

Fall Home & Auto



Farmhouse Feel
Ideas to give your home
the farmhouse feel



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Recognize the signs

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Signs your gutters are in need of repair

Compromised gutters can contribute to water issues in basements and adversely affect a home's foundation if not addressed immediately.

- **Gutters hanging off the home:** Gutters were once installed predominantly with spikes; however, many industry professionals now install gutters with hanger brackets. Why the change? Spikes loosen over time, leading to the gutters hanging off the home. Hanging gutters don't necessarily have to be replaced, but rather may be secured to the home, ideally with hanger brackets instead of spikes. Brackets hook into the front of the gutter and are then screwed into the fascia of a home. A professional who specializes in gutter repair can perform this task relatively quickly.

- **Gutter separation:** Gutters that are no longer fastened together can leak. Clogs and the accumulation of debris can cause gutters to separate. Replacement of separated gutters may or may not be necessary depending on how big the problem is and the condition of the existing gutters. If replacement is not necessary, separated gutters may be remedied by securing the joints, another relatively simple fix.

- **Peeling exterior paint:** Paint that appears to be peeling off of your home may indicate that water is seeping over the edge of the gutter closest to your home. When that happens, water is coming down the side of the house, causing the paint to peel. In such instances, replacing the gutters is often necessary.

- **Basement flooding:** Flooding can be caused by aging, ineffective gutters. That's because deteriorating gutters sometimes allow water to leak near the foundation of a home, contributing to basement flooding.

Ideas to give your home a farmhouse feel

Farmhouse style homes are having a moment. A 2020 survey from Homes.com asked more than 5,000 adults across the United States about their favorite house style from a list that included bohemian craftsman, mid-century modern ranch, French chateau, and Tudor, among others. Modern farmhouse was the runaway winner, as participants in 42 of the 50 states indicated this simple, cozy style was their favorite.

Home renovation projects can help homeowners put their own unique stamp on their homes, and such projects can be both aesthetic and functional in nature.

Following are some farmhouse design elements homeowners can consider as they look to transform their home interiors with this popular style in mind.

- **Exposed beams:** Exposed beams instantly evoke images of a farmhouse. The home improvement experts at BobVila.com note that this rustic renovation project can utilize real wood or faux beams that look like the real thing. Decorative beams that have nothing to do with a home's structural integrity can be installed by skilled do-it-yourselfers. However, even faux beams are heavy, and BobVila.com recommends homeowners have an engineer assess their existing structure prior to installation.

- **Distressed wood finishes:** Distressing is designed to make something look less than perfect. Distressed wood finishes can be found throughout many farmhouse style homes. Furniture and picture frames can provide the distressed look farmhouse fans are looking for. This is a relatively inexpensive project that many homeowners can tackle on their own after watching some online tutorials that recommend the right tools and techniques to get the job done right.

- **Kitchen sink:** Many components combine to create a truly classic farmhouse kitchen. But perhaps no component is more essential than the classic farmhouse sink. The renovation experts at HGTV note that a classic farmhouse sink features a deep, wide basin. Farmhouse sinks are large



Farmhouse style homes are wildly popular. Some simple renovations can help homeowners with a fondness for farmhouse style bring this classic look into their homes.

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enough to handle all the dishes that come after a big family meal. Old-fashioned porcelain sinks are worth consideration by homeowners who want their kitchen sinks to evoke a traditional farmhouse feel.

- **Countertops:** HGTV recommends butcher block countertops for homeowners who favor European farmhouse style. Homeowners overhauling their kitchens to create a farmhouse feel should consider installing a large island with a walnut butcher block countertop for an authentic farmhouse feel.

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Pre-winter perennial pruning pointers

Foliage and football might be two things people instantly associate with fall, but there's more to this beloved season than brightly colored leaves and action on the gridiron.

