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# Welcome

After splashing out at Christmas and being tempted in the January sales, most of us are feeling the need to **start tightening our purse strings** at this time of year. To help you get your bank balance back on track we've crammed this issue with loads of **brilliant money-saving ideas** and **budget buys** that will brighten up your home without breaking the bank.

On page 36 you'll find **50 thrifty ideas for revamping your home – all for under £50**, plus we've got even more ingenious **money-**

**saving ideas for decorating your home on a shoestring** on page 112. While on page 106 we take a look at **how to save money on bigger home improvement projects**, such as fitting a kitchen or adding an extension. If you're worried about mounting debts, turn to page 18 for our **expert advice to help you get back in the black**.

Many of us made a New Year's resolution to eat healthily but worry it could cost us more, if that sounds familiar check out our **delicious recipes for family meals** on page 100 – they aren't just good for your health, but kind on your pocket too.

## Go digital...

Download our app version for your mobile, tablet or PC and you can take *Your Home* with you on the go. See page 86.



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We caught up with the lovely Hemsley sisters at the recent Vita Coco launch. Find out why the girls swear by it on page 99.



We visited the fabulous Eternal Maker for some great ways to save on fabric. Turn to page 112 to discover more money-saving ideas.

*Anna-Lisa*

**BurdaInternational**

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Birds mug, £10.95, both  
Cherith Harrison



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at the checkout.

Feature Laura McLeish

## Put a spring in your step

With spring just around the corner, get ready with these cute accessories from Scottish designer Cherith Harrison. The collection of bags, tea towels, cards and stationery feature charming illustrations of fauna and wildlife, inspired by Cherith's beloved Scottish countryside. Available in spring colours such as zesty yellow, mint green and sky blue, the accessories would make a great gift or a well-deserved wardrobe or home update in time for the new season. We love the Birds tea towel, printed and sewn in the UK, and the canvas Birds zip purse and tote bag, the perfect pair to kit you out for the year ahead.

### Reader treat

For your chance to win one of five Birds reusable tote bags, worth £10.95 each, send your name, address and contact details to Your Home February Bag giveaway, HBM UK, The Tower, Phoenix Square, Colchester, CO4 9HU before 28th February 2015.



# This month we love...

For stockists see page 120

Make the most of February with the best things to do, see and buy this month

## Hidden Gem: Nook & Cranny

Since 2011, Nook & Cranny has been one of Liverpool's best spots to pick up fun and quirky gifts, and since moving to their new store in October, there's even more reason to pay them a visit. Whether you're looking for novelty knick-knacks or designer homewares without the hefty price tag, you can find it here. The store prides itself in supporting local, talented designers,



meaning there are lots of great buys that you won't find on the high street. Nook & Cranny also hosts lots of different events, from screen printing workshops to pop-up restaurants, making it much more than just your average gift shop. Check out the online store at [www.nookandcrannyshop.co.uk](http://www.nookandcrannyshop.co.uk) to browse the extensive collection of witty prints and cards or pop into the store at 28 Bold Street, Liverpool, L1 4DS.



## Dress to impress

Whether you're cooking a romantic Valentine's meal for two or a Sunday roast for the whole family, look your best – even if the food doesn't – in matching oven gloves and apron from Pinnygirls London. The six stylish designs are perfect for the fashionable cook who wants to look great, even when you're busy mashing potatoes. Taking inspiration from the 1940s, 50s and 60s, the vibrant colours, beautiful detailing and flattering cut of the aprons means you needn't worry if you forget to take it off before you sit down to eat.



'All in flavour' apron,  
£24.99; oven glove, £17.99,  
both [www.pinnygirls.com](http://www.pinnygirls.com)

## GREAT IDEAS FOR...

### All you need is love

This Valentine's Day surprise your loved one with our pick of quirky heartfelt gifts



◀ This fun print is the perfect gift for your house-proud loved one

'You are my sunshine' print, £14, The Calm Gallery

▶ This cheeky boyfriend biscuit might just be better than the real deal

Ultimate boyfriend biscuit, £6, [www.biscuiteers.com](http://www.biscuiteers.com)



◀ Brighten up their morning brew with this gorgeous spoon

'You are my cup of tea' teaspoon, £18, The Cutlery Commission



Hazel Nicholls card holder, £8.95, Wild & Wolf



▼ Distance will make the heart grow fonder with this cute travel card holder



▲ Make your gift extra personal with these adorable promise cards

'I Promise' cards, from £9.50 for three, [www.notonthehighstreet.com](http://www.notonthehighstreet.com)

### A date for your diary

If the New Year has got you in the mood for a new project, grab yourself a ticket to the Make It and Knit & Stitch It shows in Farnborough, on Friday 27th February – Sunday 1st March. For just £9 you'll get entry to the two shows, packed with over 100 exhibitors, thousands of materials and supplies and lots of experts on hand offering advice on all things crafty. As one of the UK's most popular paper crafting events, Make It showcases the best in everything from card making to découpage, while Knit & Stitch It is a haven for needlecraft and wool craft enthusiasts. Get involved in the free 'make 'n' take' sessions for a taste of something new or join a crafting workshop to try out new techniques or brush up on your old ones.



Reader treat

We have 10 pairs of day tickets to give away to lucky readers. To enter send your details to February Knit Show giveaway, Your Home, HBM UK, The Tower, Phoenix Square, Colchester, Essex, CO4 9HU before 31st January 2015.

**make it**  
27th February – 1st March 2015  
FIVE, Farnborough

### Chop chop!

Chinese New Year falls on 19th February this year and marks the beginning of the Chinese zodiac Year of the Sheep. Celebrate in style by hosting your very own Chinese banquet – the perfect excuse to stock up on some Oriental-inspired kitchenware. We love this set of two bowls in traditional blue and white that comes complete with stylish black chopsticks. Not only does the set look great but you'll want to use them so much you'll have mastered your chopstick technique in no time.



Set of two Oriental bowls with chopsticks, £25, John Lewis

### Website watch: [www.mariaallenboutique.com](http://www.mariaallenboutique.com)

Beautifully crafted wooden gifts, jewellery and homewares are now just a click away thanks to Maria Allen Boutique's brilliant online store. Beautiful illustrations are laser-etched onto

reclaimed, sustainably sourced wood to produce exquisite designs that will have everybody asking where you bought them. As well as unique jewellery, you can also get your hands on intricate lace letters, perfect for displaying on your sideboard, and cute coasters to rest a big mug of hot chocolate on. We also love Maria's simple but stylish keyrings that come in lots of adorable designs including choose-your-own doggy designs – perfect for the Dashchund-devotee or Labrador-lover in your life.



Wooden Dashchund keyring, £18, [www.mariaallenboutique.com](http://www.mariaallenboutique.com)





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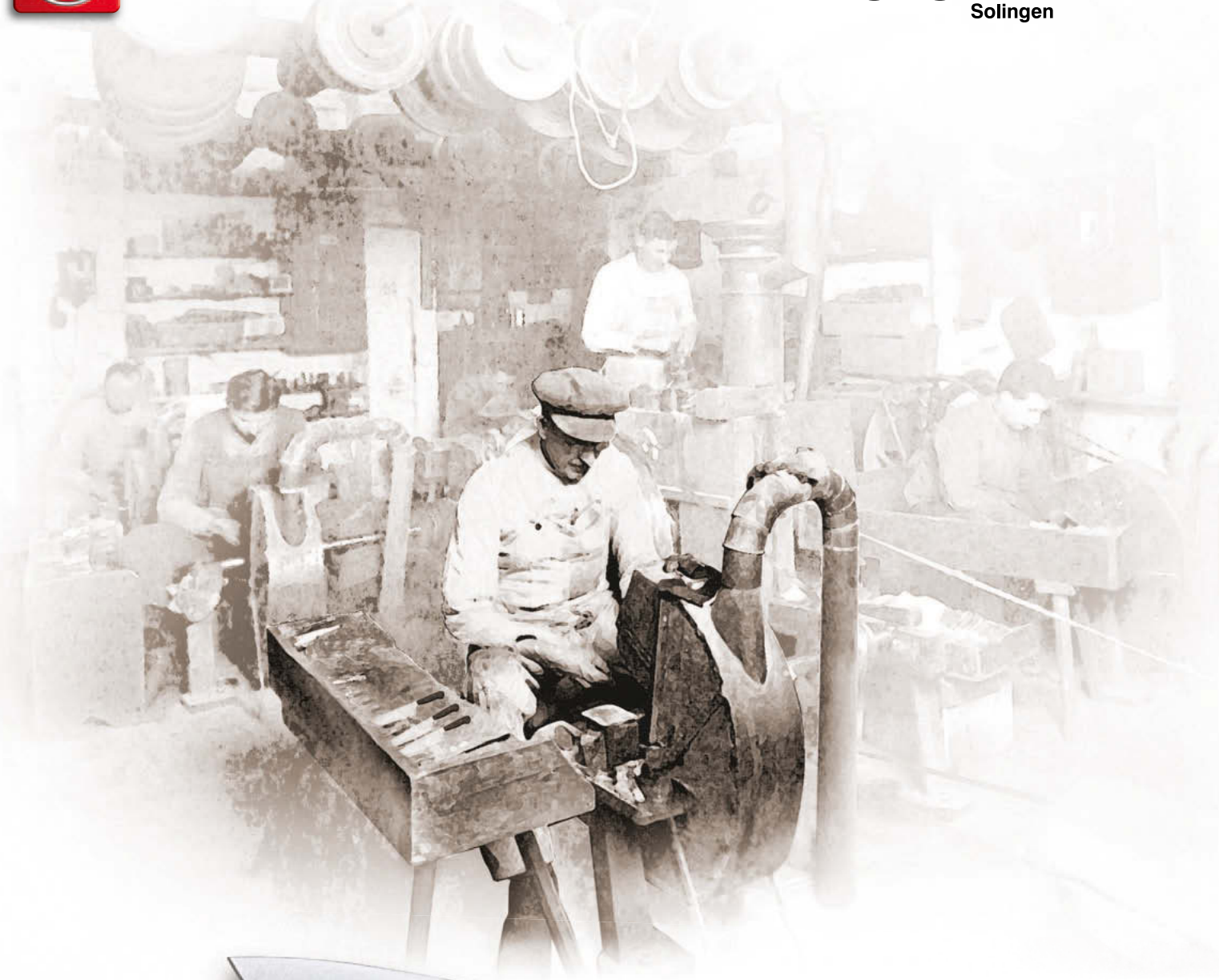
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GET IN TOUCH

# Your letters

We answer your questions and discover what you've been up to this month...

## A family affair

Q After taking inspiration from previous makeovers on Your Letters, I decided to revamp an old glass cabinet I picked up on eBay. I remembered my Grandma having a similar one in her front room with all her special ornaments displayed in it. With three daughters in the house, we needed somewhere to put our towels and bathroom products and I thought the cabinet would be perfect. After sanding and prepping it I painted it using Dulux Perfectly Taupe paint, then added a crystal-effect doorknob for a bit of glam. I'm really pleased with the result and am sure my Grandma would have loved it too.

Julie Law, via email



**Your Home says** What a brilliant idea, Julie. This was already a beautiful piece of furniture but you've brought it into the 21st century while still managing to keep its vintage charm. We'll be looking for a similar piece for our bathrooms!

## Brushes at the ready

Having seen what other readers were up to, I decided to have a go myself at painting a piece of furniture and chose an old, unloved chair I already had at home. I sanded it roughly and then painted it with two coats of left over matt emulsion we'd used in our kitchen. I then put my artistic skills to the test and painted a design onto the back of the chair using acrylic paint. Lastly, I distressed it and gave it a wax. The chair now sits in our spare room – I can't believe I did it all for free!

Helen Philpott, via email

**Your Home says** What a great way to breathe life into an old piece of furniture. I'm sure there are lots of readers who

have similar chairs at home that could just as easily be turned into a

style statement like this one. Well done, Helen!



## Get online



Tweet us your pictures and comments @your\_home or like our Facebook page



[www.facebook.com/yourhomemag](http://www.facebook.com/yourhomemag)

## Making a house a home

Q After years of saving I have finally purchased and fallen in love with my first home and I'm now on a mission to find fun DIY projects to help furnish and accessorise on a budget. After flicking through old editions of Your Home I decided to try building a 'shabby chic' side table using pallets.

I am very happy with the results, and can't believe it only cost me the price of a tin of paint!

Sophie Chiswell, Plymouth

**Your Home says** Congratulations on buying your first home, Sophie. It's great to hear that Your Home has inspired you to have a go at upcycling and we love what you've done with this table. We can't wait to see how the rest of your home turns out!



## YOUR HOME NEEDS YOU!

We love to hear what you've been up to, so send us your letters, tips and photos and you could win up to £120 of WallpaperDirect vouchers.



Laura ✕  
Editorial Assistant

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

I just wanted to say thank you for not devoting your December issue entirely to Christmas, with pages and pages of decorated Christmas trees in half a dozen colourways and countless gift guides. You stayed true to yourselves with just enough recipes and reference to Christmas whilst still giving all the usual things in Your Home which made it such a joy to read. So once again, thank you from a very happy reader who read every word of the December issue.

Jackie Beckett, via email

**Your Home says** Everyone in the Your Home team was thrilled to read your letter, Jackie. It really does make it all worthwhile to know that our readers appreciate all the hard work that goes into every issue. We hope you enjoy this one just as much!

Jackie's letter won £120 of WallpaperDirect vouchers. Send us your views, thoughts and ideas and you could be next month's winner.



SEND YOUR TIPS, PHOTOS AND LETTERS TO:  
Letters Editor, Your Home, Hubert Burda Media UK,  
The Tower, Phoenix Square, Colchester, Essex CO4 9HU  
or email [yourhome@burdamagazines.co.uk](mailto:yourhome@burdamagazines.co.uk)

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Take a look at our helpful tips and best buys for this month



## HOW TO... *avoid one big spring clean*

Let's face it, who actually has the time or energy to tackle the spring cleaning all in one go? Little and often is a much more manageable approach to having a happy, healthy home...

- ✓ The annual spring clean used to be a necessity when homes had an open fire. Paintwork, carpets and upholstery would become sooty over the winter and by the time spring came around the house was definitely in need of a deep clean. These days with central heating this isn't really a problem, but it is nice to freshen up your home as it gets warmer, perhaps with a new coat of paint in certain rooms, cooler bed linen and even lighter, brighter window dressings and soft furnishings.
- ✓ Launder winter duvets, throws and blankets and pack them away once the weather warms up. Also take the opportunity to pack away winter coats, jumpers and boots, making sure everything is clean and dry and re-homing anything that you didn't actually wear over the winter.
- ✓ Keeping on top of the housework throughout the year is key to keeping your home running smoothly. Saving up chores until the weekend can mean hours of solid cleaning that eat into your social life and down-time. Do a little every day and you'll be surprised how clean your home stays – just vacuum one room before you leave the house in the morning, rather than doing all of them in one go; disinfect the sink and work surfaces while the kettle is boiling; and give the bathroom floor a quick clean while the bath is running. It all adds up!
- ✓ There are certain tasks that we all put off, such as vacuuming behind the furniture, cleaning on top of cupboards and washing carpets and upholstery. Don't save all of these until spring, as long as you do them once or twice a year it really doesn't matter when you do it.



### Laura's choice...

'Everyone with a small home knows that every inch counts when it comes to saving space. This foldaway dish rack could be a handy addition to the kitchen, providing convenient

drying space when in use, with its feet to elevate it for better drainage, and fold-down side walls, feet and spout for when you want to store it away out of sight, freeing up more of the work surface.'



Foldaway dish rack, £35, Oxo Good Grips

## Q&A

Can you suggest a cleaning product that's good for killing germs but is safe for using around a home with young children?

**Aquaint is an antibacterial sanitising water that is endorsed by Allergy UK as an allergy-friendly product, and has passed stringent UK drinking water tests, meaning it's completely harmless. It's great for use on high chairs, children's toys and play areas, as well as for sanitising kitchen and bathroom surfaces. It doesn't need to be wiped away so is fantastic for a quick clean, and the handy mini bottle is ideal for popping in your handbag when you're on the move.**



Aquaint multipurpose trigger spray bottle, £4.99 for 500ml; Finger pump bottle, £2.49 for 50ml, [www.aquaint.com](http://www.aquaint.com)

## What to look out for **THIS MONTH**

### Great buy...

Sort all of your household waste and recycling needs in one, slimline system, with Joseph Joseph's new Totem Intelligent Waste. Alongside a 36-litre general waste compartment, the unit also has a multi-purpose drawer underneath with a removable divider, ideal for storing away glass bottles, tin cans and paper ready to be recycled; and a removable food waste caddy which sits in the top of the general waste compartment. To banish bad smells the system has a carbon odour filter which is simple to change, and the Totem's handle and wheels on the base make manoeuvring the bin really easy.

