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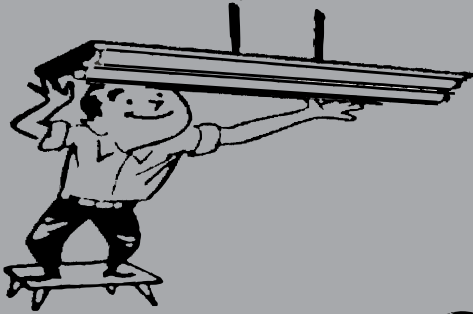


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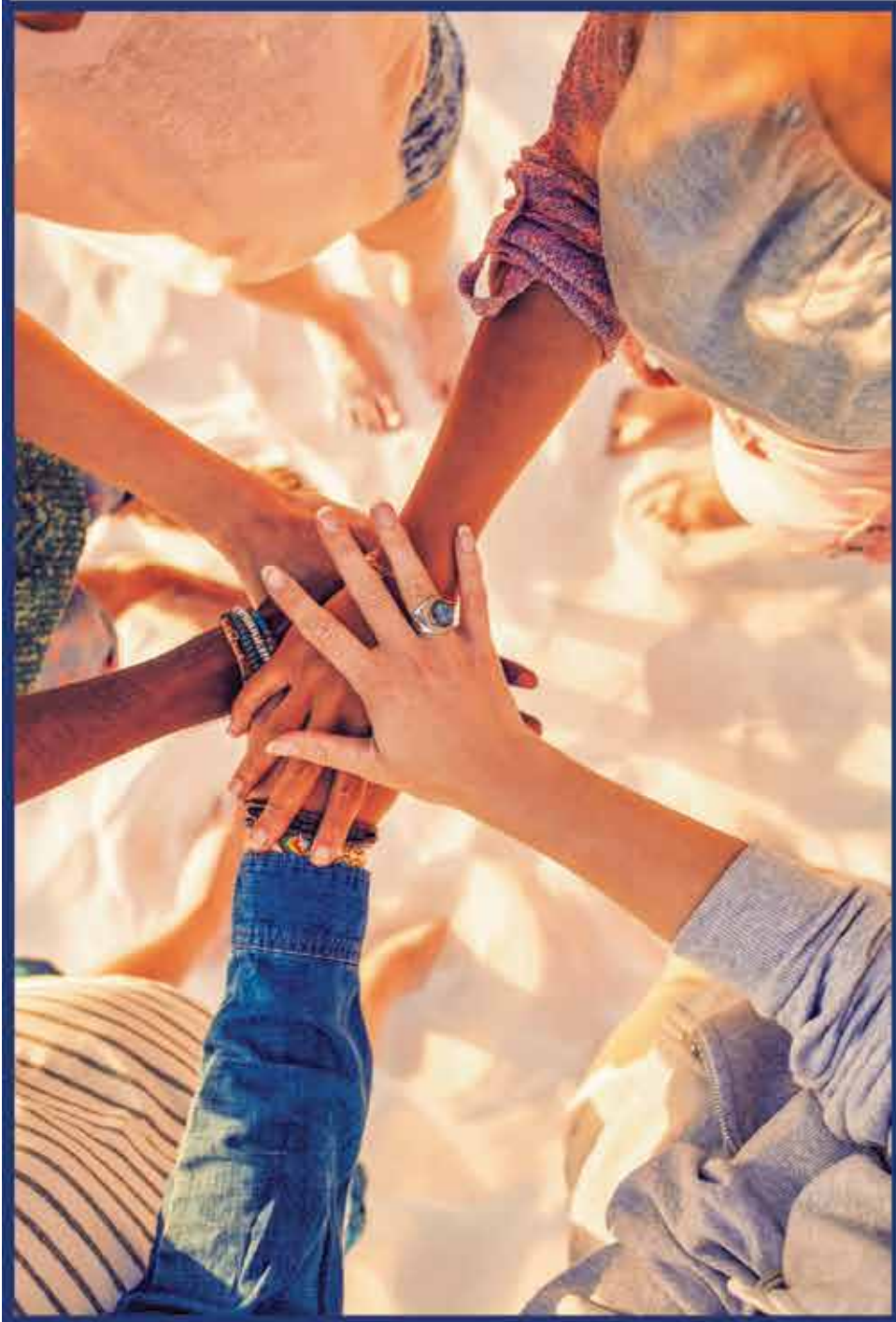
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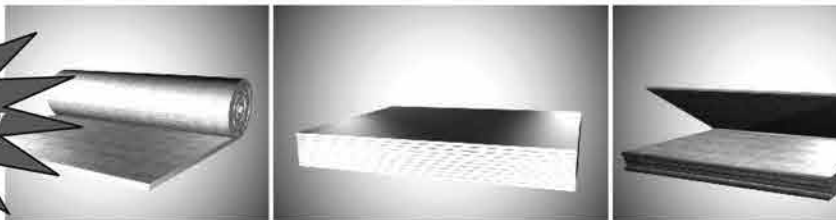
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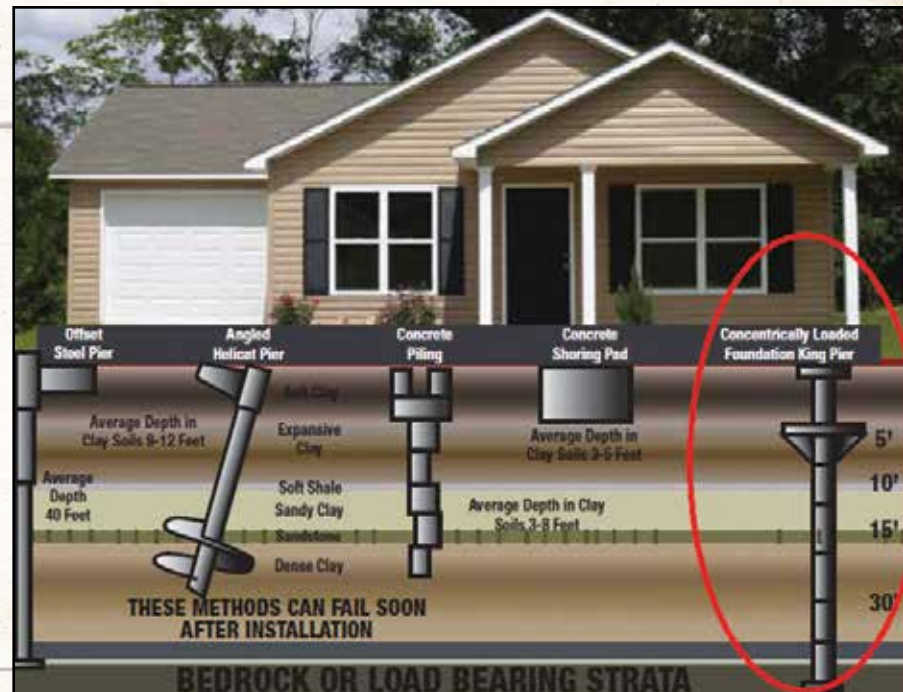