Gardeners know that spring is an ideal time to plan and plant their favorite flowers and most flavorful fruits and vegetables. However, seasoned gardeners know that gardening is a year-round commitment. Pruning is one of the keys to keeping perennials coming back for years to come, and fall is an ideal time to take on this important task.

Pruning perennials in the fall is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor. According to the Old Farmer's Almanac, some perennials can be cut down after the first killing frost, while others can be left to benefit wildlife, including birds and insects. Understanding pruning and when to do it this fall can help gardeners lay a strong foundation for their gardens that will benefit them next spring.

Why should some perennials be pruned?

The College of Agricultural Sciences at Pennsylvania State University notes that perennials that have become diseased or infested with insects are pruned to prevent those problems from resurfacing in the spring. In addition, according to the Old Farmer's Almanac, many herbaceous perennials have old foliage and dying stems after several hard frosts. If dead foliage or dying stems aren't pruned, disease, slugs and other pests can overwinter in the plants. Cutting these plants down to the ground after several hard frosts allows the base of the plant to remain dormant over the winter but makes the plant less hospitable to disease and insects.

Which perennials should I prune?

The first step to pruning perennials is to recognize which need to be pruned and which can be left intact for the winter. The Old Farmer's Almanac notes that bee balm and phlox are prone to powdery mildew and should be cut back once they're gone. Hostas harbor slug eggs, so they, too, should



Understanding pruning and when to do it this fall can help gardeners lay a strong foundation for their gardens that will benefit them next spring.

be pruned after a hard frost. Hosta leaves that have fallen on the ground should be removed as well.

There's no need to cut back certain perennials if they're healthy. For example, hardy geraniums do not require pruning in the fall, and Penn State Extension notes that hardy perennials like garden mums are more likely to survive a cold winter if they're left intact. That's because the tops of such plants will collect leaves and snow for insulation and moisture over the course of winter. Gardeners who are unsure about fall pruning can speak with their local gardening center for additional advice regarding which plants to cut back before

winter.

When to prune perennials

Gardeners need not rush to prune perennials in the fall. Diseased or infested plants can be pruned at the first sight of disease or infestation, but gardeners can wait until several hard frosts have occurred before they prune healthy perennials. In gardening parlance, a hard frost refers to when temperatures drop below 28 F. Several hard frosts kill the uppermost growth of most perennials, making this an ideal time to prune them.

Pruning perennials in fall can be the first step toward creating an awe-inspiring spring garden.

When you can stop mowing

Each lawn is different, and when to stop mowing may depend on a host of factors, including local climate and the type of turf. In addition to climate and turf, homeowners can keep an eye on these conditions to determine when the time is right to put their mowers away for the winter.

- **Frost:** Warm-season grasses typically go dormant after a couple of significant frosts. Frosts are most noticeable in the early morning hours, so be sure to check lawn conditions each morning as the weather begins to grow cold. Two or three frosts might be enough to make warm-season grasses go dormant for the winter. Cool-season grasses may keep growing and require mowing even after a few frosts.

- **Soil temperature:** If it's hard to determine if frosts have occurred, homeowners can try checking the temperature of their soil to decide if they need to keep mowing. Homeowners can routinely check soil temperature to determine if their grasses have stopped growing. Warm-season grasses tend to stop growing once the soil temperature is consistently at 55 F or below, while cool-season grasses tend to stop when temperatures are 45 F or lower.

Falling leaves have long been a barometer used by homeowners to determine if they need to keep mowing their lawns. That's not necessarily a reliable metric, as grass can still keep growing even if leaves have been falling for weeks. Some trees shed their leaves more quickly than others, but it's a good rule of thumb that lawns will need to keep being mowed if trees are still retaining more than half their leaves.