Joseph Joseph Totem 50, £175; Totem 60, £199, available exclusively from John Lewis and josephjoseph.com



◀ This pretty yellow apron will put you in the mood for spring. Handmade in England, the gorgeous selection of aprons from Posh Pinnies come in an array of colours and styles. Plus they come beautifully packaged, making them ideal for gifts.

Yellow apron, £28, Posh Pinnies



◀ Traditionalists, who never stray from the freshly squeezed lemon and sprinkling of sugar combo, will love this nifty gadget on Shrove Tuesday. Press the lemon into the top of the juicer and the bottle beneath will catch the pip-free juice ready to be misted onto your pancakes, for a fine and even coverage.

Citrus Mister, £4.99, Lakeland

▶ Ensure you get your batter spot on this Pancake Day by measuring out your ingredients accurately. This jolly set from Jamie Oliver will give you the helping hand you need in the kitchen.

Jamie Oliver stacking measuring cups, £17.60 for set of five, John Lewis



## We test... potato mashers

We tested a selection of potato mashers, here's what we found...

### THINGS WE CONSIDERED

- How quick was it to use?
- How easy was it to clean?
- Did it have other uses?

#### STELLAR JAMES MARTIN POTATO MASHER, £8.75

This masher has a simple design with a soft-grip, anti-slip handle for ease of use. It does the job without any fuss, and with a bit of effort produced lump-free mashed potato. It came up sparkling in the dishwasher, but was also easy to clean by hand. It's a good buy, especially if you don't want to spend too much on a masher. Its design made it easy to use in the pan without causing extra mess.



7/10

#### JOSEPH JOSEPH SCOOP RICER, £25

We were impressed by the stylish design of this ricer, which was easy to clean and also dishwasher-safe. Simply scoop hot boiled potatoes from the pan, then add the top handle and press together, forcing the potato through the stainless steel plate for perfect, super-smooth mash. Although it has a very smart design, it is quite chunky, so takes up quite a large space in a drawer or cupboard. It is a little tricky to use until you get the hang of it – it's best to use a large pan to catch any mess.



6 1/10

#### OXO GOOD GRIPS 3-IN-1 ADJUSTABLE POTATO RICER, £30

This 3-in-1 ricer has three different settings that you can quickly change between with a twist of the dial. We used the fine setting for mashed potato, which turned out velvety smooth with virtually no effort compared to using a traditional masher. There's also a medium setting for pressing water out of greens and a coarse setting for making chunky sauces. This was quite large but with no extra parts to worry about it's easy to store in a deep drawer or the cupboard. It was easy to clean and dishwasher-proof.



7 1/10

#### RUSSELL HOBBS AURA MASH & BLEND, £34.99

The mash head on this gadget was quick and easy to use – when clipped on it made light work of a pan of potatoes and blended smooth, creamy mash in seconds. The hand blender was equally successful, and would prove useful for a number of tasks. Cleaning the heads was fiddly by hand, but would be fine for those with a dishwasher. Overall this is a handy investment for anyone who also needs a hand blender.



8 1/10



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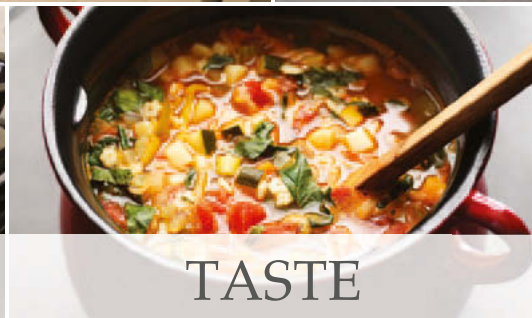
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# Consumer NEWS

Stay on top of the latest issues and hot topics with our monthly round-up of news

## SAFETY FIRST

Regular gas safe checks are a legal requirement in Britain, to make sure your home and any gas appliances are kept out of danger. So you know the basics RatedPeople.com has the following tips on how to ensure your home is as safe as possible:

- 1 Check your engineer is Gas Safe registered.
- 2 Have gas appliances regularly serviced and safety checked.
- 3 Install an audible carbon monoxide alarm and be aware of the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.



Carbon monoxide alarm, £29.99, Wickes

## PUT AN END TO DELIVERY WOES

If you've wasted time waiting in for a delivery, only for it to never show, or you've received a package that's been delivered damaged, the Which? campaign to 'Stamp out dodgy deliveries' may interest you. In an effort to put an end to disappointing and frustrating service, the campaign is targeting shops to improve the delivery service they provide. In particular they are calling on retailers to:

- ✓ Provide specific time-slots for deliveries on a named day
- ✓ Inform customers of the estimated delivery time on the day of delivery by phone, email or text
- ✓ Ask customers to specify at the time of purchase what to do if the delivery is unsuccessful.

To pledge your support for the campaign to Stamp out Dodgy Deliveries visit

[www.which.co.uk/stampout](http://www.which.co.uk/stampout).



## Do you suffer from FOLO?

New research from Honeywell has revealed that Fear Of Leaving On (FOLO) is something that affects more than one in three of us, at least once a week. The most common appliances that we fret about are the heating, hair straighteners, lights and the oven. Nearly half of those questioned (46%) flagged up their main concern as wasting energy and therefore money, which is no surprise given the high price of energy. With an intelligent heating system, such as Honeywell's evohome, you could alleviate some of that worry, as you're able to switch off your heating even when you're away from home. For more information visit [www.honeywelluk.com](http://www.honeywelluk.com).

## Drive safely this winter



With UK drivers six times more likely to have an accident during the winter months, Continental Tyres has the following driving tips to help make travelling in bad weather much safer:

- Visibility is vital, so keep your windscreen and windows clear.
- Check your lights are clean and working.
- Reduce your speed on slippery surfaces and avoid harsh braking or acceleration.
- At low speeds use second rather than first gear to avoid spinning the wheels.
- To slow the car, change down a gear and use engine braking, but if you need to use the brakes apply them gently.
- Increase the distance between you and the vehicle in front – in rain, ice and snow leave enough space to stop safely.
- Check your tyres. The legal limit for tread depth on tyres is 1.6mm, but safety experts at Continental Tyres recommend a minimum of 3mm for wet weather safety. Ensuring tyres are correctly inflated will also improve your cars handling as well as saving you money.
- Put together an emergency kit, such as food, drink, torch and extra clothing, for journeys in severe winter weather, and keep it in the back of your car.
- Plan ahead and allow enough time to get to your destination.

## Fantastic service on demand

Domestic services provider Fantastic Services, has launched a new iPhone app, GoFantastic, to allow you to book a wide range of services in seconds. Whether you're looking for a cleaner, handyman, or pest control you can use the app to enter the type of job you want doing and date and time you need the job done. This information will be sent to a vetted, insured and guaranteed team of experts and GoFantastic will generate a quote.

Currently the service is available in London and the South East with plans to move into the Midlands soon, followed by the rest of the UK.



# Consumer news... IN FOCUS

If you're in debt and need help getting back on track, here's our guide to managing your money

**M**ost of us have some sort of debt, whether it's a mortgage, credit card or store card, but for some people debts can creep up incredibly quickly from all sorts of sources and if you find it difficult to keep up with the repayments, it's time to sit down and work out a budget to suit you. There's no quick fix, but the sooner you address the situation, the better.

## Stop spending, start saving

**The key to clearing debt is to stop spending and repay more...**

- ✓ Debt comes from spending money you simply don't have or a change in circumstances such as losing your job, an illness in the family or divorce.
- ✓ The first thing to do is to reduce your outgoings so make a budget with Money Saving Expert's budget planner online at [www.moneysavingexpert.com](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com).
- ✓ Check whether you are entitled to any benefits. These can include Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit if the family's income is under £72,000. Get in touch with HM Revenue & Customs at [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk).



## Clearing the debt

**Work out a way to do this as quickly as possible without being charged a ridiculous interest rate:**

- ✓ Check your credit score to make sure you're being offered the best interest rates. If there's false information on your credit files, this can cause rejections and higher interest rate offers so address it now. Use Experian's free month-long trial to check your file for free then cancel to avoid a subscription fee.
- ✓ Move your debt to a cheaper credit card by taking advantage of balance transfer offers.
- ✓ If you're having trouble paying your utility bills, contact your supplier, as some companies offer help if you have large arrears.
- ✓ You may be able to get a good personal loan with fixed repayments and low interest rates to help you budget. This could be a way to pay off your debts and manage one sensible loan instead.
- ✓ If you can afford to, make larger monthly repayments on your credit card.

**Q** What's your advice about using one of those loan companies which advertise on the TV?

*Jane Stapleton, Portsmouth*

**A** Don't go anywhere near them! Their job is simply to make money out of you and their extortionate interest rates make this a definite no-go area.

## FIND OUT WHAT'S YOURS

**There may be other ways to claim money back:**

- Contact your bank, building society or credit card company to see if you are owed any cash-back from previous mis-sold payment protection schemes.
- Are you paying too much council tax? You can apply for re-banding if you think you are and don't forget that single person households get a 25% discount, so if you've recently split up with your partner, make sure you tell your council tax office.

## Further help

**If you're still struggling, there are people you can turn to:**

- Never default or miss payments if you can help it. Talk to your lender and let them know you're having trouble paying.
- Your local council may have a support scheme that includes free furniture and food grants. Visit [www.yourarea.gov.uk](http://www.yourarea.gov.uk) to see if you can benefit.
- There's also a Government scheme that provides interest-free loans up to £1,500 to those on certain income-based benefits for essential items such as clothes and furnishings. Find the form at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) or apply via the Jobcentre.

## Useful contacts

- StepChange is a debt charity that offers a free debt management plan to help you create a budget that meets your needs while consolidating any money left over into one monthly payment for your debts. Visit the website at [www.stepchange.org](http://www.stepchange.org) or call 0800 138 1111.
- For fact sheets on everything from bankruptcy to council tax recovery, contact the National Debtline at [www.nationaldebtline.org](http://www.nationaldebtline.org) or call 0808 808 4000.
- The Money Advice Service offers free, unbiased, independent advice on debt and borrowing, budgeting and managing money. Visit the website at [www.moneyadvice.org.uk](http://www.moneyadvice.org.uk) or call 0300 500 5000.
- The Citizens Advice Bureau has plenty of helpful information on debt and money issues at [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk).



# Decorating

Discover stylish updates for your home for under £50



## Make a mess

Sometimes even the most beautiful of homes need a handmade touch to bring them to life. A Beautiful Mess Happy Handmade Home by Elsie Larson and Emma Chapman, has all the ideas and know-how you'll need to do just that. Courtesy of the sisters behind popular DIY blog A Beautiful Mess, the book includes over 90 never-before-seen, budget-friendly projects that will transform your walls, furniture and the way you look at that old chest of drawers or unloved chair. The book takes you from room to room, with projects such as a statement stencil wall for the living room and nine ways with throw cushions for the kids' rooms, so whether you're renting or renovating, you can put your stamp on every room in the house.



Reader offer

Your Home readers can buy a copy of the book, RRP £17.99, at the discounted price of £11.99 (including p&p) from Grantham Book Services. Email [cashsales@tbs-ltd.co.uk](mailto:cashsales@tbs-ltd.co.uk) or call 01206 255800 and quote the code HOME. Offer available until 31st March 2015.

## Prints charming

Liberty is known for its impressive, intricate prints and the latest wallpaper collections are no exception. The Nesfield, Jubilee and Heritage collections all include much-loved designs from the Liberty archives and new colour palettes to bring them bang up-to-date. We love these China Blue and Cashmere colours that are a perfect fit with the current trend for everything blue. Plus, with prices from £59 per 10m roll, they're a piece of iconic design that you can afford to treat your walls to.



From left to right: Ianthe Flower; Patricia Anne; Royal Daisy; November Michael; Hebe, from £59 per 10m roll, Liberty Art Fabrics Interiors

## Bright idea

Gone are the days of hiding ugly light bulbs underneath gaudy lampshades – this year it's all about showing off beautiful, decorative light bulbs in all their glory. The trend for antique bulbs shows no sign of dimming and prices vary dramatically depending on where you buy them, so it's worth doing your research. Hang them in a group over the dinner table for drama or use a coloured cable and shelf bracket to create a quirky bedside light. If you're not ready to get rid of your lampshades just yet, opt for a modern cage-style shade or a traditional one covered in a sheer fabric. Whatever you do, make sure your bulb takes centre stage.



Filament light bulbs, from £7.95 per bulb, The Gifted Few

## Trend watch: Copper Blush

Copper continues to be a firm favourite with designers and homeowners alike, so it's no surprise that this coppery pink has been named as Dulux's 'colour of the year' for 2015. Just like its metallic counterpart,

it's the perfect shade to add warmth and style to any room. Team it with white and neutrals to really make the colour pop or use it to soften bolder reds, pinks and oranges for a colourful but sophisticated palette. When it comes to accessories, copper is the obvious but perfect choice, but gold would work just as well if you're feeling a little copper-ed out. Whether you dive in with a feature wall or dabble in accessories, you needn't be bashful with this colour of the year.



Image Dulux



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# TREND ALERT...

## blue hues

Use blue tones for a tranquil scheme



Although blue has always been a popular, and an easy colour to use in our homes, it has been the deeper, darker tones that have been stealing the limelight in the last year or so. From mysterious charcoal grey blues, through to deep indigo and cobalt, and striking teal, turquoise and cerulean, the possibilities are endless and will make each and every scheme unique and personal, depending on what colour combinations you go for.

Complete your scheme by teaming a mixture of blues

with warm neutrals, or even white would work in a particularly sunny room, although bear in mind that those dazzling blue and white Greek island-inspired schemes rarely look as good in our cold British light! Whereas lighter shades can often feel cold, these colours can be much richer and you can even throw in a few touches of other colours to warm it up further such as copper for an on-trend masculine feel, or dusky pink for a softer, feminine side.

*Laura*

Acting Deputy Editor



Feature Laura Higgins Background wallpaper Kali 110868 from Spirit and Soul collection, £36 per roll, Scion



Warm taupes and mushroom shades work really well with blue hues

Reversible spot/stripe cushion, £12, Very

Soften deep, indigo blue with warm neutrals

Pecoso wallpaper 111068, £56 per roll; headboard wallpapered in: Pecoso 111066, £56 per roll; throw made from Limosa 120338, £46 per m; Cushions, from a selection of fabrics, all Amazilia collection, Harlequin

These cute bowls could be used at the table, or for storing bits and bobs around the house

by Sainsbury's Aqua print dip bowl, £2.50 each, Sainsbury's



Bargain buy



## EXPERT TIPS

'Instantly freshen up your home for the new season by introducing a cool palette of blues. Rich and striking indigo is sure to create an impact, paired with an eclectic mix of clear recycled glass accessories. For a traditional look pair regal blues with dark wood furniture to keep it classic, while swapping brighter hues for more muted, mineral tones will bring an oasis of coastal calm to your living space.'

Steven Rowe, Head of Design at Tesco

Give your décor a fresh, Mediterranean feel with bold cobalt blue

Kensington Scatterback corner sofa in Biscuit, £999; Mekong Acacia one-drawer side table, £199; Mekong Acacia two-door two-drawer sideboard, £399; Mekong Acacia coffee table, £249; Tripod wood floor lamp, £79; Aldeburgh recycled glass table lamp in indigo, £39; Multi Bean blue rug, 120cm x 170cm, £120; Recycled glass turquoise tealight holder, £3; Blue Watercolour spot cushion, £8; Iridescent sequin cushion, £14; Sequin cushion, £12; Seagrass and plaited water hyacinth trunk, £30 for set of two; Recycled hurricane in turquoise, £10, all Tesco Direct

For a brighter scheme choose calming sky blue

Stockholm desk and dressing table, £299; Stockholm pair of chairs in oak and charcoal linen-effect, £169, all Tesco Direct

Clockwise from top left: Pickle 131223 fabric from Plains Six collection, £34 per m, Scion. Nalina 120333 fabric from Amazilia collection, £46 per m, Harlequin. Sisal Olympia in Silver, £35 per sq m, Sisal & Seagrass. Night Jewels 5 matt emulsion, £24.29 per 2.5l, Dulux MixLab. Khadi 110875 wallpaper from Spirit collection, £34 per roll, Scion. Nalina 120338 fabric from Amazilia collection, £46 per m, Harlequin.



