoor living areas with all the creature comforts that are

typically found indoors - a task they're accomplishing with natural building materials such as cypress.

Mark Tuck of the Southern Cypress Manufacturers Association, www. CypressInfo.org, says, "Cypress is a beautiful wood that looks exotic. More importantly, it is a durable wood that - when properly installed and maintained - provides long-lasting performance. It's perfect for outdoor use!"

Unlike other species that need to be pressure-treated with chemicals for outdoor use, cy-











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press comes by its durability naturally. When growing, cypress trees produce cypressene in their heartwood. This preservative oil protects the wood from the elements, and it repels insects such as termites and carpenter bees that often feed on and nest in other species.

"Thanks to its natural characteristics," Tuck adds, "Cypress has typically been used as siding or as an outdoor ceiling product. But more recently, design professionals are using it for a variety of other outdoor applications."

# Cypress for the Out-door Floor

"Outdoor rooms, peaceful spaces, and low-maintenance materials are the buzzwords I hear most from my clients," says Nancy Moore of The Porch Company in Nashville, Tennessee.

"I like to use cypress in spaces that are exposed to the elements. From my experience, it holds up well to blowing rain that may come in. I love its character, authenticity, longevity, and the fact that it is a renewable resource."

Moore says that her clients prefer porch designs that flow from the inside to the outside, which includes the flooring.

"We typically use tongue-and-groove cypress for our porch floors because it makes the space feel like another room of the house - a room that just happens to have walls that breathe."

# The New Heart of the Home

The heart of the home has long been the kitchen.



right? So as today's homeowners spend more time outside, creating a secondary kitchen outdoors is a top priority.

When crafting cabinetry for outdoor kitchens, Rod Richardson of Associated Construction Group, Gonzales, Louisiana, relies on cypress, and for good reasons. "It offers value, appearance, and performance that lasts," Richardson says. "In my 20 years of building outdoor

kitchens with cypress, I haven't had a callback."

"There are many building materials available, but one has stood the test of time and that's wood. It offers an appearance, feel, and even smell that you can't recreate with manmade products. And when I show customers different cabinet materials - even different woods - they usually lean towards cypress."

Incorporate cypress into your lavish outdoor space. See how at www. CypressInfo.org.



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(StatePoint) Many people have found themselves working from home. Whether setting up shop at the kitchen table or creating a complete home office, here are simple hacks to make your new work environment comfortable and productive.

"No matter which room becomes your table and chair and workspace, proper lighting plays a key role in avoiding fatigue, eye strain and other discomforts," said Jennifer Next, think about Kis, director of marketing communications, Progress Lighting.

Begin by defining your workspace. Setting up on the kitchen or dining table can work -temporarily. The upside is that it's quick and easy. But these rooms are typically high-traffic areas, leading to distractions. Plus, you might have to pack up work at mealtimes. Instead, re-purpose a small place it in an outof-the-way spot, such as a stairwell or bedroom corner.

lighting. Layering light is a basic technique that should be used in

every room, but especially home offices.

"Balance the lighting for different times of day. Natural light for day, layered light for afternoon and task lighting at night," recommends Piper Stromatt, lead designer and partner for Curate Custom Homes. "There are three layers of light to consider: ambient or general light, task lighting and decorative or accent lighting."

Select a location with a good source of ambient light. Natural light is





certain times of the

day. If an overhead

light source, situate

your workstation so

that the light shines

from behind it.

"Make sure your

home office suits

your performance

under particular

lighting condi-

Stromatt, who

following tips:

recommends the

tions," says

fixture is the only

ideal: it diffuses throughout the space, bouncing off walls and ceilings to cut down on glare that can reflect on the computer monitor and the shiny desk surface.

"When selecting ambient light sources, the goal is to illuminate the entire space without creating undue glare and contrast, which can lead to headaches and eye strain," says Kis. "If possible, avoid using overhead ceiling fixtures as the primary source of lighting. If that's the only option, use a dimmer switch to vary light levels as needed."

Positioning your workspace correctly also helps. For rooms with natural light, place your desk perpendicular to the window, ideally facing north or south so that sunlight doesn't cast shadows at

• Don't set your monitor in front of the window; the bright background light shining behind the screen causes eye strain.

• Place your chair at least arm's length from the screen so that it can be seen without reading glasses or squinting.

• Add LED tape lighting behind your monitor or under a desk for diffused light.

• Use solar shades to soften lighting and lessen heat.

After setting up a glare-free workstation, add task lighting. Use dedicated light sources such as desk lamps for tasks like paperwork and filing. Place direct task lights on the op-

posite side of the hand you write with to avoid casting shadows onto your work.

Finally, add accent lighting for visual appeal. Frame your workspace with desk lamps or install a permanent fixture on a dimmer switch, such as a pendant hung directly over the desk. Wall sconces can throw light on decorative objects in the room.

For more home tips and lighting inspiration, visit Progress Lighting at www.progressltg. com/shop.

Lighting can make or break a home office. Be sure to set yourself up for maximum productivity and comfort with proper lighting options.