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Signs it's time to overhaul your kitchen

Homeowners may wonder if remodeling their kitchens is worth the investment, but they should not just consider cost, but also the current conditions of their kitchens when deciding if a renovation project is the right move to make. These signs indicate it may be time to renovate a kitchen:

- Breakers are triggered. If the lights go dark from a tripped circuit breaker every time you try to microwave and run the toaster at the same time, your wiring is likely not up to the task of handling the workload.
- Lack of storage. One of the biggest hassles homeowners encounter in their kitchens is a lack of storage space. If making a meal involves a Jenga-like stacking and rearranging of kitchen tools you might need more storage. A redesign can achieve this.
- Outdated appliances. Even if your appliances are not avocado green or relics of the 1970s, they might still need to be replaced. According to CRD Design, appliances are only expected to last around 10 to 15 years. If appliances have become unsafe or energy hogs, it could be time for a remodel.
- Family is expanding (or shrinking). Kitchens often are the heart of a home. They need to meet the needs of the family that resides in that home. A remodel can add space as needed. On the flip side, when a couple becomes empty nesters, kitchens can be redesigned and downsized.
- Poor lighting. Task lighting is essential in a kitchen, but older homes may not be equipped with lighting where it's most needed. A remodel can improve lighting with under-cabinet lights, pendants, overhead lighting, and even natural light to make the space attractive and more functional.

Must-haves for a bathroom remodel

Many new and longtime homeowners recognize the value of remodeling their kitchens and bathrooms. Kitchens and baths tend to appear dated more quickly than other spaces, such as living rooms and bedrooms, which can always be revamped with some fresh paint and new furnishings.

The home improvement pricing resource Home Guide indicates an average bathroom remodel costs anywhere from \$5,500 to \$15,000, depending on the size and scope of the renovation. However, a bath redo can increase a home's resale value and can return as much as 68 percent of homeowners' investments.

As homeowners plan their bathroom renovations, it's a good time to consider improvements that will improve function and add design appeal for years to come.

- Floating vanity. Add an airy feeling to the room by creating space between the vanity and the floor. A floating vanity can be a counter with a vessel sink or even have cabinets, as long as the vanity doesn't extend to the floor.
- Freestanding traditional sink or tub. There's something elegant about a freestanding tub or pedestal sink. Such features can lend a classic vibe to a space, however, freestanding fixtures also come in modern or eclectic forms, so there are options for any design style.
- Frameless showers. Switch to a walk-in shower option, which improves aesthetics and makes it easier to "age in place" in a home. Pair that frameless shower with clear glass shower doors so sightline in the space remains unencumbered.
- Natural textures. Create a calm and serene sanctuary in the bathroom with light, natural hues and materials. Nature-inspired colors on tiles, walls and vanities can add to the spa vibe.
- Dual sinks and vanities. With a double vanity, two people can share the space and easily use the bathroom without getting in each other's way. One vanity with two sinks works, but homeowners can create even more personal space by dividing vanities and mirrors.



As homeowners plan their bathroom renovations, it's a good time to consider improvements that will improve function and add design appeal for years to come.

- Small-textured tile on shower floors. Small textures are appealing and add safety. The added texture and grouting will keep feet from slipping on wet floors. Also, opt for mold-resistant grout to make cleanup even easier.
- Special shower heads. Invest in shower heads that can run the gamut from creating steam showers to rainfall effects. Some showers will have multiple shower jets to offer an invigorating experience.
- Improve drainage. Increase the diameter of the drainpipe in the bathroom

from the standard to a two-inch drainpipe. This will reduce the risk of clogs and overflow leaks.

• Install a window. Natural light and air flow can reduce the risk for mold and mildew growth, and windows add some aesthetic appeal to a space. Consider adding frosted privacy glass.

Additional considerations for a bath remodel include heated floors, well-placed and attractive storage options and a toilet enclosure (water closet) for added privacy. These and other bathroom renovation ideas can add value and improve the appeal of the room.



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How to maintain hardwood floors

Hardwood floors have long been sought after by home buyers. In its 2019 "Remodeling Impact Report," the National Association of Realtors revealed that new wood flooring was the fourth most popular project to attract buyers.