Combine different tones of blue for a layered-effect

Greenwich large sofa in Monsoon Alcindo Dot dark grey, H89cm x W180cm x D94cm, £1,229, with 19" scatter cushion in Monsoon Alcindo Abstract lime, £59; Greenwich chair in Monsoon Alcindo Abstract dark grey, H89 x W82 x D94cm, £759, with 20" bolster cushion in Monsoon Alcindo Dots lime, £39, all Multiyork



Clockwise from top left: Kimi 110857 wallpaper from Spirit collection, £34 per roll; Toma 131278 fabric from Spirit collection, £32 per m; Shibori 120322 fabric from Spirit collection, £31 per m, all Scion. Bitter Chocolate 4 matt emulsion, £24.29 per 2.5l, Dulux MixLab. Pampas Nordic Stripe in Denmark, £21.99 per sq m, Kersaint Cobb. Chenoa 131267 fabric from Spirit collection, £36 per m, Scion.

## Spend vs Save

Sit back and admire your new décor in comfort



Boho chair,  
£249, Very



Chloe occasional chair, £295, Alison at Home

Display fresh spring bunches of flowers in this light-catching vase

Large diamond cut glass vase, £29.50, Alison at Home





Update your tableware with some eye-catching designs

Splash Porcelain 12-piece set, £40; Splash Stripe bone china footed mug, £5; Splash porcelain dinner plate, £4; Splash porcelain pasta bowl, £4; Splash porcelain side plate, £3.50; Splash porcelain cereal bowl, £3.50; Blue Topaz soda glass, £1; Small check tea towels, £5 for five, all Tesco



Wrap up warm with a snugly knitted rug

Luella throw, £60, Laura Ashley

Break up a darker scheme with blocks of colour in a lighter shade

Medina MED02 rug; Be Square BES02 rug, both from £125 for 120cm x 170cm size, both Plantation Rug Company



Navy blue lends itself to a nautical theme, so don't be afraid to use the ocean as inspiration

by Sainsbury's Aqua print jug, £12, Sainsbury's

Mix rich velvety blues with fresher azure blue for a contemporary look

Curtains: Limosa fabric 120338, £46 per m; Upholstery: Amazilia Velvets 131512, £88 per m; Java 131514, £78 per m, all Amazilia collection, Harlequin



## Patterned fabrics

Choose a mixture of blue hued prints



Nerina fabric in Mineral F0692-04 from Artiste collection, £29 per m, Clarke & Clarke



Java 131519 fabric from Amazilia collection, £78 per m, Harlequin

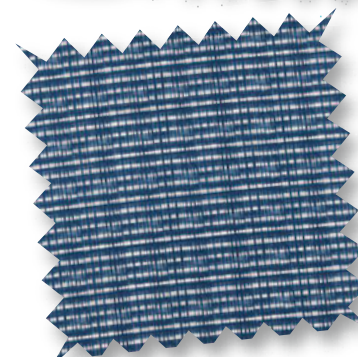


Limosa 120343 fabric from Amazilia collection, £46 per m, Harlequin



Blavinge blue fabric, £4 per m, Ikea

Best buy



Kali 120327 fabric from Spirit collection, £27 per m, Scion



Total Cost  
£774



# My old junk room is now a calming office

Susan Rook's spare room was filled from top to bottom with junk and somewhere underneath there was a office waiting to be used!



Before

Suzanne Rook, 45, and her two children moved in to their three-bedroom cottage 18 months ago. 'I decided to move out of the city to be nearer my job as a radio producer, and also to provide a safer environment for the children to grow up in'. The house Susan purchased was a converted barn, but had been a bit neglected over the years. 'It had a room I could use as an office for the days I had to work from home, and I was desperate to have my own space, especially with two young teenagers.'

However, as she decorated each room in the rest of the house it seemed all the junk and left over furniture would end up being stored in the office. This meant the room wasn't fulfilling its proper use and Susan was working in the kitchen or living room and getting easily distracted. She decided that as soon as Christmas was over it would be her mission to reclaim the room and turn it into her dream office and a retreat from the coming and goings of her two children.



# SPARE ROOM MAKEOVER

✦ The calming colours of lime, yellow and grey work really well together. And the mix of old and new give the room an industrial yet functional feel



**STEP ONE** The first step was to remove all the rubbish and prep the room for painting. Susan had recently had a flood in the bathroom, which had affected all the walls and flooring in the office. This meant she had to have the walls replastered and then decided that the flooring she'd originally used in the kitchen would be ideal for this room too. 'It was functional, affordable and as the office is just off the kitchen area it would give a bit of a flow to the ground floor of the house – I also had loads left over from when we replaced the kitchen and I do like to re-use where I

✦ The colours of Susan's radio were the inspiration behind the scheme in the room. Mixed and matched with plain and floral notebooks, it brings the room to life

*Good idea!*

Revamping old furniture not only cuts down on budget, but it's really simple to do and will add character to the room. Plus, the satisfaction that you've done it yourself will make you feel good!

can.' Susan decided she wanted a feature wall and had found a really pretty floral print wallpaper from Wallpaper Direct, which matched the colours of her favourite Orla Kiely radio. 'Lime, yellow and grey seem to be everywhere at the moment so I felt confident I would make it work in the room, and I carried a snippet of paper around with me for months ensuring I could match it up to all the bits and bobs I needed.'

**STEP TWO** With the walls and flooring ready the room was taking shape, her next job was to search for furniture, which was harder than she anticipated. 'I'd seen a lovely desk but at over £600 it was really pricey and out of my budget, so having looked around I decided to build my own desk area.' Susan picked up some old end-of-line kitchen units from a local DIY shop for under £60, she used these as floor cabinets and then fixed a length of her old kitchen worktop on top to create the desk area, which made the perfect customised work space. Feeling inspired, and happy she was saving money, instead of buying a new shelf Susan chanced her luck and asked a ground-keeper on a local estate if she could have an off-cut of wood from trees he'd been felling. 'I'd seen them being cut down a few days before and thankfully he was happy to let me have some – he even trimmed it down to size and treated it for me so it fitted perfectly on my shelf brackets.' The wood worked really well with the floral wallpaper and Susan decided a soft wood-effect blind at the window would really tie the look together. ▷

✦ This comfy seat is a great place for Susan to catch up with clients or a spot to chill out when she wants to get away and read a book



✦ Made from local wood the shelf is not only practical, but also has a rustic feel that complements the elegant floral wallpaper







## Good idea!

By using spray paint on old baskets, Susan was able to give them an instant update and inject her colour scheme into the otherwise white shelving unit.

✦ This brilliant shelving unit is perfect for an office. Each shelf has room for box files, magazines and books

✦ The old metal filing cabinet was a junk shop buy that cost just £40. Susan used spray paint on the doors and then decorated it with bright colourful magnets and postcards to create a quirky notice board



◀ **STEP THREE** With all the main areas sorted Susan realised she needed storage for her recording equipment, that was safe, but large enough to keep it all out of sight. She found an old industrial unit from a reclamation yard but the grey colour made the room look too functional and bland. 'I hated it, so decided to use spray paint to update the doors with a gorgeous lime colour – the result was amazing and as it's magnetic it has made a perfect notice board too.' Once she realised how easy the spray painting was she used a soft grey on some old baskets for the shelving unit and even sprayed an old bin for a fresh new look. Suzanne

sometimes has to meet clients at home and had enough room and money to invest in a small comfy chair and table, and a new office chair for herself. 'Because I'd saved so much money on a new desk and other furniture, I was able to splash out on some pretty accessories and invest in a new rug, as well as shelving units and the

## 3 of the best... lime green office accessories

### £7 from Ikea

This funky table lamp will look great on your desk or side table in a contemporary office, plus it's a bargain at just £7.

### £11 from j-me

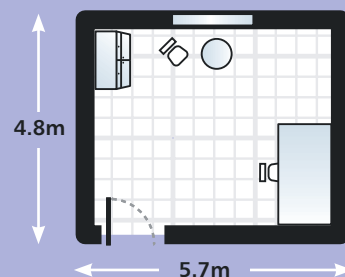
Keep your post organised with this kitsch letter holder that's straight out of the Wild West. No more searching for those stray bits of paper.

### £30 from Newgate

Make sure you are always on time with this stylish, eye-catching wall clock in lime green and lemon yellow.



## ROOMPLAN



## THE DETAILS

Paint	£18.99
Wallpaper	£147
Flooring	£100
Blinds	£86
Furniture	£399
Spray paint	£22.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£773.49</b>

## Shopping list

Kallax large shelving unit, £75; small unit, £35; Patrik swivel chair, £120; Dokument letter tray, £9.50; Spontan magnets, £2.50 for four; Knuff magazine files, £6.75 for two; Kasset boxes, £8.75 for two (painted white); Villstad easy chair, £140; Varum rug, £55; Branas baskets, £15 each; Tertial work lamp, £8.50, all Ikea. Miami occasional table in white, £29, Tesco. House collage wall frame, £45, Next. Green hole punch, £2, Tiger. Harlequin Mimi Lime wallpaper, £49 per roll, Wallpaper Direct. Butterflies stationery box, £9; wire notebooks, £8; A6 fabric note book, £5, all Paperchase. Sakura cushion, £12; Durdle saffron vase, £20, both Habitat. Faux wood blind in 38 Autumn Gold, 151cm x 138cm, £86, Direct Blinds. Polyflor Camaro Smoked Brush Elm flooring, £20 per m², Naked Interiors. Magic White matt emulsion, £18.99 per 2.5L, Dulux. Gold acrylic spray paint in Poison, Marble and Gravel, £7.50 each, Montana. All other items, second-hand shops or eBay.

quirky lamp that fitted to the shelf. The result is amazing, a gorgeous space that's functional yet relaxing,' smiles Susan.



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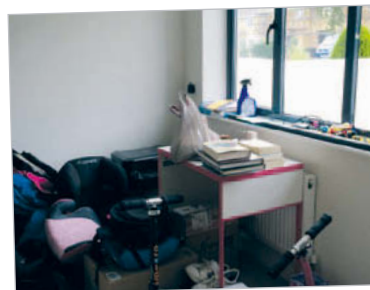
# It's more than just an office

Clever storage means Rachel's room is multi-functional

Rachel McWatt, husband Vincent, and children Gus, six; Seth, four; Elise, two, and Aoife, five months, have slowly made their house in Harrow, Middlesex, the perfect family home. Rooms have been designed and decorated to meet their needs, but the room at the front of the house was used for many things – none of them ordered! With no hallway storage and this room being next to the front door, all shoes, coats and bags were dumped on the floor in a pile resulting in daily chaos where no one could find anything. A child's desk gave a surface on which to do household paperwork, but it was generally lost in the disorder. Despite the compact proportions, Rachel was convinced she could make the room function better but was worried it would be asking too much from a small space. 'I wanted it to be an office with accessible storage for books and papers, but also a place to put shoes, coats and school bags. Although I would have loved to have it just as an office, I knew that would never work as we had no hall storage and the corridor was too narrow to add any. Instead, I decided to embrace the situation and treat the design as a challenge blending two rooms into one.' Rachel's confidence was high and she set to work in the autumn of 2014.

**STEP ONE** Rachel had seen a unit at a friend's house that had been made for them and she knew this was the way forward for her home. 'I needed to store such a wide mix of things and wanted to use the whole of one wall, there was no way I could buy the right thing on the high street. I drew a sketch of exactly what we needed with little cubbyholes for shoes, hanging space for coats, and shelves designed to hold boxes, files and books. I found some large wooden boxes that would be ideal for the children to keep their school shoes,

bags and sports kit in and designed a low level space for these too.' Once her design was complete, Rachel input them all on the Jali website who made the piece to her exact design and the bespoke shelves were delivered in two weeks. While she waited for the shelving to be delivered, Rachel chose the décor. 'I love pale grey as it's calm yet airy so painted the walls this shade, and laid a new floor in a pale washed wood plank to blend. The carpet had been ruined by muddy shoes and this would be a far more practical long term solution,' she explains. The shelves were then fitted and painted the same grey as the walls in hard-wearing eggshell to complete the first stage of the transformation.



Before



Total Cost  
£1,240



Good idea!

Neutral shades of grey are easy to live with but adding a pop of orange or grassy green adds instant energy.

▲ A feature wall gives the room personality and a wall of storage tackles clutter. A practical desk makes the most of the light flooding through the window

▲ A large set of drawers has a retro feel and offers great storage. The magnetic chalkboard above keeps family arrangements ordered





**STEP TWO** To add a fun eye-catching feature, Rachel decided to hang a wallpaper mural and searched the internet for the perfect design. 'I was aware that I needed to keep the detail quite small to not overwhelm the space but I also knew it would be really impactful and drive the feel of the room, so it was an important choice. I looked at hundreds and considered one with signposts on it and one with book spines but kept coming back to a blackboard print. I was a bit concerned it'd make the room dark but took the plunge anyway and I'm so glad I did because it looks fabulous and doesn't affect the light at all – I love it!' she smiles. After the paper was up, it was time to start thinking about furniture. Rachel wanted

a neat desk that didn't look too bulky and matching drawers for stationery, and spent hours looking at different websites. She considered a vintage steel desk but couldn't find one the right size, as well as ultra modern designs and ones from reclaimed wood. 'It felt like looking for a needle in a haystack so I stopped looking for a while and went to Ikea to get all the storage boxes I needed so I could get the shelves in order. While I was there I saw a lovely grey desk and drawers and bought them straight away – it was like I couldn't see for looking but it was such a relief to have found them in the end!' she laughs. ▶

*Good idea!*

Buy a range of boxes and files to keep all paperwork under control for a neat working space.





## Good idea!

Invest in shelving that meets your needs so you can store unusual things together.

► Fabulous bespoke built-in shelving offers storage for books and paperwork as well as coats, shoes and bags



▲ Rachel used clean jars decorated with washi tape to create her own useful desktop accessories



◁ **STEP THREE** Rachel needed a chair and found a bentwood style one in a second-hand furniture store. 'It was badly painted in pale blue gloss but I knew I could do something with it and for £10 I had to give it a go,' she explains. She rubbed down the paint with sand paper and sprayed it bright orange to add a zesty pop of colour. 'The orange looked fantastic so I added more with files. I needed a few pen pots so decorated some glass jars with coloured washi tape I bought

on eBay – they look great and I like that I can change the tapes if I want to in the future,' she explains. 'I also made some clips for my new memo board by painting clothes pegs orange, decorating with tape and hot-gluing magnets to the back.' With a new clock to ensure the family are never late and everything stored neatly where it should be, Rachel's room was complete. 'Having a place for everything has transformed this room – there's no excuse to drop things on the floor and the

## 3 of the best... wall murals

**£7.99 for 10m from Go Wallpaper**

Turn your office into a grand library with the help of this quirky wallpaper, fit for any bookworm.

**£26 per m2 from Photowall**

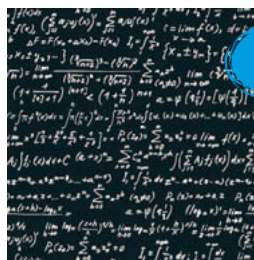
Channel a bit of old school with this blackboard design that would look great with bold colours.

**£92 for 1.2m x 2.4m from JW Walls**

Get the office you've always dreamed of with this fun mural. We're pretty sure you won't be getting much work done with that view.



£7.99



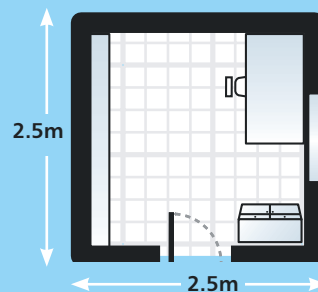
£26



£92

Bargain buy

## ROOMPLAN



## THE DETAILS

Paint	£77.79
Flooring	£243.75
Shelving	£472.59
Mural	£220
Office furniture	£225
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,239.13</b>

## Shopping list

Wall paint: French Grey Mid intelligent matt emulsion, £43 per 2.5l; shelves painted in French Grey Mid intelligent eggshell, £26 per litre, both Little Greene. Galleria Elite White 150mm Engineered flooring ENG-GA-18-003, £39 per sq m, UK Flooring Direct. Bespoke shelving, £472.59, Jali. Blackboard mural P130101-8, £220, Wallpaper Direct. Alex desk, £120; drawer unit on castors, £95; Ranarp work lamp, £40; Luns magnetic memo board, £17; Kassett boxes on shelving, from £1.90 for pack of two; Kassett magazine files, £3.75 for two; Fintorp Black wire basket, £7, all Ikea. Chair, £10, local second-hand store. Chair sprayed in Gloss Orange Twist & Spray, £7.49 per 400ml, PlastiKote. Apollo clock, £28, Jones Clocks. Washi tapes, £1.50 each, eBay. Wooden boxes, £14.99 each, Home Deco Art. Wooden boxes sprayed in Matt Grey Twist & Spray, £7.49 per 400ml, PlastiKote. Cup handles, £7 per pair, B&Q.

children enjoy having their own spaces so do tidy up really well. I have a place to work, our hall is clear and the room oozes style – what more could I ask for?' **YH**



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# It's my workshop heaven

Emily's practical space means she can sew, paint and upcycle to her heart's content

Emily Roberts has always been creative and dreamed of a space where she could experiment with all types of craft, so when she moved to her new home in Little Chalfont, Bucks, in 2014, she was thrilled with a little room at the side of the house. 'It had been used previously as a workshop and store room so was really basic with no furniture, flooring or décor – it was a bit of a mess but I could see huge potential.' Although lacking style, the room had a sink which would mean she could wash brushes without splashing paint in the kitchen, and lots of light. 'I do lots of sewing, crafts and also customising furniture, upcycling and DIY too, but have always had to work on the kitchen table. I needed a multi-functional space with masses of storage, a good-sized work area, tool organisation and clear floor space to customise pieces of furniture – it was a lot to ask but a wonderful challenge!' she smiles.