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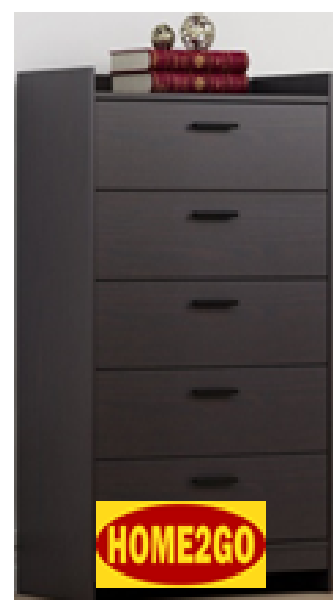
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Tips for planning a major renovation

Do you want to remodel your home so it better suits the needs of your growing family? Or maybe you hope that a major upgrade will appeal to potential buyers? Regardless of your goals, here are a few things you should do to ensure your large-scale renovation is a success.



- Determine your needs and establish a list of priorities such as creating an open-concept living space or adding a second floor
- Settle on a maximum budget and reserve a portion of the amount for unexpected expenses
 - Do some research to find out whether you qualify for any home renovation rebate programs
 - Obtain all the necessary permits from your municipality before you begin any work
 - Consult with and hire all needed professionals such as an architect, interior designer, general contractor and electrician
 - Set a realistic timeframe in which to complete the work
 - If needed, make arrangements for your family to live elsewhere during the renovations

Remember, when properly planned and completed by experienced professionals, most major home renovations offer a great return on investment.

7 essential steps for painting kitchen cabinets

An effective and affordable way to freshen up your kitchen is to paint the cabinets. For great results, follow these seven steps.

1. REMOVE DOORS AND DRAWERS

Start by taking apart the cabinets so you can work on a flat surface. You should also remove all handles, hinges and other hardware. Be sure to number the doors and drawers so you know where each item goes when you reassemble the cabinets.