Of course, hardwood floors aren't just for buyers. Homeowners who already have hardwood floors know just how impressive these floors can be, especially when they're well maintained. Maintaining wood floors is not necessarily as straightforward as it may seem, and homeowners may benefit from a tutorial on how to keep the floors under their feet looking good.

To polish or not to polish?

Polishing floors is an inexpensive way to keep them looking good. But the home improvement experts at BobVila.com note that not all floors can be polished, and determining which ones can depends on the finish. Floors with waterproof barriers such as urethane will benefit from routine polishing. However, floors with penetrating finishes like tung oil will need to be waxed rather than polished.

What finish is on the floor?

The Hardwood Distributor's Association recommends a simple way for homeowners to determine which type of finish is on their hardwood floors. Homeowners are advised to rub a finger across the floor. If no smudge appears, then the floor is surface sealed. If a smudge is created, then the floor has been treated with a penetrating seal. The HDA also notes that recently installed wood floors are likely surface sealed.

How often should floors be polished or waxed?

Wood flooring professionals recommend polishing floors that can be polished once every few months. Waxing wood floors does not need to be done as frequently, and most can benefit from a fresh coat of wax every 12 to 18 months.

What can I do on a daily basis? Some simple tricks and daily maintenance can help wood floors maintain their impressive look.

- Use floor mats. The HDA notes that floor mats near entryways can reduce the



Hardwood floors are attractive for many reasons, and they look even more stunning and last much longer when homeowners make an effort to maintain them.

time it takes to clean hardwood floors and reduce the wear and tear they endure. For example, tiny particles like dirt can scratch the floor and contribute to the kind of minor damage that adds up to significant scarring over time. Floor mats near entryways ensures that most of that dirt never makes it to the wood floors.

- Vacuum without a beater bar. Some vacuums contain beater bars, which are designed to pick up human hair, dog hair and other things that conventional vacuums may not be able to pick up. The HDA ad-

vises vacuuming without the beater bar, as it can contribute to small scratches in the floor. Sweeping with a high-quality broom or microfiber cloth is another way to pick up dirt without damaging floors.

- Use manufacturer-recommended cleaning products. Local home improvement stores sell a host of hardwood floor cleaning products, but the HDA notes that many flooring manufacturers now sell their own hardwood floor cleaners designed specifically for their floors. These products are likely homeowners' best bets.

Cyberattacks Security often overlooked with smart home set up

Smart homes can make life at home more convenient, especially for remote workers. However, a recent report suggests many smart homes are vulnerable to cyberattacks.

In its "Smart Home Report 2019," the cybersecurity firm Avast revealed that just under 41 percent of the 16 million smart homes surveyed across the globe contained at least one vulnerable connected device. The Avast report found that 69 percent of vulnerable devices in smart homes were determined to be susceptible to attacks due to simple passwords or one-factor authentication.

Two- or multi-factor authentication provides an extra layer of security and is a simple way to safeguard smart homes from cyberattacks. Two-factor authentication is a security process that requires users to provide two different factors to verify their identities.

A password to log in to an account is typically the first factor users utilize. The second factor may be a cell phone number that users provide. In such instances, a code is instantly texted to the number provided when users attempt to log in. Once that code is entered, users can then access their programs and accounts.

Two-factor authentication is not time-consuming, and users can typically expect to access files, accounts and apps within seconds of verifying their identities a second time. That makes two-factor authentication a simple and highly effective way to make smart homes less vulnerable to cyberattacks.



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Tips to consider before buying new tires

Though vehicles can't function without them, tires are something few drivers think about until something goes wrong.

The automotive resource Kelley Blue Book notes that the life expectancy of most tires falls between 25,000 and 50,000 miles. That's a big gap, and car owners can check their vehicle manuals to see if their vehicle manufacturer recommends a more specific replacement interval.

It's worth noting that mileage is not the only barometer drivers should use to determine if they need to buy new tires. The following tips can help drivers determine if now is the time to outfit their vehicle with new tires.