**STEP ONE** Emily chose to paint the walls white to keep the room as bright as possible and chose an acrylic eggshell product to be able to clean paint splashes without damaging the surface. The flooring decision however was trickier. 'Initially I thought ceramic tiles would be good as they're hard-wearing and easy to clean but decided against it for fear that if I drop anything heavy like my hammer I could crack a tile.' Emily then discovered Castello Oak from QuickStep – a honey-toned oak engineered flooring. 'I loved it



Before

A large sink is a great asset for washing brushes and Emily added a feminine touch with pretty tiles and a funky bin



*Good idea!*

If you do lots of DIY and craft, have tools easily at hand so you don't scramble around trying to find things.



▲ Glass jars and tins are an attractive way to keep small items in check. A magnetic knife rack means sharp drill bits are securely stored and easy to locate

– it was beautiful to look at, warmer to walk on and would just look like old floorboards if they got dents and marks over the years.' Once laid, the room felt fresh and clean and ready for the next stage. The room already had a sink on a white unit that was in good condition and Emily started looking for some additional storage to match.

'I went to Ikea and looked around and realised that kitchen units and worktop would be ideal, and I was thrilled when I found a range with a door almost identical

to the sink unit. I chose a tall cupboard for power tools and paint rollers as these are practical but not beautiful, and a smaller drawer unit with oak worktop in between. The oak gives a huge space to spread out and leave painted things to dry, and any damage it might get as I work won't matter because it's solid wood – I could even drill a hole in it and it wouldn't harm it in the way that it would laminate!' she laughs. She fitted the same handles on both old and new units to tie them together and the room was taking shape. ▷



## SPARE ROOM MAKEOVER

Total Cost  
£1,286

Kitchen units from Ikea give Emily a generous workspace and practical storage. Patriotic vintage style is created with white walls, a red ticking stripe curtain and revamped blue stool. Emily framed the cover of a vintage magazine to create some fun wall art



*Good idea!*

A colour scheme of red, white and blue is timeless and classic.



➤ An old pine shelf was painted blue, distressed, and the knobs replaced with pretty ceramic handles to make unique storage. Craft paint bottles stored with the base visible means Emily can see exactly what colours she has



◁ **STEP TWO** For wall protection and a touch of pretty vintage style, Emily turned her hand to tiling and fitted a splashback. 'Although the room had to be practical I didn't want it to feel like I was working in a garage, so I chose gorgeous patterned tiles from Fired Earth to go behind the sink. The cobalt blue is stunning and the pattern disguises splashes so they're perfect,' she explains. Next, Emily started to organise the things she uses often so they would be close at hand, and began with her tools. 'They've always been in a muddled box and I could never find anything,' she laughs, 'so I bought a metal peg board from eBay to hang everything up and sprayed it white. I also made my own screwdriver rack by drilling holes through a piece of timber so all my screwdrivers are lined up and I can grab whatever I need. It's such a simple solution but I love it!'



➤ Vintage tins hold Emily's array of brushes in size order and lovely tiles beneath add a feminine twist to a potentially harsh, masculine space.

blue then distressed and waxed it, and made a red ticking curtain to dress the glass door. I loved doing it all myself, creating my perfect space.' With the room almost complete, Emily

treated herself to a statement bin to help her keep tidy. 'I wanted my room to have character and style and so I bought a gorgeous big red pedal bin that reminds me of a post box,' she laughs. Finally, Emily framed and hung pages from an old DIY annual she bought for 50p in a car boot sale to brighten the walls. 'To me, this room is heaven. I have everything right at hand, space to paint furniture that doesn't affect anyone else and I can leave things out mid-project which is such a treat. It really is wonderful.' 🏠

**STEP THREE** The final touches were lots of fun for Emily. 'I wanted an eclectic vintage feel,' she explains. 'I collected vintage tins from car boot sales and used these teamed with old fashioned-style Kilner jars to store furniture handles, threads and buttons. I keep craft paints in crates and I painted a charity shop stool

## 3 of the best... *storage tins*

### £4.99 from Strawberry Fool

Go back in time with this retro tin featuring the kitchen favourite, OXO. The small size makes it the perfect spot for your paperclips or pins.

### £8 from Bhs

This floral tin from Bhs' latest Columbia Road collection will definitely brighten up your desk or row of shelves.

### £18 from Amara

Fans of Orla Kiely will love this classic Poppy Meadow tin that will add designer style.



£4.99



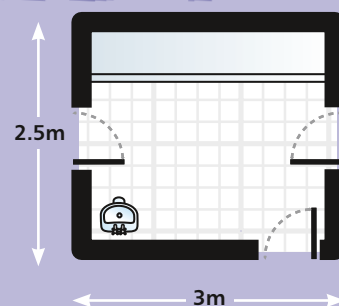
£8



£18



## ROOMPLAN



## THE DETAILS

Wall paint	£53
Flooring	£431.92
Worktop & storage	£513
Tiles	£191.84
Tool board	£51.24
Curtains	£45
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,286</b>

## Shopping list

Loft White Intelligent eggshell, £53 per 2.5l, Little Greene. **Castello Palazzo Oak 1339 flooring**, £53.99 per sq m, Quick-Step. **Hammarp oak worktop**, £100; **Metod tall unit with Grytnas door**, £234; **Four drawer unit in Grytnas**, £93; **Varnhem handles**, £8 per pair; **Ekby Jarpen 80cm white shelves**, £8 each; **Ekby Bjarnum brackets**, £10 per pair, all Ikea. **Andalucia Almonte tiles**, 20cm x 20cm, £11.95 each, Fired Earth. **Baseboy Retro red bin 20L**, £149.95, Wesco. **Tool board**, £43.75; **Magnetic pen pot**, £6.25 each, both eBay. **Tool board sprayed in White Twist & Spray**, £7.49 per 400ml, PlastiKote. **Ticking Stripes curtain fabric**, £18 per m, Clarke & Clarke. **Wooden shelf**, £2; **wooden stool**, £8.50, both local car boot sale, painted in **Napoleonic Blue chalk paint**, £18.95 per litre, Annie Sloan. **Ceramic knobs**, £2.95 each (£11.80), all Trinca Ferro. **MAKE letters**, £5.20 each, eBay, painted in **Napoleonic Blue chalk paint** (see details above) and **Emperor's Silk**, £5.95 for tester pot, both Annie Sloan. **Kilner Preserve jars**, from £1.79; **Wooden Kilner crates**, £9.99 each, all Kilner. **Be Ro tins**, £9.99 each, Lakeland.



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DECORATING CENTRE



# 50 thrifty revamps for under £50

Updating your home for the year ahead doesn't need to break the bank. Try these clever decorating ideas to reinvigorate your home without splashing the cash

**G**iving your home a new lease of life is fun to do and with great projects you'll be able to freshen up each room without spending a fortune. Transforming a tired piece of furniture with a few coats of paint, or creating a photo display on the wall will make all the difference and doesn't have to cost the earth.

**1** Cosy up your living room with this stunning emerald green shade on one or more walls, to make all your furniture come to life

**2** Group together inexpensive lamp shades to make a dramatic feature in the room

Colours Any Room, Any Surface, One Coat Silk emulsion in Emerald, £18.98 per 2.5L; Colours Haymarket shades, £5 each; Colours Carina textured cushion in Blueberry and Clematis, £12 each, all B&Q

**3** Updating your flooring can get quite pricey so if your budget doesn't quite stretch, invest in a colourful rug instead

Randerup rug, £35, Ikea





**4** Personalise walls with a photo gallery featuring all your favourite snaps and display on the wall for all to see

Multi aperture frame, £25, Ben Di Lisi at Debenhams



*Bargain buy*

**5** Create a welcoming entrance and display fresh flowers on a hall table to fill your home with wonderful aromas. Not only will they smell gorgeous but they'll add a splash of colour too

Radiance bouquet, £39.90, iflorist



**8** There are so many ways to add colour and pattern to your room without spending too much. For a quick update, cover an old lamp shade with a left over fabric remnant and then finish off with a fancy trim

Arabella trimmings, from £7 per m, Harlequin



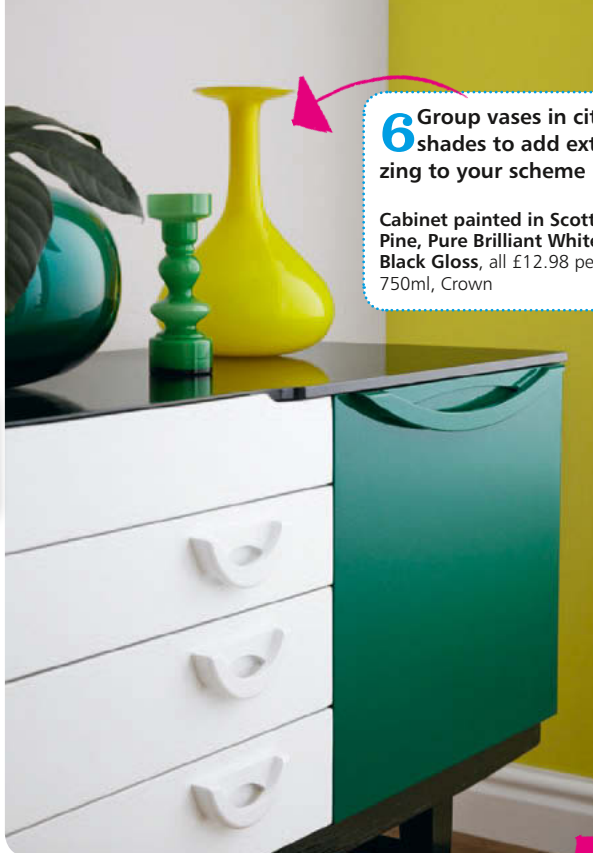
**9** Don't forget to treat your doors to some attention too. If you're opting for white painted walls, why not paint your doors in a vibrant shade instead?

Door: Luscious Lime Quick-Dry gloss, £11.99 per 750ml; Hallway wall: White Cotton matt emulsion, £13.79 per 1L, both Dulux



**6** Group vases in citrus shades to add extra zing to your scheme

Cabinet painted in Scottish Pine, Pure Brilliant White and Black Gloss, all £12.98 per 750ml, Crown



**7** Don't be afraid to add a pop of colour to some old furniture. If you've inherited a side table you're not keen on or have just spotted a piece in a charity shop, you can soon resurrect it with some paint. Be bold with colour and choose a different shade for each door

**10** Treat a stained or tired chair to a brand new look with a snug chair cover, then add a cosy throw to fit into your colour scheme

Ektorp armchair cover, from £35; Ormhassel throw, £15, both Ikea





Bargain  
buy

**11** Give your room a new colour scheme with a feature wall. Two or three rolls of wallpaper will be enough to transform your room in no time at all

Geometric wallpaper, £15 per roll, Next



**12** Rejig furniture to give your room a brand new look. You may find that rearranging your seating layout will work better with how you use the space

Wood panelling wallpaper by Albany, £19.99 per roll, Wallpaperdirect



**13** If your kitchen chairs are in good condition but looking a bit tired, give them a coat of paint to revitalise them. Mix and match the colours for an eclectic look

Chairs painted in acrylic eggshell, £15 per 750ml, the Authentic Period Colours range from Craig & Rose

**14** Create a pretty corner by displaying a selection of favourite items on a side table or shelf. Working around a theme, such as coastal, should ensure that your display works beautifully

**15** If you dream of wood panelled walls but can't afford to splash the cash, why not fake it with a wood-effect wallpaper instead?

**16** Give your existing sofa a new lease of life by investing in a new set of covers – making it look like new without the expense



**17** Little details such as a favourite piece of artwork can bring a personal touch to your home. This glittery illustration is hand-printed and will add sparkle to any wall

There's No Place Like Home framed artwork, £30, DeBono & Bennet





**19** If your sofa is in need of some TLC, add a splash of vibrancy with two or three cushions for a brand new feel

Jeanie Floral cushion, £25; Glitzy fan cushion, £25, both M&S. Teal cushion, £30, Matthew Williamson at Debenhams



**18** Revamp an old set of curtains to give them a new lease of life, with a bobble trim running down the edge in a contrasting colour. Finish off with a matching tie-back. If your budget doesn't stretch to a tie-back, dig out some old bead necklaces in similar colours and upcycle these instead

Barletta bobble, £29 per m; Vivalto tie-back, £41, both Harlequin

**22** Make your home office work harder by investing in a selection of baskets and racks to fit your storage unit and help keep everything in order

Nornas wine racks, £10 each; Branas baskets, £15 each, both Ikea



**20** Get in touch with your artistic side and make use of some left over tester paint pots to create a dramatic feature wall. Draw out a pattern first in pencil, mark out the different areas with masking tape, and just get going



Venetian blind, from £7.18; Colours 50ml tester pots, £1.10 each, both B&Q

**21** Don't forget the windows. Give them an early spring clean with some elbow grease and then freshen up with a white Venetian blind

**23** Smaller items such as candles and vases can make all the difference. Clear surfaces free of old knick-knacks and replace with some well chosen vases and candle holders in different shapes, but sticking to your colour scheme



**24** Dim the lights down low and light your collection of scented candles for a relaxing ambience where you can unwind

Willow food dome, £35; Glass candlesticks, from £15 each; Embossed vase, £25; From the Herb Garden candle, £20, all House Of Fraser



# DECORATING INSPIRATION

**25** Pick up some inexpensive frames from charity shops and revamp them with paint. Then create your own work of art with some wallpaper offcuts and display in groups on the wall

Wallpapers from the Clarisse collection, £34 per roll, Clarke & Clarke

**26** Make an impression in the room with a large statement mirror to create instant impact. It will make the space feel much brighter

Venetian wall mirror, £34.99, Homebase



**27** Transform an unused wall with a rich shade of blue and attach some floating shelves to display your choice of lovely accessories

Form floating shelf, £25; Modern glazed white pot, £5; Contemporary block picture frame, £4; Ampersand sign, £10; large clear corked bottle, from £12, all B&Q



**28** If your crockery is too pretty to store away or your cupboard space is bulging at the seams, put up some simple open shelving in the kitchen where you have some space

**29** Tile your kitchen walls in blocks of colour to make your crockery collection stand out. Choose three or four of your favourite shades and tile in solid blocks of colour

Prismatic tiles, from 39p each, Tile Mountain



Best buy

**30** It's easy just keeping all your photos on your computer on home but spend an hour or two going through them and find a few to have printed onto canvas to grace your walls. Companies such as Photobox and Snapfish offer this service

Bicycle wall art, £25, Graham & Brown







Cushion: Antique Grey machine dye; Purple throw: Intense Violet machine dye; Curtain: Burlesque Red machine dye, all £6.25 per pack, Dylon

**31** Give your bed linen a quick and easy revamp with a pack of Dylon machine dye. It's that easy to transform your colour scheme. Give your cotton, linen and viscose curtains, blankets and throws a go too. They can quickly and easily be transformed in your washing machine in no time at all

**32** Treat your bedroom to a splash of colourful blooms to brighten it up. We love the great-value range available from George Home



Watercolour floral double duvet set, £15, George Home

**33** If you're not keen on your view out of the kitchen window, give the glass a sandblasted look with window film, which won't affect the natural light coming in



Frostbite Film, from £30, The Window Film Company



Bargain buy

**34** Wall stickers can transform a wall in no time at all. These leafy stickers create a spring feel and will give a plain room a colourful focal point

Elsabo decoration stickers, £10, Ikea

**35** Walk around your home and make sure each room has the correct amount of lighting. The kitchen needs to be bright whereas relaxing areas such as the living room and bedrooms benefit from some mood lighting

