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## HOMEOWNER'S UPDATE

### Home Tech Upgrades

Technology often feels like it's moving at the speed of light — just when you think you've got a smart home, smarter technology is released. Staying on top of home tech upgrades can be intimidating, but it can also be a fun challenge. After all, advanced tech is aimed at making life easier. Here are some tips to help you make upgrading decisions in the future.

#### What To Upgrade

**Smart hubs** connect all smart devices within a home. Think of them as the brains of the operation, tying every light bulb, smart lock, playlist, and doorbell together. If these hubs or their controllers aren't compatible with newer tech, consider an upgrade for better integration, operation and security.

An outdated **home security system** can leave you vulnerable to break-ins. With advancements in encryption, camera resolution and alerts, it's in your best interest to keep this tech up to date and in working order.

Always being improved, **smart appliances** are some of the most fun and utilitarian home tech items. While older models might not necessitate replacement like other tech, enhancements such as food management, energy efficiency and artificial intelligence make it tempting to upgrade.

#### When To Upgrade

Just because a new model is available doesn't mean you need to upgrade. Many smart devices maintain full functionality for years. However, if your device will no longer accept software updates, consider replacing it. This way, you're protected from security risks, and the item remains compatible with your other smart tech.

There's also no need to put up with malfunctioning devices. In a connected environment, one kink can slow down the entire chain. If your tech is sluggish, some features don't work or the quality is degrading, it's probably time to look for a new model.

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**Add Color Without Painting**

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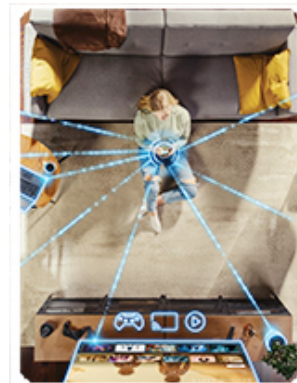
Add Color Without  
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Overrated Household  
Expenses

Creature Comforts

Winter Quinoa Salad

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Put down the paint roller and take the plastic tarps off your furniture — there are plenty of ways to add color to your home that don't involve painting walls. Consider these colorful concepts.

### **Flashy Lamps**

Every great room needs great lighting, which makes it the perfect opportunity to introduce new hues. Hang vibrant pendant lights, bring in a bold desk lamp or swap out lampshades for more colorful options.

### **Faux "Stained Glass"**

Who says all your windows must be transparent? Let the sun's rays diffuse through removable window film that mimics stained glass, available in solid colors or traditional cut-glass mosaics.

### **Happy Hardware**

Revitalize cabinets with ornate or bright knobs and pulls. From a single piece to an entire kitchen, these little pops of color will make a big splash.

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## **Overrated Household Expenses**

Owning a home can provide a sense of security and self-sufficiency — but it does require routine maintenance. Here are some cost-saving measures for homeowners to consider.

### **Home Repairs**

Next time you have a small repair job, find some reliable DIY videos online and decide whether it's a project you can handle on your own.

### **Extended Warranties**

Typically, most appliances don't break until after the extended coverage period. Be sure to compare the possible cost of any future repairs with the cost of the extended warranty.

### **Appliance Upkeep**

Unless an appliance is very old, it's probably smarter to make repairs than to spring for a shiny new one. Keep in mind the energy-efficiency savings of the newest model can take a decade to recoup.

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## **Creature Comforts**

Pets rule the roost. In fact, the National Association of Realtors® reports that 43% of pet owners would be willing to relocate to better accommodate their furry friends. And if Buddy struggles with stairs, forget the two-story in the perfect neighborhood because *Realtor.com*® found that 68% of animal lovers would pass on a dream house if it didn't meet their pets' needs.

Here are some newer trends in pet-friendly home improvements.

### **Bath Stations**

Sharing a bathtub with your pet can make a dirty mess. Give them their own space with a utility sink, commercial tub or tiled shower in a mudroom, garage or laundry room.

### **Installed Pet Gates**

Plastic baby gates still do the trick, but the era of built-in wooden gates is here. These can be attractively mounted to door frames or installed as pocket-style gates that slide into walls.

### **Hidden Feeding**

Food and water bowls are usually in the way, so why not install them in a hideaway drawer in a lower cabinet? They're there when you need them and can easily be hidden out of sight when you don't.

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## Winter Quinoa Salad

### Ingredients

#### *For salad:*

- 1 cup tri-color quinoa, uncooked
- 1 blood orange
- ½ cup shelled hazelnuts
- 1 avocado, diced
- 2 cups fresh baby spinach
- ½ cup fresh pomegranate arils

#### *For dressing:*

- 5 Tbsp. orange juice
- 2 Tbsp. sherry vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. agave syrup
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Directions

Cook quinoa according to package directions. Allow to cool completely. Peel orange and slice each segment in half. In a large frying pan, add hazelnuts and toast over high heat for 2 minutes. Allow hazelnuts to cool, then roughly crush.

Whisk together all dressing ingredients and set aside. In a large bowl, add quinoa, oranges, hazelnuts, and remaining salad ingredients and toss to combine. Serve cold or at room temperature with dressing on



Serves 2-3



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