2. CLEAN EVERY SURFACE

To remove fingerprints, grease and other residue, wipe down all components of the cabinets with a solution of warm water and liquid dish soap. Rinse thoroughly and let each surface dry completely before you move on to the next step.

3. LIGHTLY SAND EACH SURFACE

Remove the finish on the doors and cabinets using a sanding block with fine-grit paper. This will create a rough surface for the paint to grip. If the existing paint is peeling, you may need to start with a medium- or coarse-grit sandpaper and then finish with one that has a finer grain.

4. REMOVE ALL THE DUST

Sanding the cabinets will create wood dust, which needs to be removed to ensure a smooth paint job. Start by vacuuming up the loose particles, then wipe down each surface with a damp cloth. Allow the cabinets to dry completely.

5. APPLY A COAT OF PRIMER

An undercoat of primer helps ensure the paint's adhesion. Be sure to apply it evenly to all surfaces. For a more eco-friendly option, choose a water-based product.

6. ADD TWO COATS OF PAINT

Once the primer dries completely, apply a thin coat of paint to the interior and exterior of the cabinets, doors and drawers. Make sure the paint flows into the corners of any raised features. Wait at least three hours for the paint to dry before you apply the second coat.

7. LET THE PAINT CURE

To ensure your cabinets are resistant to scratches and dents, wait a week or two for the paint to harden before you reinstall the doors and drawers.

Once your cabinets have been remounted, consider getting stylish hardware and light fixtures to enhance your kitchen's new look. These elements will help define the space's style.

PRO TIP!

For a flawless finish, lightly sand every surface after the primer dries and between each coat of paint. This will remove dirt and dust particles that would otherwise create a rough texture.

Hardwood floors: repair or replace?

Have your hardwood floors seen better days? If the planks are dull, stained, damaged or creaky, you may be wondering if you should refinish them or simply start over. Here are some factors to consider before you decide.

REPAIR

If you like the look of your hardwood floors, you may be able to revive them. Sanding and varnishing as well as staining the wood can extend the lifespan of your floors by a few years. If the planks are warped or worn thin, however, they're likely beyond repair. Similarly, if numerous damaged planks need to be replaced, you're probably better off starting over.

REPLACE

If you're in the mood for a change, installing new flooring is an opportunity to completely transform the look of your home. Plus, it will last for many years to come. It should also be noted that renovating old floors can take several days, whereas replacing them is a fairly quick process albeit more expensive.

If you're still uncertain about whether to repair or replace them, ask a professional to evaluate the condition of your hardwood floors. He or she will be able to recommend a solution.



Why glass partitions deserve a look

If you want to create designated spaces in your home without sacrificing the airiness of open-concept living, glass partitions offer a beautiful compromise.

This type of room divider helps block out noise while continuing to let in plenty of natural light. If you want to create an office space or reading nook in your living area, for example, such partitions are ideal. Alternatively, glass walls can be used to keep strong smells in the kitchen without obstructing sight lines.

From intricately etched panels to industrial steel frames, glass partitions can be incorporated into any style of home and customized to fit any space. Plus, they're typically made of tempered glass, which means they won't shatter into sharp pieces if they accidentally break.

To help you make the most of this practical and striking feature, consult an interior designer.



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3 things you need to pour a concrete slab

Concrete is a durable and affordable material that can be used to build a patio or walkway on your property. Here's what you need to successfully pour a concrete slab.

1. A STABLE BASE
Excavate a hole that's the right dimensions for your project, then add a layer of compacted gravel that's at least four inches deep. This facilitates soil drainage and will help prevent the slab from shifting and cracking when the ground freezes and thaws.



2. A STRONG FORM
A form is a framework that holds the liquid concrete in place to ensure it hardens in the desired shape. For best results, use straight wood planks to build the form and firmly brace the sides. You should also reinforce the concrete with rebar to strengthen the slab and prevent cracking.

3. A STEADY HAND
When you pour the concrete, make sure it seeps into every crevice. Once the form is filled, you'll need to remove air bubbles and smooth out the surface of the slab with a bull float and trowel. Allow the concrete to harden overnight before you carefully remove the form.

Keep in mind that pouring concrete can be a challenge, particularly for large-scale projects like a garage floor. To ensure the job is done correctly, leave it to the professionals.

5 components of a cosy nursery

If you have a baby on the way, you'll probably want to think about creating a nursery. Here are five design elements to incorporate into the room.