- Measure the tread. KBB notes that a tire assessment should always include measuring the remaining tread.

Drivers can do this on their own in various ways. One method involves looking at the tread wear bars, which are little bridges in the grooves between the ridges. If the bars are even with the tread pattern, then the tire has very little tread remaining and must be replaced.

The penny or quarter test is a popular way to determine if tires must be replaced. Insert a penny or quarter into the center of the tread between two ridges with Lincoln's or Washington's head facing you. If you can see the very top of the head or the space above the head, the tire must be replaced. If only a little bit of hair is visible, then the tire is nearing its end. The tire has sufficient remaining tread if the some of the forehead is concealed.

- Check for other signs of wear and tear. Tires with cracked sidewalls, discoloration and/or bulging need to be replaced.

Recognize the signs of driver fatigue

Few things elicit a sense of unbridled adventure as much as a road trip. Unlike more traditional vacations with carefully planned itineraries, road trips are a less formal, more flexible way to travel.

The sense of control drivers have on road trips can help make such excursions feel more liberating. But as any veteran road tripper knows, that control can begin to wane as drivers experience fatigue. Driver fatigue is a serious safety concern. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that each year roughly 100,000 police-reported crashes involve drowsy driving. The National Safety Council notes that drowsy driving accounts for more than 1,500 fatalities every year.

Learning to recognize the signs of driver fatigue can help road trippers know when it's time to put their vehicles in park or hand over the keys to a fellow traveler. The warning signs of driver fatigue can manifest themselves in various ways, affecting drivers' bodies and minds and their performance behind the wheel.

Body – The American Academy of Sleep Medicine notes there are various ways the body exhibits signs of driver fatigue. An inability to stop yawning and having difficulty keeping eyes open are two telltale signs of driver fatigue. Drivers experiencing fatigue also might have trouble keeping their head up and find themselves nodding off. Drivers who are blinking with greater frequency than normal and are rubbing and itching their eyes also are showing signs of fatigue.

Mind – The mind also is affected by driver fatigue. The AASM notes that fatigued drivers often cannot remember driving the last few miles. Drivers also may feel restless, irritable, impatient, or even aggressive as they become fatigued. Difficulty focusing attention on the road and daydreaming are some additional mental signs that drivers are fatigued.

Driving – Fatigue also manifests itself through erratic driving. The AASM notes that fatigued drivers may miss road signs,



The warning signs of driver fatigue can manifest themselves in various ways, affecting drivers' bodies and minds and their performance behind the wheel.

“
...fatigued drivers often cannot remember driving the last few miles.
”

drift out of their lane and have difficulty maintaining their speed. Passengers may not notice the physical and mental signs of driver fatigue, though they can do their part and look for them during road trips, especially if drivers have been behind the wheel for a long time. Passengers who notice the driving-related signs of fatigue should offer to take over immediately or strongly encourage drivers to pull over. Drivers who are starting to drift into other lanes, missing street signs and/or tailgating other motorists should be asked to hand over the keys right away, as this behavior can greatly increase the risk of accidents.

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Clean vehicle interiors enhance comfort, preserve value

Oil changes, tire rotations and even car washes may garner the bulk of drivers' attention in regard to vehicle maintenance, however, a number of smaller undertakings, including keeping vehicle interiors clean, are worthy of drivers' attention as well.

Dust and dirt can accumulate in a vehicle over time, making for a less comfortable ride. Keeping vehicle interiors clean can make car and truck cabins more welcoming for drivers and their passengers, and such maintenance is simple and inexpensive.

- **Focus on the floors.** The floors in a car face all that weather has to offer. In winter, boots may track snow and deicing solutions like salt into a vehicle's cabin. In summer, sand from the beach or dirt from hiking trails may find its way in. Some drivers use the same floor mats year-round, but there's an advantage to switching based on the seasons. According to the automotive experts at NAPA, fabric floor mats in summer will hold on to dirt and keep it from spreading. Beachgoers will appreciate that after tracking sand into their cars. In the winter, swap fabric floor mats with rubber or plastic alternatives, as these mats will hold melting snow, rain or salt, preventing them from staining the floors.