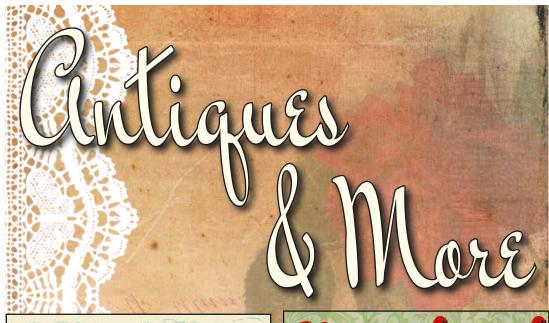


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# SPRING LAWN EQUIPMENT: KEEP SAFETY IN MIND WITH THESE 8 TIPS

(NAPSI)—Spring is on its way and homeowners are eager to get outside and spruce up their yards. The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI), an international trade association representing outdoor power equipment, small engine, utility vehicle, golf car and personal transport vehicle manufacturers and suppliers, reminds homeowners to keep safety in mind when working in their outdoor living spaces.

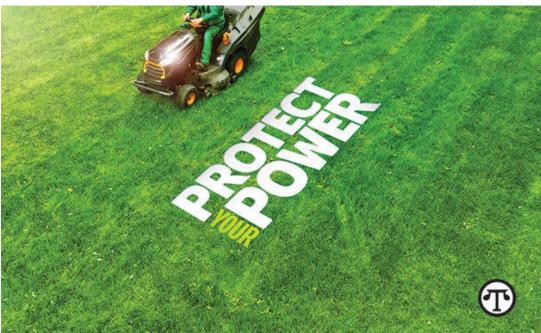
"Before you use a mower, trimmer, blower, power washer, chainsaw, pruner, portable generator or other piece of outdoor power equipment this season, it's important to refresh yourself on handling and safety procedures," says Kris Kiser, President and CEO of OPEI. "We're all eager to get outside and enjoy the living landscape after a long winter, but you should take the time to do basic maintenance

to ensure your equipment operates safely for the season and is ready to get the job done."

Here are tips to help:

Read your owner's manual. Follow all guidelines for your outdoor power equipment and familiarize yourself with the controls. If you have lost your manual, look it up online (and save a copy on your computer for easy





reference in the future).

2. Inspect equipment. Check the air filter, oil level and the gasoline tank.
Also check loose belts and missing or damaged parts.
Replace any parts needed or take your equipment to a qualified service representative for servicing.

**3.** If you have gasoline-powered equipment and

didn't empty the tank before winter storage, drain the fuel now. You should never leave fuel sitting in the gas tank of your equipment for more than 30 days. Untreated gasoline (without a fuel stabilizer) left in the system will deteriorate, which may cause starting or running problems or damage the fuel system.

4 Protect your power by only using E10 or less fuel in gasoline-

powered outdoor power equipment. With today's higher ethanol content fuels, most manufacturers are recommending a fuel stabilizer be used, especially if you don't use up all the gas purchased right away. Some gas stations may offer 15 percent ethanol (E15) gas or higher ethanol fuel blends, but any fuel containing more than





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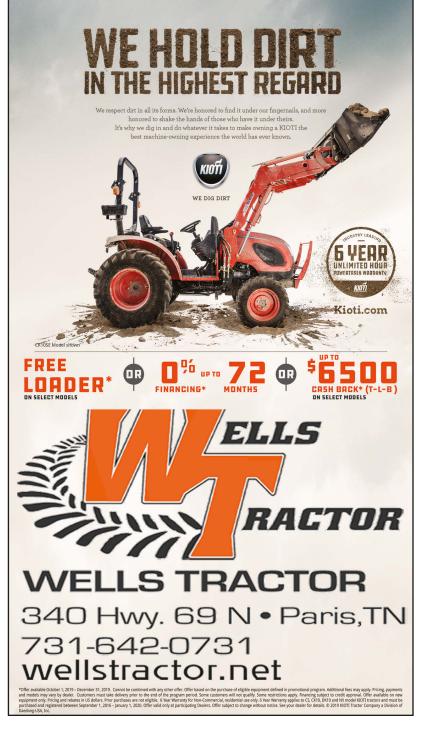
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10 percent ethanol can damage--and is illegal to use in--small engine equipment not designed for it.

5. Store fuel safely. Label your fuel can with the date of purchase and ethanol content of the fuel. Never put "old" gas in your outdoor power equipment. If you don't know the date of purchase, safely dispose of the fuel in the can and buy fresh fuel. Always store fuel out of the reach of children or pets and in approved containers.

**6** ■ For battery-powered equipment, recharge

only with the charger specified by the manufacturer. A charger that is suitable for one type of battery pack may create a risk of fire when used with another battery pack. Follow all charging instructions and do not charge the battery pack or tool outside the temperature range specified in the instructions.

T Store batteries safely. When the battery pack is not in use, keep it away from other metal objects, like paper clips, coins, keys, nails, screws or other small metal objects, that can make a con-

nection from one terminal to another. Shorting the battery terminals together may cause burns or a fire.

**8** Clean your equipment and store it in a dry place. Remove any dirt, oil or grass. Clean equipment will run more ef-

ficiently and last longer. Never store your equipment in a place that is damp or wet.

To learn more, go to www.opei.org. For further information on safe fueling, go to www. LookBeforeYou-Pump.com.



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