

# Spring HOME



April 2018  
A Special Supplement to

# Lake Mills Graphic



# How empty-nesters can transform their homes

After bringing home a bubbly baby boy or girl, it can be hard for parents to imagine that a day will come when their kids are off to college and then onto their own apartment or house. After spending decades nurturing and caring for children, parents are then left with a suddenly quiet house and probably much more time to spare. If saying goodbye to the kids also means extra house, there's the option to downsize or make that extra space more useful.

Homeowners who choose to stay put can renovate vacant rooms into spaces that meet their newfound needs.

- **Hobby haven:** If you've always meant to set up a crafting room, home-brewing station or an artist's studio, now is an ideal time to do just that. Figure out which supplies you will need and begin reworking that former bedroom into a new sanctuary for leisure interests.
- **Guest suite:** If you've never had a spare bedroom to entertain guests, a child's former bedroom can fit the bill. It may not be that difficult to transform such spaces into relaxing and inviting rooms for overnight guests. Be sure there is at least a queen-sized bed and a dresser or chest of drawers to stash belongings. Select paint colors and linens in neutral tones so the room will be inviting to guests.
- **Living room redo:** When there's an entire soccer team coming over to hang out, that large sectional sofa or modular seating may be ideal. Now that the kids are out of the house and their friends are no longer coming over for movie night, living rooms can be made more intimate with small-scale seating. A small sofa and two comfortable chairs may be a more fitting option.
- **At-home gym:** Save on gym membership fees by building a mini studio right at home. Choose one of the larger bedrooms and then fill it with some fitness equipment, such as an elliptical trainer, a bench press bench and some free weights. Store rolled-up mats in the closet for yoga or Pilates sessions.
- **Expanded bathroom:** If space has always been at a premium in the bathroom, borrow area from an empty bedroom and turn it into a spa. Install a soaking tub separate from the shower, and fill the room with other amenities, such as a warming lamp or even a small sauna.
- **Home office:** Working from home a few days a week may be more plausible when nearing retirement, as it will be a smoother transition from heading to the office each day to spending more time at home. Turn a bedroom or den into an office space with a new desk and bookshelves.

An empty nest can be a bittersweet experience, but parents can make such situations work for them by transforming their homes to better reflect their current needs.



An empty bedroom can be turned into a cozy sitting room.

# Safety renovations for seniors' homes

Feeling safe and secure at home is a priority for any homeowner. But safety is of particular concern for aging men and women who are at greater risk of being involved in accidents at home than younger men and women.

Harvard Health Publishing says that accidents at home are among the leading causes of injury and death in the United States. The chances for fatalities increases as one ages, and by age 75 and older, men and women are almost four times as likely to die in a home accident as people a decade younger.

As people age, their balance, eyesight and general physical abilities can begin to diminish. Furthermore, a fall or incident that may only bruise a younger individual can cause more serious breaks or damage for seniors, resulting in potentially lengthy recovery times.

The Home Care Assistance organization says that one million elderly people are admitted to the emergency room for injuries every year. People concerned about the safety of their homes or the homes of their aging loved ones can retrofit such properties to make them safer.

## Falls

According to The Senior Social Club, which offers care and community services to seniors, falls are the most common accidents affecting seniors. One out of every three seniors aged 65 and older falls at least once a year.

In addition to working with doctors to improve mobility and modify medications that may cause unsteadiness, changes around the home can help. Grab bars placed in bathrooms and high-traffic areas can help seniors get stay more stable when changing from sitting to standing positions.

Potential tripping hazards should be assessed. Area rugs without nonskid backings, clutter on floors, extension cords that extend into walking areas, and uneven flooring pose tripping hazards. Anti-slip coatings can be added to floors to reduce the risk of tripping.

Poorly lit staircases and entryways also can contribute to falls. Consider the installation of motion-activated lighting so that dim areas can be automatically brightened when necessary. A nightlight or LED lights placed near molding can help guide seniors to the bathroom during midnight visits.

## Physical limitations

Arthritis can impede seniors' ability to turn on and off appliances, water faucets or handle certain kitchen tools. Kitchen and bathroom modifications can include the installation of ergonomic and user-friendly handles and spigots.

Task lighting can make it easier to prepare meals, and appliances that automatically turn off after a certain period of time can be a safety feature for forgetful individuals.

Reorganize kitchen cabinets to make commonly used items as accessible as possible.

## Smart Homes

Friends or family members can have greater control over seniors' homes by installing smart home systems. This way they can remotely adjust thermostats, control lights, view cameras, engage locks or alarm systems, and much more without having to be at the home. This can seniors allow seniors to maintain their independence while offering peace of mind to their loved ones.

Certain home modifications can reduce seniors' injury risk.

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## How to control common spring pests

Just when winter thaws out and people are anxious to enjoy the blooming flowers and luscious lawns of spring, pesky pests can appear and impact comfort levels and safety.