Kynes pendant light, £46, B&Q



**36** Brighten up an old chest of drawers with some colourful paint. Paint the handles too for a whole block of colour

**37** Floorboards are easy to paint too. Treat yours to an injection of colour in a stripe pattern, to inject some fun into the room

Drawers: Marigold 209 Intelligent eggshell, from £26 per 1L; Flooring: Bone China Blue 107 and Bone China Blue Pale 182 floor paint, from £27 per 1L, both Little Greene





**38** Give your bathroom walls some interest with a patterned border around the top

**39** A towel ladder is a great way to display towels and keep them close to hand

**40** To achieve a co-ordinated bathroom, paint the side of the bath too to match your chosen scheme

Walls painted in Slate Grey Kitchen & Bathroom matt emulsion, £23.98 per 2.5L, Crown. Hay Barn ladder, £39, Notonthehighstreet

**41** If you need a bit of privacy in your bathroom but you still want the natural light to flood in, opt for some window film for a stylish solution. There are lots of designs to choose from to blend in with your theme

Frostbite Film, from £30, The Window Film Company

**42** Invest in a few new fluffy towels to give your bathroom the spa treatment

Bobble trim hand towels, £10 each, House of Fraser



Copper Austin table lamp, £49, Made.com

**43** Adjusting the lighting can make all the difference in a space. Use dimmer switches for your ceiling lights and add some stylish side lamps to enhance the ambience of the room even more

**44** Create a focal point in your bathroom with a feature wall using stylish chevron tiles. Mark out the bath or shower area with patterned tiles for maximum impact

Chevron black and white tiles, £2.48 per tile, B&Q







**45** Give your hallway the 'wow' factor with some bright blooms. If you have a small area to decorate, either above or below a dado rail, this wallpaper is sure to make an impact

Wallpaper: Diva 110860, £34 per roll, Scion



**46** Treat your windows to a cheerful floral roller blind to make your kitchen feel like it's summer all year round

Tea Rose Moss roller blind, from £32.95, Tuiss

**47** Sand down your old kitchen table and then give it a rub down with some wood oil to bring the grain back up

Sadolin wood oil, £11.99 per 500ml, Homebase



**48** Revamp old, rusty garden furniture with some specialist paint and bring it inside to give you more seating options for extra guests. This paint can be applied straight onto rusty metal and gives it a long lasting revamp. Add a couple of cushions for an extra seating option in your home

Hammerite Direct to Rust metal paint in white, £9.99 per 250ml, available at all good DIY stores

**49** Make a good first impression with a newly-painted front door and add a smart shiny knocker to greet your guests



Ring door knocker, £30, John Lewis



**50** If you want to update your bathroom without spending too much, invest in a new set of co-ordinating towels in a stunning pattern

Ingeborg towels, from £3 for a hand towel, Ikea





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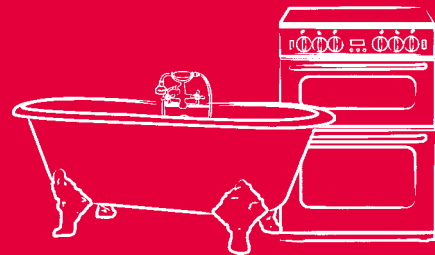


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# Kitchens & BATHROOMS

Get a designer kitchen on a budget



**Victorian unglazed tiles**, from £69.95 per sq m, Walls and Floors



## Trend: Hexagon haven

Move over brick-shaped tiles – there's a new shape in town. Hexagon tiles are set to be big this season, which is great news for anyone looking for something a little bit different that won't date. Because the six-sided shape is such a feature in itself there's no need to over-complicate your décor with busy patterns. A monochrome scheme, or bold colours teamed with neutrals, work brilliantly with this trend as the contrast shows off the honeycomb pattern to perfection. We love these new Victorian Unglazed tiles from Walls and Floors that will add character to even the newest of homes. Use them in a uniform pattern on your kitchen floor or design your own pattern to make a focal point on your bathroom wall.



## Mirror, mirror on the wall

Every bathroom needs a mirror, but don't be pressured into scrimping on style in favour of function. It's the one room that guests will almost certainly see, so make it just as stylish as your living room. Add some glamour to your bathroom or cloakroom this month with this gorgeous mirror from Next.

Complete with a shelf to house your toothbrushes or a miniature vase of flowers, the ornate design has a distressed, white painted finish that will perfectly pair with every look from shabby chic to mediterranean cool.

**White mirror shelf**, £60, Next



## Wash the week away

If you're on the lookout for a stylish wash bag for weekends away this year then

Poppy Treffry's new collection of practical yet adorable bags could be just the ticket. Not only do they come in a range of fantastic designs and colours but they're also tall enough to store toiletries, such as shampoo and shower gel, upright – a simple idea we wish we had thought of! Among our favourite designs are 'Dotty Pug' for lovers of purple and 'Best in show' in pillar box red. Costing £25, they'd make a fabulous gift or a great excuse to book more trips away.

**Wash bags**, £25 each, [www.poppytreffry.co.uk](http://www.poppytreffry.co.uk)

## All that glitters

With more choice than ever, there's no excuse to have a boring kitchen worktop. We love the new range from Betta Living that will add that bit of extra sparkle. Although it's pricey it would be fantastic for an island unit, or a smaller kitchen. Available in five colours, including vanilla and ruby red, the Metallic Laminate collection is the perfect new year update for your kitchen.

**Strass Noir Quartz Gloss Metallic Laminate worktop**, £208 per m2, Betta Living



# Our kitchen feels so open

The bright, open plan kitchen-diner is a far cry from the dark and confined space the Cox



## Insider info

### WHO LIVES HERE?

Jane Cox, 41, a writer, her husband Ian, 40, a construction manager, and their two children, Xanthe, seven and Kenzie, six. They bought their four-bedroom 1930s semi in Hove eight years ago.

### WHAT WAS YOUR BEST BUY?

'The units – I haven't seen this style or colour anywhere else and the whole lot cost just under £3,000.'

### DID YOU RECYCLE ANYTHING FROM THE OLD KITCHEN?

'We kept our fridge-freezer and we were able to re-use the pull-out larder and the slimline dishwasher. The fitters just put new doors on the front.'

### WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THE NEW ROOM?

'The circulation space. It's much nicer having people over because we don't feel so squashed and crammed in.'

### WHAT WAS WRONG WITH THE OLD ROOM?

The old kitchen was cramped and dark with not much worktop space, and wasn't a very social area.



Before

### BE BOLD WITH WALLS

Jane chose an off-white colour scheme with hints of grey in the cupboards and quartz worktop to offset the vintage green walls and bespoke shelving. Designer bulbs on a traditional flex replace pendant lights, which, when dimmed in the evening, create a lovely ambience



Jane and Ian Cox decided to change their kitchen when it became evident that the galley-style was no longer working for them and their two children.

'The kitchen was narrow and really cramped – there wasn't even enough room to have a worktop on both sides of the room,' Jane explains. 'We couldn't all be in there at the same time and the burgundy cabinets made it feel dark.'

In September 2013 work began to improve the space. The kitchen was extended by just 1.8m to allow for a new back door leading to the new utility in the garage, and the wall was taken out between the kitchen and dining room.

'A breakfast bar was top of my wish list and this was the ideal place to put one,' says Jane. 'It's fantastic – we congregate here all the time.'

The lack of light was resolved with a new skylight and a glazed back door – then Jane started thinking about a kitchen style.

'I like vintage pieces and the simplicity of Scandinavian design ideas,' she says. 'I'm drawn to wood but, as we already had an oak dining table and we wanted a wood floor, I didn't want to make the room feel overbearing.'

Jane struggled to find a contrasting cabinet colour that wasn't white or a gloss that would be difficult to keep clean. Then the answer popped up on a chance visit to a local independent kitchen shop. 'I stopped by to ask about quartz worktops and spotted this woodgrain style door in a white-grey, and it was just perfect,' Jane recalls.

The look was completed with a white quartz worktop teamed with bold vintage green walls and bespoke shelving. Jane's really pleased with how everything has come together.

'The kitchen is such a lovely bright space to be in now,' she smiles. 'The breakfast bar is brilliant because we can eat together, chat together and even cook together now.'



# and bright

family lived with before



## MAKE ACCESS EASY

Crockery is stacked in two drawers next to the sink and dishwasher to make it easy to put washing-up away, and for the kids to reach their own plates.

## ADD STYLE WITH ACCESSORIES

Jane introduced a vintage flavour to the kitchen with the green walls and wire shelves. Here she displays original vintage pieces from flea markets alongside the mugs and jars she uses every day.



## BLEND COOKING AND EATING AREAS

Removing the wall has brought the dining area within eye-view of the kitchen. The oak table has a great outlook over the garden and the narrow wall shelves are ideal for displaying pictures.

## CREATE SPACE AND LIGHT

The breakfast bar replaces the old wall giving way to a spacious kitchen-diner. Light floods into the room through the new skylight, the glazed back door and from windows that overlook the garden.

## DON'T INTERRUPT THE FLOW

The new extension was ideal as a separate work area for washing up and making hot drinks. It's recessed under the window away from the door and the circulation space around the breakfast bar so nobody gets in the way.



## SHOPPING LIST

Eco Avola white kitchen units, £94 for 600mm unit; Rangemaster Atlantic Quad sink QUB3416, £225; Franke Eiger brushed steel tap, £169; Arcadia quartz worktop, upstands, splashback and satin chrome leg, £2,695, all Boundary DIY Kitchens. Whirlpool ACM847/BA BK induction hob in black, £380; Zanussi ZOP37902XK SS electric single oven, £339; Siemens LC66BB530B SS cooker hood, £385, all Appliances Online. Whirlpool MAX 35 CRG microwave, £119; Le Parfait orange jars, £5.95 each, both eBay. Kitchen and bathroom emulsion mixed in Crown's Beatnik Blue, £47 per 5l, Johnstones. Tarkett Homestyle Gea Dark Beige flooring, £15 per sq m, Ocean Flooring. Oak bar stools, £68 each, Danetti. Russell Hobbs Heritage kettle, £34.49, Tesco. Green teapot, £8.99, Berts Homestore. Emma Bloomingville Carla mugs, £6.50 each; Madam Stoltz wall rack, £55, all Flitty Bird. Aida Mette Dittmer heart small cups, £5.50, Achica. Azure plates, £14.50 each, Denby. Bespoke shelves, £35 each, Brighton & Hove Wood Recycling. Meadow Terrace and Daze Terrace tea towels, £7.95 each, Lilly Lory at The Wise House. Joseph Joseph Index chopping boards, £48; Le Creuset Volcanic casserole, from £99, all Debenhams. Nigella bread bin, £55.95, The Cook's Kitchen. Bayonet pendants in elephant grey, £33.60 each; Large Squirrel Cage bulb, £16.80; Globe Quad loop bulb, £30, Globe Spiral bulb, £25.20, all Nook London.

**TOTAL COST: £7,520**

WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

# WIN! A SafeChoice front door worth £1,500

Two lucky readers will win a SafeChoice front door to help make a real entrance to their home



► Window panes let light flood in, and create a bright and welcoming entrance to your home. This smart front door is Georgian in style and makes an elegant choice for any property, modern or traditional

▼ This retro-cool black door from the SafeChoice Continental range has five rectangular glazing panels and a metal handle and lock for a smart, contemporary look that really stands out



safechoice



As the saying goes, first impressions are everything – and this is certainly true of your home. The exterior of your house is the first impression your guests have of your style, and it impacts how much neighbours and passers-by think you value your home and community.

We've teamed up with SafeChoice to offer two lucky homeowners their choice of front door, supplied and fitted to the value of £1,500.

There are over twenty styles of door to choose from with a multitude of colours and glazing options, so whether your look is contemporary or traditional, there is a door design to suit every décor. For further information visit [www.safechoice.co.uk](http://www.safechoice.co.uk).

▲ Proving that there are endless ways to stave off dull-door syndrome, this versatile stable door which opens in two sections is a real eye-catcher. Choosing a front door has a huge impact when it comes to enhancing your home's kerb appeal. Whether it's the door's design or choosing the right colour, you can make a real entrance with the range from SafeChoice.

## RULES OF COMPETITION ENTRY

\*Calls cost 26p per minute and last approx. 2 minutes. Calls from mobiles may vary. \*\*Texts cost 50p plus your standard network charge. This is not a subscription service. Lines close at midnight on 28th February 2015 and three working days later for online entries. The winners will be selected at random from all correct entries received after the closing date. If you call to enter after the advertised closing date you will not be entered into the competition, but you may still be charged. 1. Hubert Burda Media UK may use your details to let you know about other products and services we think may be of interest to you. If you do not want offers from us, please end your text message with BURDA NO. 2. The competition is open to anyone in the UK over the age of 18, apart from employees of Hubert Burda Media UK, Spoke and any other companies or company employees involved in the competition. 3. Unless otherwise stated prizes include delivery to the UK mainland but not installation or removal of existing appliances

or products. 4. No cash alternative is available and products will not be changed or upgraded, but should the prize become unavailable Your Home has the right to offer an alternative prize. 5. Only one online entry per giveaway per person. 6. Winners must be willing to participate in publicity if required. 7. Proof of postage is not proof of receipt. 8. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. 9. Unless otherwise stated prizes must be claimed within six months. 10. Holidays and breaks are subject to availability at the time of booking and unless otherwise stated do not include travel, insurance or extras. 11. Reproduction of this competition in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Hubert Burda Media UK reserves the right to prosecute any offending parties. 12. Allow 8-10 weeks from selection for completion. 13. Entrants are asked to provide their full name and address when entering the competition. SP: Spoke – 0333 202 3390.

## Terms & conditions

1. The winner(s) MUST be homeowners. 2. The winner(s) will receive the prize from Masco UK Window Group Ltd. as per the submitted entry. Such prize will include the survey, fabrication and installation of their prize up to a total value corresponding to the specified prize value (retail value). Final design, fabrication and installation decisions rest with Masco UK Window Group Ltd. 3. The survey, fabrication and installation will be performed by Masco UK Window Group Ltd. and/or third parties selected by Masco UK Window Group Ltd. and will be subject to the general terms of sale/service.

## HOW TO ENTER

For your chance to win, simply answer the following question:

**Q: If a door is open, it could also be said to be:**

A) Abottle B) Ajar C) Atub

To enter, call our competition line

**0901 819 0680\***

To enter online visit [www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk](http://www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk)

To enter by text message text **YH COMP4** followed by a space then your name, address and answer to **87080\*\***

\*\*Texts cost 50p, calls cost 26ppm\* and last approx. 2 mins.

**Closing date:** 28th February 2015 and three working days later for online entries.





Smart stainless steel is ideal for a professional-looking kitchen, and it needn't cost as much as you might think

Metod/Grevsta kitchen, from around £52 for a 600mm base unit with door; Realistisk oven, £250; Luftig extractor hood, £100; Grundtal kitchen trolley, £100, all Ikea

# Update your kitchen *without breaking the bank*

We've gathered together some great ideas to help you give the heart of your home a new look for less

Most of us spend a fair amount of time in the kitchen, whether we like it or not, so it's important to ensure that it's a well thought out space which is highly functional as well as stylish. If yours is looking a little drab, but you don't have the funds to splash out on a brand new scheme, there are plenty of ways in which you can give your space a lift without spending a fortune. Replacing a worktop, for example, needn't cost as much as you might think, while new flooring and tiles can be bought for very little. So take a look at some of our best buys to give your kitchen a brand new look.



If you'd love a solid wood work surface but are put off by the price, take a look at the range of options from Worktop Express

Beech worktop, £75 per three metre length, Worktop Express



▲ These pretty glasses are a great buy, and will add a splash of vibrant red to your scheme

Molly floral tumblers, £3 for four, Wilko



# DECORATING IDEAS



The Basics Daisy two-seater dining table, H73cm x W70cm x D70cm, £49, John Lewis

▲ If you have room in your kitchen for a small table, this affordable square design is a great choice



Jazz up a plain white scheme with a pop of colour introduced through handles and accessories

Fyndig kitchen, from £25 for a 40cm wall cabinet; Satta knobs, from £1.50 for a pack of six; Fyndig laminate worktop, from £20 per 126cm length; Fyndig one-bowl inset sink with drainer, £45, all Ikea



▲ Get a high-quality tap at an affordable price with Abode's Pico monobloc mixer

Pico tap in chrome, £99 in chrome, Abode

► Check out Wilko for some fantastic kitchen bargains

Everyday value one-litre glass jug, £1.25, Wilko



Wooden crates, from £5.99 for a small size, Dunelm

▼ If you're a fan of Oriental cooking, this set of essentials is a must-have. It includes a 30cm wok, four bowls and spoons, four sets of chopsticks, a pair of serving chopsticks and a spatula

15-piece wok set, £13, Sabichi



◀ If you can't afford to splash out on authentic vintage wooden crates, try these for size instead



▲ If your cooker hood has seen better days, why not replace it with this bargain buy?