- **Be mindful of seating materials.** When cleaning seats, drivers should be mindful of the materials those seats are made of. Cloth seats should be cleaned differently than leather and vinyl, and all



Clean car interiors can make driving that much more enjoyable and even more healthy.

seats should be vacuumed prior to cleaning. Consumer Reports notes that leather and vinyl seats are treated with a protective coating that requires gentle cleaning. Begin with a small cloth with a dab of dish or saddle soap, and then apply a leather conditioner to prevent the leather from drying out.

When cleaning cloth seats, an upholstery cleaner can be applied to stains, just be sure to follow instructions carefully. Cleaning products are not all the same, and application techniques may vary. A scrub brush can be used to work cleaning solutions into the seats and any lingering moisture can then be wiped away with a microfiber cloth.

- **Clean the inside of your car windshield.** Use an interior glass cleaner to clean the interior windshields and windows. These surfaces can accumulate a significant amount of dirt due to interior vapors and air pollution. Consumer Reports recommends using a glass cleaner that contains alcohol. Interior glass cleaners are designed to prevent streaking and film buildup, which can compromise drivers' vision.

- **Take on touchscreens.** Many of today's vehicles have touchscreens that can quickly accumulate dust and fingerprints. Toyota recommends soaking a clean cloth in lukewarm water and lightly wiping the surface of touch screens. Avoid substances like solvents, alkaline or acidic solutions, which can contribute to staining or discoloration on the screen.

Safety tips to follow for inexperienced motorcycle riders

Riding a motorcycle can be an awe-inspiring experience much different from riding inside a car. According to the motorcycle information resource Biker Report, 1.5 million Americans owned a motorcycle in 2018.

Even though motorcycle accidents have declined in recent years, a recent report by the Governors Highway Safety Association, a nonprofit organization representing state highway safety offices, indicates that, when adjusting for miles traveled, motorcycle

fatalities occur 28 times more frequently than fatalities involving passenger vehicles. Alcohol and drug impairment, distraction and an aging motorcycle population have contributed to the elevated accident risk among motorcycle riders. However, inexperience also plays a role.

By adhering to certain safety measures, novice riders can avoid risks and stay safe.

- **Get your license.** It is essential to ride with a license. In the United States,

riders are required to have a motorcycle license or endorsement in addition to a driver's license to legally ride a motorcycle. Depending on where riders live, a motorcycle safety course may be a prerequisite to getting a license and can help riders improve their skills on a motorcycle.

- **Enroll in a safety course.** A safety course can teach riders various strategies, including emergency evasive maneuvers. The Motorcycle Safety Foundation offers

courses for riders, who can check to see if any such courses are available in their areas.

- **Wear a helmet.** Many states require motorcycle operators and riders to wear helmets when bikes are in operation. The U.S. Department of Transportation also recommends a full-face helmet as an added safety option for novice motorcycle riders. Biker Report states that a helmet can reduce risks of brain injuries from a motorcycle accident by up to 67 percent.

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Steps to organize your home office for remote work

Remote working has become popular in recent years, but the "working-from-home" economy bloomed exponentially as the world was forced to confront the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Stanford economist Nicholas Bloom, as of summer 2020, 42 percent of the United States labor force was working from home full-time.

The need for home office spaces has increased as more people work from home. Many people have retrofitted various spaces around their homes into areas to get work done. More organized home work spaces can increase productivity. Individuals can follow these guidelines to create effective, organized home offices.

Begin with the desk: The desk is the primary spot where work will take place. The right desk accessories can provide visual appeal and also serve practical purposes. Have cups for holding pens and pencils, baskets and bins for larger items, and store whatever you can elsewhere so it does not lead to clutter on the desk. Store wireless printers in a cabinet or even on a bookshelf so it doesn't take up real estate on the desk.