Many pests resume their levels of activity as spring draws closer and temperatures warm up. The presence of these insects and rodents may cause problems in and around a home, which makes it essential to recognize them and avoid issues. The following are some of the more common spring pests and how to remedy infestations.

### Pavement ants

Pavement ants are some of the most common pests residents encounter inside and outside of their homes. These ants are light brown to black with appendages that are lighter than the rest of their bodies. Small in stature, pavement ants have parallel lines on their heads and thorax, according to pest extermination company Orkin.

Although pavement ants nest outdoors, they can enter homes through small crevices in search of food scraps. Their large colonies may not disappear until treatment is introduced. Keep foods in tightly sealed containers, clear counters and floors of crumbs, and address water sources, such as leaks. Pesticides may be needed in extreme conditions.

### Fleas

Fleas are tiny, jumping, biting pests that must find a host upon which to live. As ectoparasites, they feed on blood while living on the body of living hosts. Pets can bring fleas inside the yard and home in warm weather. According to the University of California State-wide Integrated Pest Management Program, flea larvae develop more quickly at higher temperatures. At normal room temperatures, the entire life cycle of a flea is about 18 days.

Several flea control products are available to control fleas on cats and dogs. There also may be powders and sprays to alleviate flea infestations in the home. Vacuuming is also very effective in killing larvae in the carpet and at picking up adults.

### Wasps

An errant wasp, hornet or yellow jacket may have survived winter and ridden out the colder temperatures within a home. Once the weather warms, queens will begin to look for places to lay eggs and establish colonies. Treating areas where wasps are seen entering and leaving the home is key. Seal holes as soon as possible.

Although wasps help control other insect populations, their painful stings and potentially aggressive nature can make them challenging to have around a home. If a nest is found, hire a professional to remove it.

### Spiders

Many spiders are not harmful enough to humans and pets to be much of a problem. In fact, spiders can be helpful to have around to control the populations of other insects. Still, many homeowners would prefer these web-slinging friends remain outdoors. Therefore, sealing cracks in a home's foundation and repairing small openings around windows and doors can help keep spiders out. Also, alleviating moisture issues in basements, garages or attics may keep out other bugs that would be prey to spiders.

Homeowners can take the steps necessary to cut down on pests in and around their homes.

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## Did you know?

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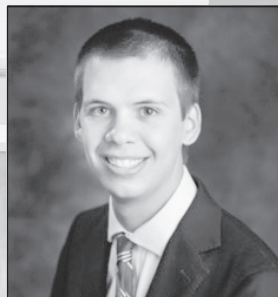
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## Complete these home improvements over the weekend

Home improvement projects ramp up when the weather warms up, as homeowners channel the rejuvenating feelings of spring and tackle their home to-do lists. Large-scale renovations can greatly affect a home, but smaller projects can yield impressive results and be completed over the course of a single weekend.

If time is of the essence, these weekend or one-day projects may satisfy homeowners' desires to fix up their homes.

- Create an accent wall. Painting a focal wall in a home can create a serious impact. The bonus is it will not take as long or require as many materials as painting an entire room. Accent walls frequently feature a bold color, so decide on placement and tackle this project in less than a day.

- Install stair runners. Dress up hardwood stairs with decorative carpet runners. Runners come in elongated pieces of carpeting or individual pieces that can be placed on each step. If carpeting doesn't fit with the home's design, painting individual stair treads also can create visual appeal.

- Dress up the entryway. An entryway is a guest's first impression of a home. Many entryways can use a minor overhaul, both inside and outside. Paint the front door a different color so it pops from the curb. Install a new mailbox or decorative house numbers. A new welcome mat can change the look as well. Inside, consider laying a new floor. Resilient vinyl tiles come in many different patterns and can mimic the look of wood, travertine or marble. Installing a floor can take a day or two.

- Install a new faucet. Instantly improve a kitchen or a bathroom with new fixtures. New faucets can provide aesthetic appeal and low-flow faucets can help conserve water.

- Create a gallery on the staircase. Gather and arrange framed photos, artwork or wall accents so that they ascend the wall of a staircase. This creates a designer touch and can dress up an often barren area of wall space.

- Install a fresh light fixture. Improve drab spaces with a little illumination. Better Homes & Gardens suggests replacing an existing fixture with something new and vibrant. If hanging a new fixture is not within one's skill set, free-standing table or floor lamps also can cast a new glow on a space.

- Add molding. Molding can add instant aesthetic appeal to a room. Molding is appropriate near the floor, at the top of walls where they meet the ceiling, or even mid-wall as a chair rail. Some homeowners like to create framed molding on walls in formal living spaces.

- Update kitchen or bathroom hardware. Replacing hardware is a fast and easy project, but one that can have immediate impact. Swap out tired or outdated hardware for newer brushed metals and more impactful shapes and designs.

Home renovations do not need to take weeks or months. Many projects can be completed over the course of a weekend.

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# Spring cleaning can alleviate allergies

Allergies affect people of all ages. The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology reports that allergic rhinitis affects between 10 and 30 percent of the world’s population. In addition, the prevalence of allergic diseases has risen in industrialized nations for more than 50 years.