1. A SOFT, NEUTRAL PALETTE
Create a soothing space with light tones and pastel colors. Options like seafoam green, lavender and cream are lovely alternatives to the traditional pale pink and baby blue. Be sure to use eco-friendly paint that doesn't contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

2. A DURABLE FLOOR
Favor strong materials like bamboo, cork and vinyl that will provide a comfortable play surface for your infant. Avoid flooring with a glossy finish as it will highlight every scratch and imperfection. A soft rug makes a nice addition to the space, and there are colors and designs for every taste.

3. AN ERGONOMIC CHAIR
A comfortable place to feed, soothe and read to your baby is essential. Opt for a rocking chair, glider or

simply one with sufficient padding. For those 3 a.m. wake-up calls, treat yourself to a rocking ottoman as well so you'll have a place to rest your feet.

4. A VERSATILE CHANGING TABLE
An increasing number of vendors now offer multi-purpose changing tables that double as a dresser or bookcase. In addition to being an attractive piece of furniture, you'll have plenty of storage space for clothes and toys as your child gets older.

5. A SAFE PLACE TO SLEEP
Before you purchase a new or second-hand crib, make sure it adheres to the latest government safety standards. This includes having a tight-fitting mattress and bars that are no more than 2-3/8 inches apart. You should also be aware that drop-side cribs are a hazard and their sale is prohibited.

For the finishing touches, install a roller shade or thick curtains to make nap time easier. You should also include a few lighting options such as a ceiling light, table lamp and nightlight.



3 ways to display your wine bottles

If you want to display your wine collection, here are three simple ways to showcase your bottles.

1. ON A BAR CART
Opt for one made of reclaimed wood or with an industrial metal frame. Lay out an assortment of bottles and glasses to create a look that's as stylish as it is functional. Make sure your cart is on wheels so you can entertain in any room in your home.

2. IN A HUTCH
Traditionally used to display dishware, this classic piece of dining room furniture can also be used to showcase your wine collection. Choose one with plenty of space and open shelving to highlight bottles

and glassware. You'll also want your hutch to have drawers and cabinets as these are helpful for storing bar tools and accessories.

3. ON A MOUNTED RACK
From simple metal pegs to elaborate wood shelving, you can display your wine collection by hanging it from a wall-mounted rack. You can choose either a vertical or horizontal model and select a style that suits your decor.

Keep in mind that the ideal temperature for storing all wines, red or white, is around 45 to 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Additionally, it's best to keep bottles out of direct sunlight.



How to hang a mirror

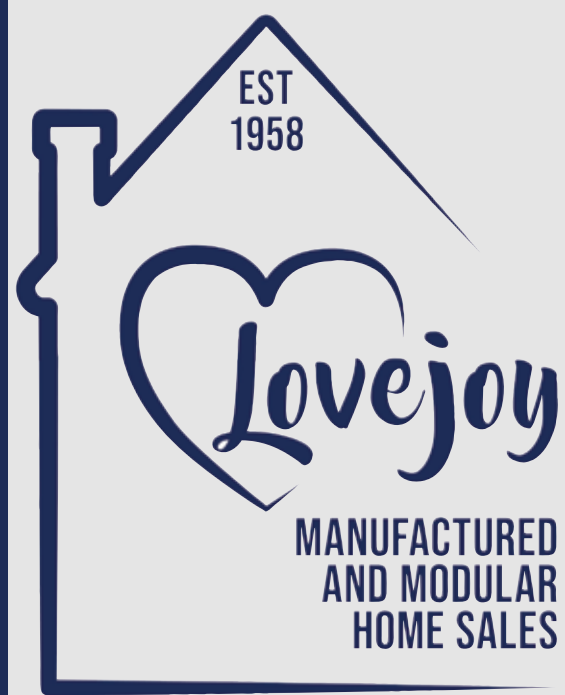
A mirror can add light, depth and elegance to a room. Here are a few tips for a quick and easy installation.

USE THE RIGHT HARDWARE
Drywall, wood and brick require different types of anchors to support a mirror. You'll also need to consider the mirror's size and weight when determining the kind and quantity of hooks to use. For a frameless mirror, you can mount clips or use a strong adhesive.

FIND THE RIGHT SPOT
Use a measuring tape and level to determine the ideal location to hang your mirror. Opt for a height that's at eye level for most adult members of your household. Avoid hanging a mirror opposite a window that gets direct sunlight as this can create a blinding reflection. Take your time to mark the spot for each nail or screw with a pencil.

WATCH THE WEIGHT!
Keep in mind that some mirrors are too heavy for drywall, even with a large anchor. If your mirror weighs more than 110 pounds, you'll need to secure it to a stud.





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