Create a printing station: While you're moving that wireless printer elsewhere, designate a space to serve as the central printing hub. This way children who need to print assignments for school will know



Getting organized can increase productivity and make working from home more enjoyable.

where to go as well. Printer supplies like extra ink cartridges and printer paper can be kept in decorative storage boxes nearby.

Increase your shelving: Shelving can help keep items organized and off the desk in home offices without closets or drawers. Look for shelves that blend in with decor but are sturdy enough to be functional.

Organize paperwork: Figure out a system that works for you to help tidy up papers you choose to save. While some papers can be scanned and stored as digital files, color-coded file folders can organize statements and other important documents. This makes it easy to find the folder you need when looking for certain documents.

Establish a charging station: Repurpose certain items, such as a desk organizer, into an easily accessible electronics charging station where phones and tablets can charge at one time.

Make essential binders: HGTV suggests making binders that can store the most important papers for easy access – even in an emergency. Set up a binder for automotive paperwork, including repair receipts, a medical binder where key medical records are kept, a binder for manuals for devices in the home, and one to store financial planning documents.

How to pick paint to revitalize your home's interior

Color can be a part of every homeowner's design arsenal. Bold colors can be used to create a stunning accent wall, while homes with open concepts often utilize color to define rooms. Homeowners who want to revitalize their home interiors can do so with paint.

Though paint may seem simple to novices, homeowners who have painted home interiors in the past recognize how complicated the process of picking paint can be. Paint retailers have a seemingly endless swatch of paint colors to choose from, and before long, your head can start to spin as

you try to narrow your options.

Follow these tips to help pick the perfect paint for your home's interior:

- Take stock, and photographs, of your current furnishings. Many interior designers rely on a simple technique when recommending color schemes to their clients. Choose a standout color from existing furnishings, such as the dominant color from a patterned decorative pillow or piece of furniture, and then look for the same shade to paint the walls. A photograph of the item can be handy when visiting the paint store.
- Lighten colors as you go up. The

home renovation and design experts at HGTV recommend picking darker color values for the floor, medium color values for the walls and light values for the ceiling. This approach mimics the look of the great outdoors, where the ground tends to be darker than the trees, and the trees are darker than the blue sky.

• Utilize paint to create the vibe you want. The home renovation experts at This Old House note that colors evoke an emotional response. Cool colors like blue and green give off a relaxing vibe, which makes them ideal for bedrooms and bathrooms.

Red is an intense color that can up the energy ante in any room, which can make it an option for homeowners who want to spark debate around their dinner tables.

• Give personal preference its place at the table. Though interior designers may have years of experience picking paint colors for a home and researchers may have determined how certain colors can be utilized to create a desired ambiance in a given room, ultimately you are the one who will be living in the home. So, it's important that you pick colors you like for your home interiors.

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Driving safer

How to help seniors adapt to automotive technology

Modern automobiles are more technologically advanced than ever before. That tech isn't just making driving more comfortable and convenient, but also safer for motorists.

In a recent analysis of motor vehicle accidents, researchers at the International Institute for Highway Safety found that vehicles with blind spot and lane departure warning systems were involved in 11 percent fewer sideswipes and head-on crashes than cars that did not feature such systems. In addition, the IIHS estimates that the number of automobile crashes in the United States could be decreased by 85,000 each year if every vehicle were outfitted with a lane departure warning system.

Driver assistance systems have made driving safer for millions of people across the globe, but one demographic may need some extra help adapting to modern vehicles and may even need a little extra encouragement to utilize tech that can keep them safe behind the wheel. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that, in 2018, the United States was home to 45 million licensed drivers aged 65 and over. That marks a 60 percent increase since 2000.

Though seniors' perceived unwillingness or inability to utilize modern technology is often overstated, some aging drivers may need a little extra help as they try to learn how to use assistance technologies in their vehicles.



Aging drivers may need a little extra help as they try to learn how to use assistance technologies in their vehicles.