ElectriQ 90cm traditional chimney hood, £69.98, Appliances Direct

▼ Made from Teflon-coated aluminium, these pans work on all types of hob, and the lids feature a built-in strainer in the lid to make them extra easy-to-use. The lid can also be hung on the edge of the pot so that condensation drips into the pot, instead of ending up on the worktop when you take the lid off. And, at just £55 for a set including three pans and two lids, we think they're a steal

Forbluffad five-piece cookware set, £55, Ikea



▲ This fresh white kitchen has a simple door style with modern bar-style handles. Tall larger units are also available for floor-to-ceiling storage, should you have the space

Ottawa kitchen, from £97 for a 600mm base unit including door, the Lifestyle range by Crown Imperial

► If you have the worktop space, these stylish scales are smart enough to leave out on display

Kitchen scale in red and cream, £15 each, Sabichi



◀ Update your cutlery drawer with a new set – who can resist at this price?

Colourplay 16-piece cutlery set, £6, Wilko



# We used wasted cupboard

Just a simple size-adjustment turned Heather Burton's cramped shower room into a



## Insider info

### WHO LIVES HERE?

Heather Burton, a journalist and her husband, Dave Burton, a photographer. They have lived in their four-bedroom detached house near York, since they built it 16 years ago.

### WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THE ROOM?

'We use the en suite first thing in the morning, usually when the sun is shining directly into the room, so it's a great way to wake up. I also like the painted boards on the wall – they were very inexpensive to do but totally changed the look of the room.'

### WHAT ARE YOUR TOP TIPS?

'Create a weathered-effect on new wood by painting it with a coat of the darkest colour you want to use, then add two more layers of contrasting lighter shades. When dry, use a piece of sandpaper wrapped around a small block of wood and gently sand in the direction of the grain until you achieve the desired 'weathered' look.'

### WHAT WAS WRONG WITH THE OLD ROOM?

The shape of the room was awkward, making it difficult to work around, and in hindsight the room was too small to be functional as a useable space.

Heather and Dave Burton had always struggled with the awkward shape and size of their en suite.

'We made a mistake when we designed our home by making it too small, but we never got round to changing it,' says Heather. 'In the end the room started to look so dated and unloved that we asked a friend of ours, a joiner, to help transform it by making it bigger and changing the layout.'

They wanted to make more space without knocking out structural walls which would have a major impact on the main bedroom.

'My built-in wardrobe was much deeper than it needed to be, so we decided to take some of the space from the back of the wardrobe and use it to make more room in the en suite,' says Heather. 'By switching the WC around, we also had room for two basins instead of one.'

Work began early in 2014 when the joiner/builder took out all the old fittings, wall tiles and floorboards then knocked out a section of the breeze block wall between the built-in wardrobe and the en suite. He built a stud wall in the gap to create the framework for the

hidden toilet cistern, with inset shelves above it.

He laid new pipework and relaid the floor with new boards, at a higher level than the original to cover the pipes, and built a shallow wooden frame on which to fix the tongue and groove boards to the wall and added new skirting boards.

The shower area was lined with waterproof Wedi board and the new shower tray fixed into position. Shortly after the joiner had found and fitted a worn, chunky railway sleeper as a counter top, and fixed two new basins into position, he was taken ill and had to take several months off to recuperate.

'Dave continued with the rest of the work at weekends,' says Heather. This included tiling, fitting the shower, fitting window shutters – chosen by Heather to make the dated window look more attractive – and decorating.

'With so many delays it took about nine months from start to finish, but it's been worth the hassle,' says Heather. 'Although we haven't gained a lot of space, it's made a huge difference to the room, and it's the best it's ever been.'



### CREATE IMPACT ON THE WALLS

Heather wanted to create a look which was partly Scandinavian, partly industrial, so she asked the joiner to fit tongue and groove boards from floor-to-ceiling on one wall, then painted them three colours before sanding them back to create a weathered effect.

### LOOK FOR INTERESTING ALTERNATIVES

The counter top is a thick piece of railway sleeper, bought from a local wood yard and kept in its original state. It is fixed onto concealed heavy duty wall brackets.

### CONCEAL THE PIPEWORK

The plumbing for the wall-mounted taps is concealed behind the tongue and groove boards which have been mounted on a shallow wooden frame.



Before



# space to make more room

spacious, urban-style en suite

## TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

Heather and Dave fitted two shower heads – a centralised rose head for a full shower, plus a hand held corner unit for days when there's no time for drying hair. The hand held unit is also useful for cleaning and rinsing the cubicle.



## CREATE RECESSED SHELVES

Recessed shelves are neat, practical and stylish. The joiner created a box frame to fit into the section of wall that was removed for the concealed toilet cistern. He then rested bespoke shelves on simple wooden brackets, adding a small trim across the front to make them look as though they are cantilevered.

## SHOPPING LIST

Made-to-measure shutters, £165, Web-Blinds. 800mm Beam pivot shower door, £396; low profile 1200mm x 800mm shower tray, £322; Platinum Dual C flip action shower head and hand shower, £810; Wall-mounted shower control, £145, all Mira. Tones white satin tiles, 400mm x 150mm, £24.36 per sq m (£602), Johnson Tiles. Counter top, £30; wood for bespoke shelves, £30 for three, all sourced by joiner. Countertop Shift collection washbasins, £204 each (total £408); Retro wall-hung WC, £220, both Vitra. Towel radiator, £60; Carlisle DIY. Mirrors, £28.99 each, HomeSense. Paint on walls: for similar try Gauze Dark (166) Intelligent matt emulsion, £53 for 2.5l, Little Greene. Paint on floor: Dulux Feature Wall Urban Obsession matt emulsion, £13.83 per 1.25l, B&Q. Bath mat, £14, Bhs. Large stool, £25; small stool, £5, both local antique shop. Jute storage bag, £7.99; small motif hand towel, £3, both H&M. For similar towels try Stripe towels, £6 each, Next.

**TOTAL COST: £3,081.83**

## PAINT THE FLOOR FOR A PRACTICAL FINISH

Painted floor boards can be matt varnished to prevent them becoming splash marked. Keep some spare paint to touch up any sections which get scratched or which fade with time. The floorboards were raised to create space for the new plumbing, then the joiner made a curved feature step from the en suite down into the bedroom.



# Easy ways to update your bathroom

from just **£3**

Give your bathroom a lift with some of these great solutions, suitable for even a tight budget

If your bathroom is more shabby than stylish, now could be the time to consider an update. You don't need to change your whole suite, however, for a brand new look. Consider a smart vanity unit to replace a basin that has seen better days, or why not give towels a new lease of life with fabric dye? There are plenty of ways in which you can make a difference without breaking the bank, so take a look at these suggestions to transform your space from drab to fab in no time.

▼ This stylish vanity unit is a steal at just **£109**, including the basin

Match 550 ceramic one tap hole basin and double door white vanity unit, £109, Bathstore

Feature Lisa Hibberd



Choose a selection of affordable matching furniture for a smart, co-ordinated look

Ronnskar wash basin shelf, £22; Hemnes mirror wall cabinet, £90; Hemnes shelving unit, £85; Hjalmar four-bar towel holder, £14, all Ikea

**£211**



**£109**

► At just **£8**, this stylish bath mat is just the ticket for an instant update

Nile blue bathe bath mat, £8, George Home



**£8**



## BATHROOM IDEAS



£29

▲ Achieve a simple, Shaker-style look with this bargain basin unit

Azure basin console, £29.99, The Range

► At just £49 for a basin with full pedestal, this really is a great-value buy

Demi 550 basin with full pedestal, £49, Bathstore



£49



£39

▲ Need a new shower handset? This design also includes a polished stainless steel slide bar, and a 1.5m hose

Blade single function shower handset and rail, £39, Bathstore



£154

▲ If your basin and WC have seen better days, update them for less with this set, which includes the basin, taps and WC

Plumbsure Newbury WC, basin and tap pack, from £154, B&Q



£8

Victorian mirror, £8, George Home

► Get a vintage look with a Victorian-inspired mirror



Refresh faded towels and bath mats using a packet of machine dye in your choice of colour

Ocean Blue machine dye, from £6.25 per packet, Dylon

£6



£11

Best buy

► Get a luxury look for less by treating yourself to this set of Chanel-style accessories

Quilted dispenser, £5; quilted tumbler, £3; quilted soap dish, £3, all George Home



**Garmin's Forerunner 10 GPS running watch accurately tracks how fast you run, as well as the calories you're burning. It can also help to keep you motivated by identifying personal records and comparing your current pace to your target. When you've finished your run, you can upload to the Garmin Connect site to see your run on a map, get more detail on each mile and share with friends**

**Forerunner 10 GPS running watch, around £99.99, Garmin**

**This clever scale measures not only your weight, but also your body fat percentage and BMI. It features an easy-to-read display, which syncs your stats via Wi-Fi to your personal Fitbit account, so that you can track your progress. It's able to recognise up to eight different users, so that the whole family can get involved**

**Aria Wi-Fi smart scale, £99.99, Fitbit**



# PUT FITNESS FIRST *with these handy gadgets*

We've taken a look at some of the latest wearable technology, apps and gadgets to help you get fit this new year

**I**f, like many people, you've decided that 2015 is going to be the year that you improve your fitness, don't worry as help is at hand. There are plenty of gadgets available to help you get motivated and track your progress, whether you simply want to be more active or embark on a new hobby such as running or cycling. Take a look at our expert advice and best buys which will help you along every step of the way.

**The latest incarnation of Nike's tracker is a smart and simple way to get more active. It converts activity into 'NikeFuel' – a universal way to measure movement for all kinds of activities. It can count steps, track the intensity of your workouts and also enables you to monitor your sleep. Bluetooth technology keeps it connected to your smartphone, and it will give you motivation and feedback when you need it, even reminders to give you a push to get you moving every hour**



**Nike+ Fuelband SE, from £89, Nike**

## Expert advice

**We asked the experts at John Lewis for their top tips on a range of popular gadgets...**

### SPORTS WATCHES

■ If you're following a training programme, a specialised sports watch will really come in handy. Monitoring the length of time you're running for is a good indicator of your improved stamina and running ability.

■ Many runners are concerned with the amount of calories they've burnt on their route; basic sports watches may roughly count your calories as well as having a timing function.

■ The top of the range sports watches are now equipped with GPS, so they record your distance and the route you follow, which can then be uploaded onto your computer and logged.

### PEDOMETERS

■ Pedometers are compact units allowing you to record your number of steps, distance and calories while exercising – commonly the number of features will increase with price, while some models also include a radio.

### HEART RATE MONITORS

■ When running without the handy features of a treadmill, you'll find it's extremely hard to judge the amount of effort you're putting into

a run. A heart rate monitor offers you objective and factual information to keep you motivated, and helps you to know if you should be speeding up or slowing down.

■ Heart rate monitors generally come in two forms – as a fabric belt with a monitor attached which is worn around your chest, or as a simple-looking watch. The watches are easy-to-use, often with touch-screen technology.

■ A basic heart rate monitor will not only show your heart rate as you run, but also create heart rate-based target zones for you to train within. So when you're running, the monitor will tell you if you need to run faster to increase your heart rate or slow down to lower your heart rate, getting you back to within your targeted zones.

■ Spending just a little more means you can also monitor the amount of calories you've burnt on a run. This is a good way to track and target your progress as you go through your training.

● Many of the advanced heart rate monitors come with GPS, so are able to measure, time, distance, speed, heart rate and calorie burn.

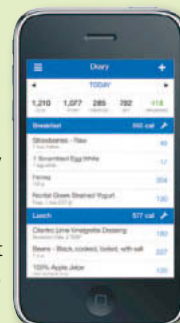


## 4 of the best... fitness apps

Get some extra motivation with one of our favourite apps

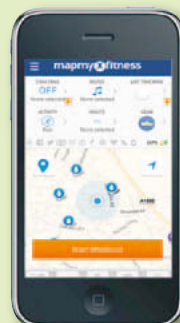
**MyFitnessPal, FREE, for Apple, Android and Windows Phone devices**

Free to download, this useful app is a great way to count the calories and keep on top of what you're eating. It has a list of thousands of foods to choose from, so you can add everything to your daily diary. The app then keeps track of how much you've eaten, along with how much exercise you've done, so that you know if you're on track to meet your target.



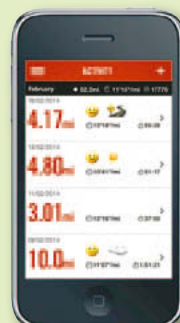
**MapMyFitness, FREE, for Apple and Android devices**

This one-stop-shop fitness tracker uses your smartphone's GPS to collect, log and record your workouts. It's especially useful for running, as it lets you plan a route and see where you've been. You can also keep track of what you're eating for a complete picture of your health.



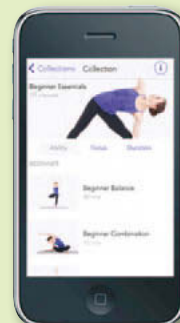
**Nike Training, FREE, for Apple and Android devices**

The latest version of Nike's app allows you to work through four-week exercise programmes guided by a virtual personal trainer. It translates your fitness level, exercise preferences and goals into motivating workouts and varied routines which will whip you into shape in no time.



**Yoga Studio, £2.49, for iPhone and iPad**

This smart app features 65 ready-made HD video classes, featuring over 280 different yoga poses. You can also customise your own classes to include more of your favourite moves.



NWZ-W273S walkman, from around £59, Sony



If you run in all weathers or you're a keen swimmer, these headphones are a great buy. They're 100% waterproof, up to a depth of two metres, so you can listen to music while you exercise. With a hands-free, no-wire design that stays in place, they're really easy to use – simply connect to a computer and then drag and drop your favourite songs, for up to 4GB of music. They charge quickly and offers up to eight hours of battery life

Keep your smartphone safe while exercising with this handy arm band, which has a water-resistant pocket with a clear window, easy access to controls and an adjustable fit

Diamond running arm band, £25, Nike



**BUDGET BUY**



If you don't want to splash out on expensive gadgets, this simple step and distance pedometer is a great buy. It measures up to 100 miles or kilometres in increments, and features a single button stride set and reset

Sportline 340 step and distance pedometer, £7.95, John Lewis

This discreet little device can be worn in a pocket or on a belt, and it's rain, splash and sweat-proof. It tracks steps taken, calories burned and distance travelled, capturing your activity and making calculations such as calories burned on your own personal profile, not just an average. It syncs automatically and wirelessly to computers, many iOS devices and some Android phones, displaying your stats and letting you know when you're close to reaching your goals



Zip wireless activity tracker, £49.99, Fitbit

This activity tracker band monitors your activity and sleep using a precision motion sensor. It will track and quantify your steps, distance, active time and idle time and calculate calories burned based on your age, gender, height and weight. It stays connected via Bluetooth to the accompanying app on your smartphone, which then displays your data and lets you add extras such as meals and mood. It also tracks the quality of your sleep, and features a Smart Alarm which will wake you up at the optimal moment in your sleep cycle

UP24 band, around £99.99, Jawbone





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**£24.99**

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curtain in red



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fully-lined to minimise  
unwanted light.

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aliens or, more boringly,  
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curtains hang beautifully  
and add warmth and colour  
to any room. They are fully  
lined, so you can get to  
sleep more easily, or even  
play hide and seek.

After all,  
they're your curtains.

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**Argos**

Make it yours





# Make it easy!



We're taking a walk on the wild side this month with a fun faux zebra hide rug made from soft suedette and striking fabric. If animal print isn't for you, take a look instead at our heart-themed interiors projects – including a sequin cushion, wall hanging and painted palmistry hand art.



Get ready for February with our checklist



*Make a sparkly sequined heart cushion*



*Give an old chair new life with a woven ribbon seat covering*



*Disguise your radiator with our guide to fitting a decorative cover*



# ✂️ Make, do & craft ✂️

Prove that romance isn't dead with these fab ideas

## Heart in hands sequin cushion

This gorgeous cushion has just the right amount of sparkle and will add a touch of romance to your living room.

### SHOPPING LIST

- square cushion pad • 1m red cotton fabric
- ruler • pencil • scissors • one A4 sheet cream felt • pins • sewing machine
- red thread • iron • 1m red sequin trim
- hot glue gun

**1** Measure your cushion pad and add 3cm to both the width and length (this will be your 1.5cm seam allowance). Cut a piece of red cotton to that size – this will be your cushion front. Download and print the Hands Cushion Template from [www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk](http://www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk) or send a stamped SAE to Your Home February Hands Cushion Template, HBM UK, The Tower, Phoenix Square, Colchester, CO4 9HU. Use the template to cut the hands shape from cream felt, then pin it to the middle of your cushion front. Stitch around the outer edge to secure.