Seasonal allergies tend to be the strongest in spring and autumn. Allergies can be exacerbated by many factors, including in homes where improvements are being made. Regular housecleaning can remove many common allergy triggers and help alleviate symptoms. Knowing which common home improvement mistakes can aggravate allergies can help homeowners avoid them.

**Suit up**

Before any cleaning begins, allergy sufferers should don face masks and rubber gloves to prevent themselves from breathing in allergens or having them touch their hands, where they can be transferred to the face or elsewhere. Those cleaning should also wear clothes that can be easily removed and laundered after a day’s work.

**Clean windows singularly**

Prolonged exposure to outdoor allergens, such as pollen, mold or ragweed, can aggravate allergies. Therefore, if windows are being cleaned, do one at a time and then promptly close the window. Having the air conditioning running can help filter the air as well.

**Use exhaust fans**

The AAAAI recommends using an exhaust fan in the kitchen and bathrooms to reduce the levels of moisture in these rooms and filter out potential allergens and odors. Moisture can eventually lead to the growth of mold and mildew, which isn’t healthy for anyone, including allergy sufferers, to breathe in.

**Invest in a HEPA filter**

Vacuums with HEPA filters can trap allergens that are so small that they pass through regular vacuum filters. That means instead of containing them, these small particles are only being shot back into the air where they are easily breathed in. WebMD suggests vacuuming once or twice a week to keep carpets and floors as clean as possible. Plus, don’t forget to vacuum upholstered furniture and drapes as well.

**Launder with hot water**

When it comes time to wash linens, do so in hot water, which can kill dust mites residing in sheets and blankets. Employ mattress covers to further protect against dust mite allergies.

**Shampoo smart**

Shampooing a carpet may cause moisture to become trapped in the carpet fibers, leading to increased dust mites or mold growth. Spot-clean stains instead. Otherwise, hire a professional cleaner who will clean and dry the carpet as quickly as possible.

**Damp dusting is better**

When cleaning up dust or home renovation debris, use a damp cloth or a vinegar solution to wipe down surfaces. This helps trap small particles instead of sending them into the air.

**Treat mold issues**

Mold can trigger allergic reactions, so it is best to keep it out of a home. Solutions that contain at least 10 percent bleach can be effective at killing mold, but it’s best to prevent mold from growing entirely. That means keeping tabs of any moisture issues and addressing them immediately.

Allergies can be problematic, but routine home cleaning in the right way can help alleviate symptoms.



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## Safety renovations for seniors' homes

Feeling safe and secure at home is a priority for any homeowner. But safety is of particular concern for aging men and women who are at greater risk of being involved in accidents at home than younger men and women.

Harvard Health Publishing says that accidents at home are among the leading causes of injury and death in the United States. The chances for fatalities increases as one ages, and by age 75 and older, men and women are almost four times as likely to die in a home accident as people a decade younger.

As people age, their balance, eyesight and general physical abilities can begin to diminish. Furthermore, a fall or incident that may only bruise a younger individual can cause more serious breaks or damage for seniors, resulting in potentially lengthy recovery times.

The Home Care Assistance organization says that one million elderly people are admitted to the emergency room for injuries every year. People concerned about the safety of their homes or the homes of their aging loved ones can retrofit such properties to make them safer.

### Falls

According to The Senior Social Club, which offers care and community services to seniors, falls are the most common accidents affecting seniors. One out of every three seniors aged 65 and older falls at least once a year.

In addition to working with doctors to improve mobility and modify medications that may cause unsteadiness, changes around the home can help. Grab bars placed in bathrooms and high-traffic areas can help seniors get stay more stable when changing from sitting to standing positions.

Potential tripping hazards should be assessed. Area rugs without nonskid backings, clutter on floors, extension cords that extend into walking areas, and uneven flooring pose tripping hazards. Anti-slip coatings can be added to floors to reduce the risk of tripping.

Poorly lit staircases and entryways also can contribute to falls. Consider the installation of motion-activated lighting so that dim areas can be automatically brightened when necessary. A nightlight or LED lights placed near molding can help guide seniors to the bathroom during midnight visits.

### Physical limitations

Arthritis can impede seniors' ability to turn on and off appliances, water faucets or handle certain kitchen tools. Kitchen and bathroom modifications can include the installation of ergonomic and user-friendly handles and spigots.

Task lighting can make it easier to prepare meals, and appliances that automatically turn off after a certain period of time can be a safety feature for forgetful individuals.

Reorganize kitchen cabinets to make commonly used items as accessible as possible.

### Smart Homes

Friends or family members can have greater control over seniors' homes by installing smart home systems. This way they can remotely adjust thermostats, control lights, view cameras, engage locks or alarm systems, and much more without having to be at the home. This can seniors allow seniors to maintain their independence while offering peace of mind to their loved ones.

Certain home modifications can reduce seniors' injury risk.

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April 2018  
A Special Supplement to

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