- Learn the tech yourself. Assistance technologies are not all one and the same. Vehicle manufacturers have their own systems and there can be a learning curve when adapting to a new one. If you aspire to teach a senior how to utilize the assis-

tance technologies in his or her vehicle, first learn the tech on your own.

If both you and your aging friend or family member own a new model, chances are you already know how to use the tech in your loved one's vehicle. If you drive cars

made by different manufacturers, visit the dealership where your loved one bought his or her car and ask for a quick tutorial on all the safety features in the vehicle. Salespeople demonstrate these features every day, so it shouldn't take long for them to show you the ropes.

- Be patient. Each person adapts to a new technology at his or her own pace. It's important to remain patient when teaching aging drivers how to use the tech in their vehicles. Old habits die hard, and while some drivers may quickly adapt to tech like backup cameras, others may not be so quick to abandon driving techniques they've been safely using for decades. Stay the course, remain patient and allow senior drivers to adapt at their own pace.

- Teach one tech at a time. It can be overwhelming for drivers of all ages to adapt overnight to all the tech in their new vehicles. When teaching senior drivers how to utilize various driver assistance technologies, take it one tech at a time. When coupled with your patience, this approach can help seniors avoid being overwhelmed and increases the likelihood that they will embrace the tech in their vehicles.

Many senior drivers utilize driver assistance technologies every day. A patient and methodical approach to showing seniors how their vehicles can help them stay safe behind the wheel can be a road map to helping seniors adapt to life in modern vehicles.

Ten gifts for the automotive enthusiasts in your life

The roar of the engine and the feeling of the wind in your hair is part of the magic of taking to the open road behind the wheel of a beloved vehicle. Whether a person is the ultimate gear head who needs to have the latest aftermarket accessory or someone who simply appreciates a pristine ride, auto enthusiasts come in all shapes and sizes. Luckily, there are all types of automotive gifts that can make it easy to impress car guys and gals.

1. Dashboard cell phone holder: Using a mobile phone while driving is not a good idea. However, many people use their phones as GPS devices. Holding a phone while navigating is dangerous, but a phone mount near the dash can keep the phone visible without compromising the safety of drivers and their passengers.

2. Customized floor mats: Know an auto fanatic who's also a sports fan? Offer a gift that mixes the two passions, such as floor mats featuring a favorite sports team's logo.

3. Cleansing wipes: When drivers are short on time, a full car wash and wax may not be possible. Drop Wipes are a product made from a neutralizing acid that destabilizes stains or bird droppings for an easy cleaning.

4. Magazine subscription: A wide selection of publications are geared to auto enthusiasts. They provide plenty of pertinent information, and some car lovers like to collect and display certain issues.



When gifting automotive enthusiasts, look no further than their favorite hobby for inspiration.

Yearly subscriptions are affordable and can make ideal stocking stuffers.

5. Racing experience gift certificate: Research racing car schools and experiences where you live. Chances are you can find an opportunity for an automotive enthusiast to get behind the wheel of a race car with professional drivers offering tips for navigating the course at high

speeds.

6. Car cleaning kit: Taking care of a ride means making sure it is clean inside and out. A quality car cleaning kit can ensure the job is done effectively and the car or truck always looks its best.

7. Personalized leather keychain: Ensure that a person can drive and keep their keys handy in style with leather

“
Research racing car schools and experiences where you live.
”

keychains engraved with a driver's name or initials.

8. Racing video games: A love for the open road may not end when cars pull into the driveway. Modern racing games and consoles produce incredibly realistic graphics and action that mimics real life.

9. Automotive cufflinks: As a nod to a love of driving, find quirky cufflinks that are shaped like everything from gear shifters to speedometers to steering wheels.

10. Roof or car racks: When a love of driving merges with the call of the great outdoors, drivers may need something to help haul their stuff. Various racks have been designed for toting around bicycles, kayaks, luggage, and more.



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