**2** Cut two rectangles from red cotton; each need to be the same width as your cushion front but only  $\frac{3}{4}$  the length – these will be your cushion backs. Press and stitch a 1.5cm double-fold hem along one long edge of each. Lay your cushion front right side up, then place the two back pieces on top, with right sides facing. The back pieces should overlap slightly. Pin, then stitch all around the edges of the cushion, leaving a 1.5cm seam allowance.

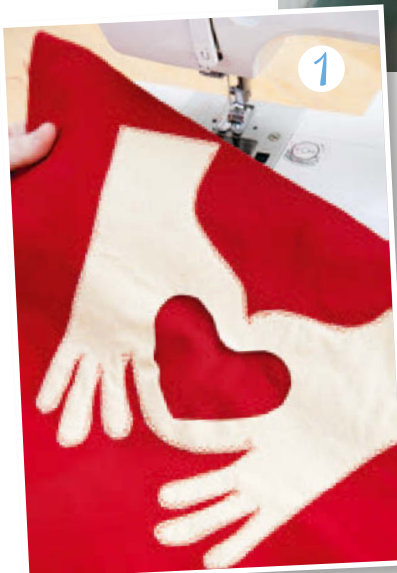
**3** Turn the cushion right sides out and press. Fill the central heart shape with sequin trim, beginning at one side and curling the trim around to fill the shape, using a hot glue gun to stick it into place.

**Glass apothecary bottle**, £25, Rockett St George. **Sylvester side table**, £195, Graham and Green.



### Top tip

For a more secure finish, hand stitch the sequins into place within the heart.





## Palmistry hand

This gorgeous display harks back to traditional fortune-telling techniques to create a unique piece of art.

### SHOPPING LIST

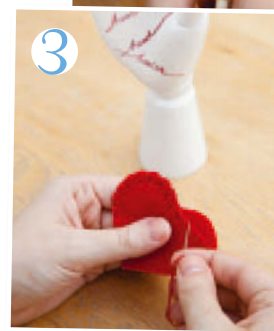
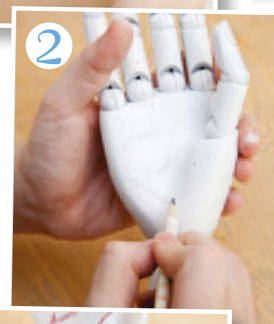
- artist's wooden hand model, from a selection at the National Gallery shop
- white spray paint ● pencil ● red pen
- black fine line pen ● one A4 sheet red felt
- scissors ● red embroidery thread ● needle
- toy filling ● glass display dome with stand, £36, Rockett St George

**1** Begin by giving your model hand two coats of white spray paint, working on one side at a time if possible to ensure an even finish. Leave to dry thoroughly.

**2** Using a pencil, sketch the health, heart and head lines onto the palm of the hand, using our sample as a placement guide. We added the name of each line midway through it in script. Work over the pencil lines in red pen. To make the text really stand out, finish by going over the pencil lines in a black fine line pen.

**3** Fold a piece of red felt in half, and draw a heart shape onto it. Cut it out to create two red hearts – hold these together and blanket stitch around the edge using red embroidery thread. Before you finish the seam, stuff it with a small amount of toy filling, then finish the stitching. Place the heart into the fingers of the hand, then mount in a glass dome and display.

Sylvester side table, £195, Graham and Green.



### Top tip

Give your finished hand a coat of spray gloss varnish to give it a long-lasting finish.

## Heart wall art

Create this wire art-piece and decorate your home for Valentine's Day and beyond.

**1** Download and print the Wire Heart Template from [www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk](http://www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk) or send a stamped SAE to Your Home February Wire Heart Template, HBM UK, The Tower, Phoenix Square, Colchester, Essex, CO4 9HU. Following the template, cut and twist pieces of steel wire together using pliers, starting with the central heart and then moving on to the hands.

**2** Cut and twist small sections of thin floristry wire between the thicker steel wires to hold it in position and strengthen it. We added it in several places throughout the work – you can add as little or as much as you like, as long as the structure feels strong and secure. Use another piece of floristry wire to create a hanger.

**3** Fold a piece of red felt in half and draw a heart onto it. Cut the heart out and work a blanket stitch around the edge in red thread, leaving a small gap in the seam. Stuff a little toy filling into the heart to pad it out, then stitch closed. Hang from the middle of the wire heart using another length of thread, then hang the work on the wall.

### SHOPPING LIST

- Blooma garden wire, £7 per 20m, B&Q
- side cutters ● pliers ● white floristry wire, £2.79 per pack, Hobbycraft
- one A4 sheet red felt ● pencil ● scissors ● red embroidery thread ● needle

### Top tip

We found it easier to create the fingers and other smaller parts of the design using short cuts of wire twisted together.



# Furniture facelift

The month we revamped an old wooden chair with a innovative woven ribbon seat

**W**e found this chair in a house clearance shop; priced at just £5 it was a bargain, especially for a piece of furniture with such a solid wooden structure. A quick rub down and a coat of paint updated the chair almost immediately – we then renewed the foam pad and covered the seat with woven ribbons to give a unique and decorative finish.

## You will need

- ✓ wooden seat with drop-in seat pad
- ✓ dust sheet ✓ glass paper and sanding block
- ✓ damp cloth ✓ paint brush
- ✓ Annie Sloan Chalk Paint in Old White, £18.95 per 1l
- ✓ soft cloth
- ✓ Annie Sloan Soft Wax, £7.99 per 500ml
- ✓ 2.5cm thick foam
- ✓ marker pen
- ✓ scissors
- ✓ 10m each of cream and black grosgrain ribbons, 25mm wide, 89p per m, Hobbycraft
- ✓ hammer
- ✓ upholstery tacks



Before



**1** Begin by removing the seat pad from the chair. Sometimes the pads are held in place with screws, but they may simply lift up and out. Place the chair frame on a dust sheet, then sand it with glass paper and a sanding block. Wipe clean with a damp cloth to remove any dust and dirt.

**2** Paint the frame with a coat or two of chalk paint and leave to dry. Lightly distress the frame with a little glass paper for a shabby chic look. Finish with a coat of Annie Sloan wax, applied with a soft cloth.

**3** Lay the foam down on a flat surface. Place the seat pad down directly on top of it. Use a marker pen to draw around the seat pad onto the foam beneath, then remove the seat pad. Use scissors to trim around the drawn lines, cutting approximately 5mm inside them so that the foam is slightly smaller than the original seat pad.

**4** Turn the chair over so that you can work on the underside. Take a length of grosgrain ribbon and fold one end under by 1cm, then tack it to the underside of the back of the chair frame using four small upholstery tacks. Ensure all the ribbon ends are turned under before tacking for a neat finish. This first ribbon should run from the underside of the back of the frame, then up on to the seat top, towards the front of the seat. It should then run underneath the front of the frame.

**5** Stand the chair upright, facing towards you. Bring the ribbon up onto the chair seat (over the seat top) then wind it underneath the front of the chair to the back and then up alongside the first ribbon. The ribbons should always sit neatly side by side and sit flat. Secure underneath the frame with an upholstery tack, then slide the foam pad into place.

**6** Continue to weave the ribbon from the back to the front until the seat pad is covered. Trim the ribbon, leaving 2cm extra. Fold the end of the ribbon under and then secure it out of sight using four tacks on the underside of the chair frame.

**7** Next, start to weave the second ribbon across the chair seat from one side to the other. Begin by tacking the end of each ribbon underneath the frame as before, turning the ribbon end underneath for a neat finish. Cut each ribbon so that it's long enough to weave across the seat pad and back, going underneath the chair frame, with a little extra to turn underneath before securing with upholstery tacks.

**8** Continue weaving individual ribbons across the chair alternating the over/under pattern as you weave towards the front of the seat. Gently ease the ribbons closely together as you work to ensure a tight weave with no gaps.





### Top tip

To ensure a neat, uniform finish, always use ribbons that are the same width.



# Sew simple

Give your home a touch of tribal style with this DIY zebra rug

## You will need

- 1.5m Limpopo bronze fabric, £21.99 per m, Terry's Fabrics
- 1.5m suede curtain fabric, £6.99 per m, Terry's Fabrics
- dressmaker's chalk
- scissors
- pins
- sewing machine
- orange thread
- orange embroidery thread
- embroidery needle
- cardboard
- orange and cream yarn scraps

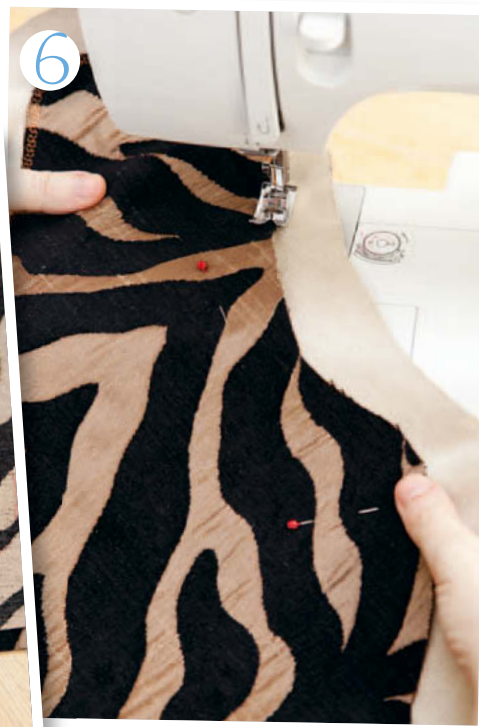
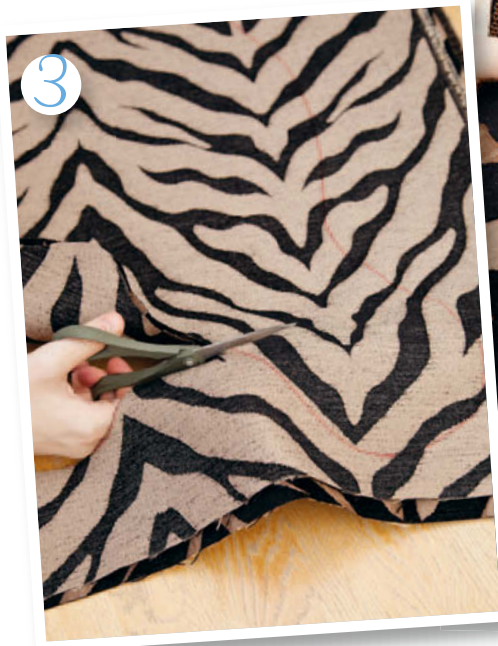
From stag heads to animal print, home décor is definitely taking a walk on the wild side at the moment. Create your own show-stopper with this faux zebra rug, made from striking upholstery fabric and suedette.

**1** Work out roughly how big you would like your rug to be, and cut off a length of zebra fabric to slightly larger than that size in both width and length. Fold the zebra fabric in half widthways with right sides facing, and pin.

**2** Download and print the Zebra Rug Guide from [www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk](http://www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk) or send a stamped SAE to Your Home February Zebra Rug Guide, HBM UK, The Tower, Phoenix Square, Colchester, Essex, CO4 9HU. Using the guide as a reference, sketch the shape of one half of the rug out onto the fabric, working out from the fold line.

**3** Once you're happy with the shape you've drawn, cut it out, keeping it pinned together. Once cut, unfold and press flat. You can now make any alterations to the shape of the rug – remember to fold it in half again before making any further cuts to ensure it stays symmetrical.

**4** Fold the faux suede fabric in half widthways, with right sides together. Fold your zebra rug in half once again (with right sides together) and place it on top, aligning the two folded edges. Draw and cut the faux suede around the zebra rug, leaving a border of about 1.5" all around. Unfold both fabrics, and press.

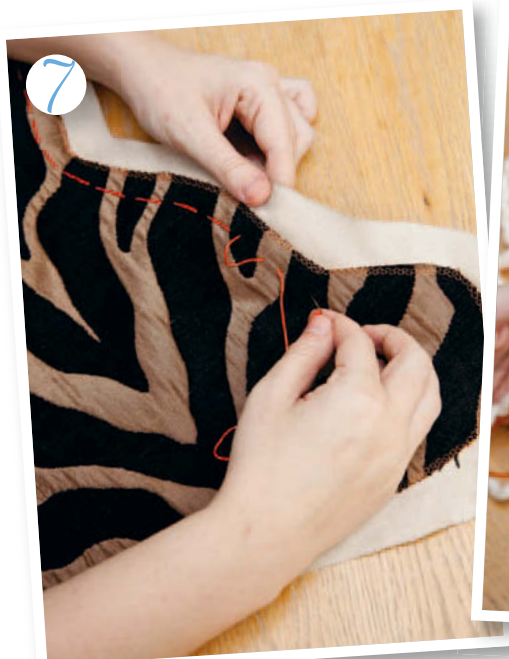


**5** Place the zebra rug on top of the faux suede rug with wrong sides facing, making sure it sits centrally. Pin together, then use a decorative machine stitch and a brightly coloured thread (we used orange) to sew a single strip down the middle of the work. Keep the layers pinned together.

**6** Work a decorative machine stitch all around the edge of the zebra rug, to secure it into place on the faux suede and finish the edges of the fabric. Again, use a bright contrasting colour of thread to make this line stand out.

**7** Once the layers are sewn, add decorative hand stitching. Thread an embroidery needle with a length of brightly-coloured embroidery thread (using all six strands) and work a straight stitch around the edge of the zebra fabric, around 2cm in from the machine stitching.

**8** Finally, make a tassel tail. Cut a 10cm x 15cm rectangle of cardboard, and wrap lengths of cream and orange yarn around it several times – the more you wrap it, the bushier your tassel will be. Thread a strand of thread underneath the wrapped yarn and pull it tight into a knot, to hold the yarn together. Trim the wrapped yarn from the cardboard, cutting along the bottom edge. Wrap a final length of yarn around the strands and tie in a knot to gather it together once more. Stitch this tassel to the edge of the rug's tail to finish.





## Top tip

Add as little or as much hand stitching as you like – we chose to only add one border around the edge, but stitching through each of the zebra's stripes will give it a quirky, colourful look.



Pink Suzani floor cushion, £50; Tyson Tiger side table, £125; both Graham and Green. Red Azami cushion, £12.99; Crewel cushion, £13.99; Tribal Collection round ball vase, £19.99, all Dunelm

# Girls' Guide to



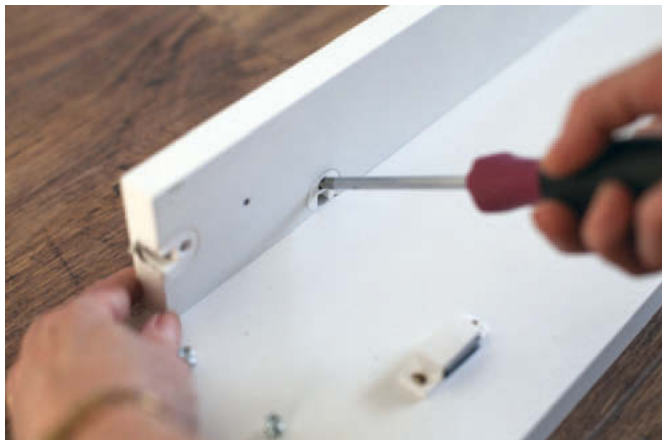
Hide unsightly radiators by fitting a stylish cover – follow these steps to learn how to install one



As well as covering a radiator, a cabinet can create a smart feature in any room, as well as a useful shelf to display your treasures

Walls painted in Cloud Burst and Night Fever matt emulsion, both £18 per 2.5l, Crown Paints





**1** Before you begin, read through the instructions carefully. Lay everything out on the floor to check and identify all the parts and fixings. As many cabinets are made-to-measure, the instructions may vary from one to the other, however the basic principles of assembly should be the same for all styles. Join the side panels to the panel supports using the cam and bolt fixings.



**2** Fit the magnetic catches to the underside of the top using the screws provided. You may find pre-drilled holes to show you where to fix them. Attach the back strut between the side panels, turn the top board upside-down (holes upwards) and fit the sides and upright to it. You may need an extra pair of hands to keep the unit steady while you do this.



**3** Fit the front and side plinths to the uprights using the plastic dowels. This can be done either with the cabinet upside-down or upright. Take care when turning the cabinet over. Be aware that the dowels may fit fairly loosely – this is to allow some adjustment if you have an uneven floor surface. After you've assembled the whole cabinet, glue the plinths in place to secure them.



