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HOMEOWNER'S UPDATE

Design Tips for a Well-Functioning Home

Your home should be a place where you can relax and feel comfortable and content. But what if your house configuration doesn't fit with your design vision or family circumstances? Consider these steps to make your house a well-functioning home.

Perfect the layout. Mindfully walk through your home and take stock of how you use your space. Note what works well and what could be improved. Be practical, but don't be afraid to take steps to make it right for you. If your kitchen and dining room are cluttered or cramped, consider multifunctional furniture for storage. Don't discount the awkward areas in your house. Get creative with how to make them work best for your lifestyle. A small alcove could become a reading nook or a craft corner.

Allow flexibility. Circumstances and needs shift over time, and your house should adapt to those changes. An open floor plan works well when you want to keep an eye on young children, but as they become teens, you may find that having separate areas allows everyone some privacy.

Personalize with color. Colors can impact how you feel in a space, so be sure the shades you choose for your home have a positive impact. Layering colors is a great way to strike the right balance of practicality and personality.

Declutter and organize. Consider your storage needs and create a system for organization. Assigning places to store specific items helps minimize the chance for clutter to take over.

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Decorating With Room Dividers

Open-concept floor plans unify space and create a sense of openness. But cultural shifts like working remotely have shown that sometimes you need a bit of separation between living areas. Room dividers can be both a practical and affordable solution. The following tips make decorating with dividers a breeze.

Choose a folding divider. Folding screens are a great way to temporarily divvy up a large space without blocking natural light. Screens add interest and dimension, plus they can be easily moved to accommodate changing needs.

Consider a divider made from a sustainable material like bamboo.

Add a bookshelf. Placing a large bookshelf to divide a big area can help create separation and provide valuable storage space.

Install glass doors. Depending on your floor plan, glass doors between two areas may be useful. The doors can be shut to keep out noise without losing the feel of an open-concept space.

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2023 Paint Colors - Wow and Why Not?

Neutral palettes still dominate interior design websites and magazines, but wouldn't it be fun to play with some new color trends in 2023? You can repaint entire rooms or simply add some of these new colors as accents. Either way, you'll end up with a refreshed and updated place where you'll want to spend more time.

Sherwin-Williams is introducing **Redend Point** as its 2023 color of the year. This expressive blush-beige draws inspiration from healing and restorative energy.

Benjamin Moore announces **Raspberry Blush** as its choice. Dramatic and punchy, the undertones of this hue are said to channel vibrant energy.

Dutch Boy champions **Rustic Greige**. Understated yet warm, this color is cozy and comfortable.

Pantone names **Viva Magenta** as its 2023 winner. Choose this shade for a vibrant, lively and optimistic atmosphere.

Painting a room the color you love shifts the whole feel of the space. Not only will you enjoy the new look, but you'll also sense a new vibe. Browse through the many unique colors of 2023 to see what strikes your fancy.

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Zero Waste Kitchen Items Under \$25

Ditch the waste and keep your kitchen efficient. Here are some reusable products that put bucks back into your budget.

Silicone Bags Make Cents

Nontoxic, hypoallergenic and temperature-resistant silicone is a healthier alternative to plastic. Safe for the dishwasher, microwave, freezer, and oven temperatures up to 400° F.

Clever Coffee Concepts

Reusable pods and filters are a sustainable win. The pods fit many coffee-maker models, and the filters are conveniently available in most grocery stores.

A Hands-Down Good Idea

Hand soap tablets produce about eight ounces of soap, and some brands even come packaged in compostable materials.

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Homemade Chocolate Spread

Ingredients

1 (8 oz.) pkg. pitted Medjool dates
2½ cups almond or coconut milk
4 Tbsp. cacao powder
1 Tbsp. coconut oil

Directions

Place pitted dates in a 3 qt. saucepan over medium heat and stir in milk. Cook for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until paste forms. Stir in cacao powder, coconut oil and a pinch of salt. Turn off heat and let cool before putting in food processor. Blend until smooth.

Stored in an airtight container, spread stays fresh in refrigerator for up to 5 days.

Serves 8-10

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