**4** Insert the front panel and grille. The metal plates on the top of the panel should line up to the magnetic catches on the top board. Once you're happy with the assembly, you can go through the process again, glueing the components in position as you go. Once the glue has dried, you can paint the cabinet and fix it to the wall through the back strut.

The instructions which came with your cabinet should provide more detailed information on using cam and bolt fixings.

### Toolbox treat

A good-quality set of screwdrivers is essential for this project. This substantial carry case from B&Q contains 49 pieces with soft-grip handles, and will be useful for all sorts of jobs around the home and garden.

Screwdriver set, £24.98, B&Q



### Top tip

Jali offers a wide range of radiators suitable for many styles of décor. You can choose from a selection of ready-made options, or customise a design to fit your radiator exactly. Using the online Jali Designer is quick and easy – change the size, finish and grille style, and then save your design for later if you need to.



# ASK THE EXPERTS

We answer some of your DIY and maintenance questions, with a little help from the experts



**Q** My home suffers from condensation, especially during the winter months. I'm worried about this and the quality of the air – are there any solutions?

*Mrs A Childs, Bristol*



**A** *EnviroVent's Marketing Director, Rebecca McLean, gives her top tips for improving the air quality in your home...*

58% of homeowners said that they had experienced condensation in their home. This is a particular problem in the winter months when there is a higher level of humidity. The result is that warm air, which carries more moisture than cooler air, remains trapped inside.

Resulting from a lack of ventilation, condensation means that your home has issues with internal air quality. Ensuring

regular air changes inside the property not only reduces relative humidity and tackles condensation, it also creates a healthier indoor environment.

## ● TAKE A WHOLE HOUSE APPROACH TO VENTILATION

So what can you do about condensation? If it's a problem in just one or two rooms, particularly the kitchen or bathroom, you could consider a low energy usage extractor fan, such as Cylone7. This is designed to control humidity levels in kitchens, bathrooms and utility rooms using low energy consumption.

If you find that you're experiencing mould and condensation across a number of rooms in the house, then Positive Input Ventilation (PIV) may be a good option to consider. PIV units can be installed into any home. They work by drawing in fresh, filtered clean air from

**Q** Every winter my garden becomes a safety hazard, with decking and steps all becoming really slippery. Are there any products available which can help?

*Mrs P Halliwell, Yorkshire*

**A** *Your Home says...* Each year, thousands of people across the UK take a tumble due to slippery surfaces outdoors, especially when the wet weather arrives and surfaces can become treacherous. Rust-Oleum's Anti-Slip paint is a great solution – remove any dirt or moss, ensuring that the surface is clean and dry, then spray on and leave to dry. The spray achieves a clear, aggregated finish on even the most polished surfaces, leaving them much safer to walk on.



Rust-Oleum Anti-Slip clear spray, £9.99 for 400ml, available at selected Homebase stores

the loft space in a house or from outside in a flat or apartment.

This fresh air is gently supplied into the home from a central position on a landing or the central hallway in a flat or bungalow. Moisture levels are controlled through PIV because it dilutes high levels of humidity, while forcing moisture-laden air outside. The result is significantly less condensation and mould.

We'd recommend condensation control units, such as the Mr Venty® range of condensation control units, which are designed to transform a stagnant and stale atmosphere into a fresh, healthy and condensation-free environment.

## ● DRY WASHING OUTSIDE

Drying washing on a radiator inside your home creates condensation and also prevents your heating system from working efficiently. This is also a reason why condensation and mould growth is accelerated during the winter months. If this is your only option, then make sure your windows are open just slightly to allow the moisture-laden air to escape before it forms condensation on a cooler surface.

## ● IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE AIR QUALITY IN YOUR HOME, GET IT TESTED

If you are experiencing condensation or mould issues within your home, then help is at hand. An experienced ventilation expert will be able to provide a home survey and advise on the best approach to improve the indoor air quality. For more information on improving the air quality in your home, find your local EnviroVent Specialist Ventilation Advisor via the website [www.envirovent.com](http://www.envirovent.com) or by calling 0845 27 27 807.



**Q** I'm thinking of replacing all the windows in my property in the spring, which I realise is going to be a big investment. Can you offer any advice on how to ensure that my new windows are as energy-efficient as possible?

*Mr Logan, by email*



**A** *Phil Brown, Technical Advisory Service Manager at Pilkington, offers his top tips...*

● **HOW CAN I CHECK THE ENERGY-EFFICIENCY?**

By checking the 'Window Energy Rating' (WER). The rating system is based on a scale of 'A+' to 'G', with 'A+' rated windows being the most energy-efficient. Current Building Regulations for replacement windows fitted into existing dwellings recommend windows that achieve ratings 'A+' to 'C' to be installed. Installing 'A'-rated windows will help to conserve energy and ultimately contribute to the reduction of heating costs – minimising heat loss that is caused by inefficient windows and doors, which can be up to 20% per household.

● **DO MY WINDOWS HAVE TO HAVE A WER?**

No, but a WER helps you to demonstrate compliance with Building Regulations for replacement windows. Windows offered solely on a low window U-value (the traditional approach) may not be as energy-efficient as WER-rated products. And even if the supplier is a Competent

Persons Scheme Installer member the product manufacturer may not be fully audited.

● **WHICH GLASS PRODUCTS ARE BEST FOR IMPROVED ENERGY-EFFICIENCY?**

One of the most recognised energy-efficient glass brands is the Pilkington K Glass™ range. A product from the Pilkington K Glass™ range forms the inner pane of an energy-efficient double glazed unit such as Pilkington energikare™. The glass is specifically designed to reflect heat back into the room and when combined with an outer pane of Pilkington Optiwhite™, an extra clear glass, it allows more sunlight and solar heat to enter your home from the outside therefore helping your home to feel warmer.

By using a combination of these two special types of glass Pilkington energikare™ is one of the leading insulating glass units, and when installed in an appropriate frame can achieve a WER of band 'A' and even 'A+' – therefore exceeding the latest energy-saving Building Regulations.

● **ARE THERE ANY PARTICULAR TRADE OR REGULATORY BODIES OTHER SUPPLIERS**



**AND INSTALLERS SHOULD BELONG TO?**

Check to see if they are a member of a trade association such as the Glass and Glazing Federation (GGF). The GGF members in your area can be found on their website [www.ggf.org.uk](http://www.ggf.org.uk). If someone is planning to install windows check that they are a member of a competent person's scheme, such as FENSA.

● For more information log on to [www.pilkington.co.uk/energikare](http://www.pilkington.co.uk/energikare)

**Q** We're planning a new family bathroom and I want to make sure it's easy to clean and as hygienic as possible. Do you have any top tips?

*Mrs D Haslett, by email*



**A** *Georgina Spencer of Roca Group (UK), offers her advice...*

The family bathroom is a busy space and it's important that it is clean and comfortable

for everyone who uses it. There are lots of simple tricks and tips that are worth considering when you're re-fitting, none of which will cost a fortune but will ensure the bathroom is easy to clean with minimal elbow grease.

Grouting is notoriously hard to keep looking clean, particularly in damp areas, so it's a good idea to keep any grouting lines in tiles to a minimum. Large format tiles in the shower area and around the bath and basin are a good way of doing this.

And with splashes and spillages being part and parcel of a family bathroom, think carefully about the surfaces you choose to ensure they're easy to wipe clean without having to break out the rubber gloves and scrubbing brush. It's also a good idea to keep

the floor clear of obstacles wherever possible, with wall-hung sanitaryware and furniture being easy to clean around and underneath.

Cleaning the bathroom is less of a chore with the CleanRim The Gap

wall-hung WC from Roca. Not only does the wall-hung design of the WC enable the floor and surrounding area to be mopped clean easily, the innovative rimless design of the pan means there is absolutely nowhere for dirt and germs to hide. In fact, the whole pan, inside and out, can be wiped clean with a cloth and a standard bathroom cleaner to keep it germ-free and looking as good as new. The CleanRim The Gap wall-hung WC with a soft-close seat from Roca is priced from £408.



ASK THE EXPERTS

If you have a DIY or maintenance question, write to Ask the Experts, Your Home, Hubert Burda Media UK, The Tower, Phoenix Square, Colchester, Essex CO4 9HU or email [asktheexperts@yhmag.co.uk](mailto:asktheexperts@yhmag.co.uk)

# Your February checklist

Discover seasonal tasks for your home and garden

## ✓ IF YOU DO ONE THING THIS MONTH...

When it comes to cleaning, there are some jobs you do every day and others that you put off until the big spring clean each year. But don't let these awkward, fiddly jobs make the big clean a daunting prospect. Follow our handy hints and you'll be left wondering what all the fuss was about.

- Venetian blinds are the trickiest window dressings to clean. To keep on top of dust and prevent a build-up of moisture, Hillarys Blinds suggests donning a pair of cotton gloves and wiping your fingers between each slat to clear any dust and dirt. If you don't have any gloves you could use a feather duster or close the blinds and use the upholstery attachment on your vacuum cleaner instead. If your Venetian blinds are made from aluminium, give them a thorough clean by washing them in the bath or shower with mild household detergent and carefully hanging over the washing line to dry. This method isn't suitable for wooden blinds as any moisture could cause them to warp or stain.

- Lighting fixtures often show up any dust or cobwebs first, but it's not practical to take them apart each week to properly clean them. Throughout the year a regular wipe with a feather duster should be enough to keep them looking clean – you should always make sure your lights are turned off before doing this. For a deeper clean, turn off your lights and leave the bulbs to cool before removing them and wiping with a duster, not a damp cloth. To clean fabric shades, The Lighting Store recommends you don't get them wet as this could cause the metal frame underneath to rust and show through the fabric. The best way to clean them is to use the lowest setting on your vacuum cleaner on the shade and clean the base with regular furniture polish.

- Regularly washing your bedding will go a long way towards making sure your bed is hygienically clean all year round, but it's still important to freshen up your mattress. Bathroom and bedroom online store, Soak & Sleep, recommends vacuuming both sides of your mattress using the upholstery attachment, making sure you press deep into the fabric and any joins or seams to help remove dirt that might be lurking there. To kill any nasty odours, sprinkle baking soda onto the mattress first, leave for 15 minutes and then vacuum up.



## ✓ Essential buy for February

Make your spring clean more enjoyable with these new retro storage tins from Tesco.

Organise everything you'll need in the stylish cream and red tins that have large handles, making them easy to carry around from room to room. There's even a matching food waste bin to carry leftovers to the compost.

Pegs container, £6;  
housekeeping container, £7;  
scourer container, £3, all Tesco Direct



## ✓ A neat idea

February is the perfect time to prune any winter-flowering plants ready for regrowth. Invest in a good quality pruner to ensure

you cleanly cut through excessive growth without damaging the plant. We love this award-winning pruner from Fiskars, with its anti-friction coated steel blades and cork inlay handles to make it easy on your hands.



Quantum™ bypass pruner, £54.99, [www.fiskars.co.uk](http://www.fiskars.co.uk)





## Beautiful *and* practical – made-to-measure furniture in around two weeks!

Imagine the perfect furniture for your home, designed just for *your* space and needs. We make Jali products to your exact sizes and deliver to your door in around two weeks. From radiator cabinets and shutters to dressers and wardrobes, everything can be customised to your wishes on our website.

Jali: the quality and finish of bespoke joinery, without the high price-tag! Contact us to find out more...

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aligns to old holes



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16 Fully co-ordinated ranges of bathroom accessories



# Reader homes

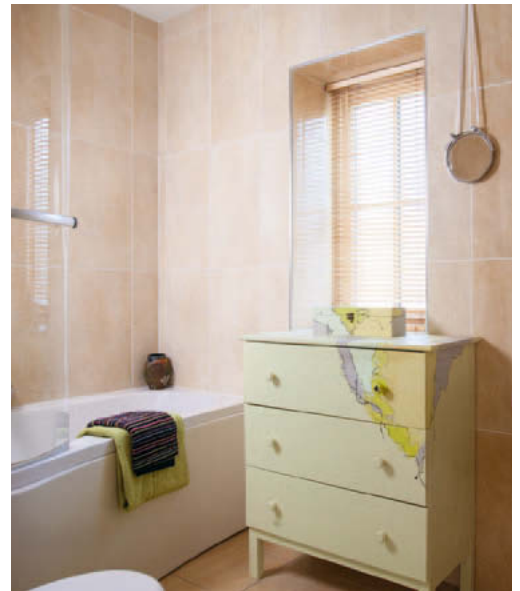
Discover great ideas with four fabulous homes to inspire you



**80** Interiors blogger Jane Day, has an eclectic home which has evolved over time

## Show off your hard work in *Your Home*

Have you just finished decorating your home? If so we'd love to see your photos and, who knows, your home may be featured in a future issue. Please send photos to Laura Higgins, Your Home, Hubert Burda Media UK, The Tower, Phoenix Square, Colchester, CO4 9HU



**74** Judy Sale used her paintings and artistic flair to inspire the décor for her entire home



**88**

Hayley Spurr turned a tired cottage into a home she wants to stay in

**92**

Lisa and Neil started from scratch to create their dream home



FIND MORE INTERIORS TO INSPIRE YOU AT [WWW.YOURHOMEMAGAZINE.CO.UK](http://WWW.YOURHOMEMAGAZINE.CO.UK)





# Colour has made my home truly unique



Judy Sale used the rich colours in her paintings to inspire and develop the vibrant style of her three-storey Yorkshire townhouse

A house without colour is like a canvas without paint to artist Judy Sale. So when she bought a modern townhouse painted from top to bottom in one neutral shade she saw an opportunity to bring lots of colour back into her life. 'I was divorced and living in a 17th-century cottage in the village,' says Judy. 'I took that house back to a shell and renovated it,

but nothing could change the fact that it was very small and dark.'

Judy was keen to have more light and space and having lived in America, Canada, Asia and Europe, she was also keen to find a home which reflected these multi-cultural experiences. 'I wasn't looking for a modern place,' says Judy. 'I prefer older houses with character, but I was curious to see this ▷





## COME ON IN...



### THE HOME

A modern four-bedroom, three-storey townhouse built on the site of a former school in Haworth, Yorkshire.

### WHO LIVES HERE?

Judy Sale, an abstract artist ([www.judysale.com](http://www.judysale.com)), and her cat Gabi.

### WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT THE HOUSE?

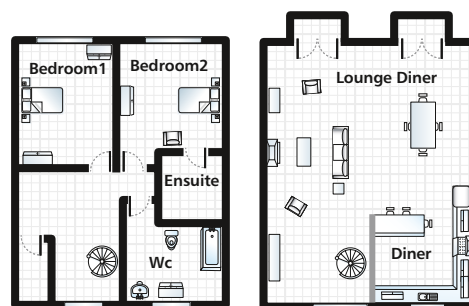
'The house has very large windows and benefits from lots of natural light, which is important to me as an artist. I also love the fact that although I don't have a garden, I can see trees from every window.'

### IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD CHANGE?

'I would like a larger, more realistic fire instead of the one I inherited with the house. I would also have preferred a bigger balcony. There is just enough space for a few pot plants, but I can't sit out on it as there's no room.'

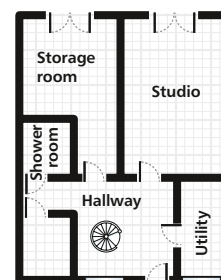
### WHAT IS YOUR INSPIRATION?

'My rooms are all inspired by my paintings, which were the starting point for each floor of the house. The colours are inspired by the places I've lived around the world.'



FIRST FLOOR

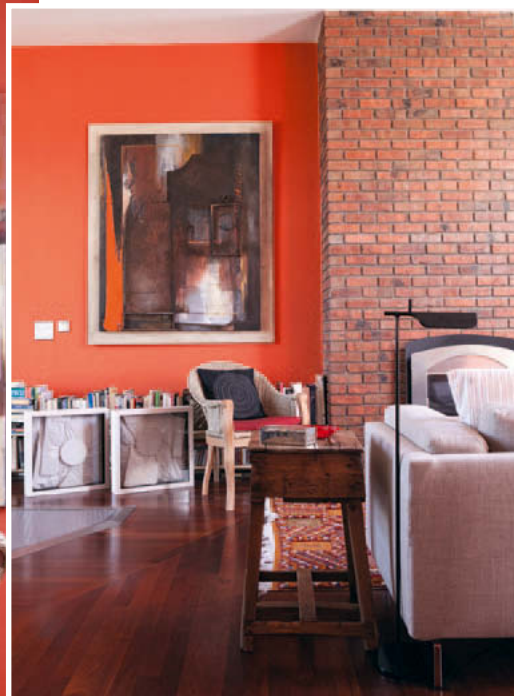
SECOND FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR

For stockists see page 120

Feature Heather Dixon photos Dave Burton

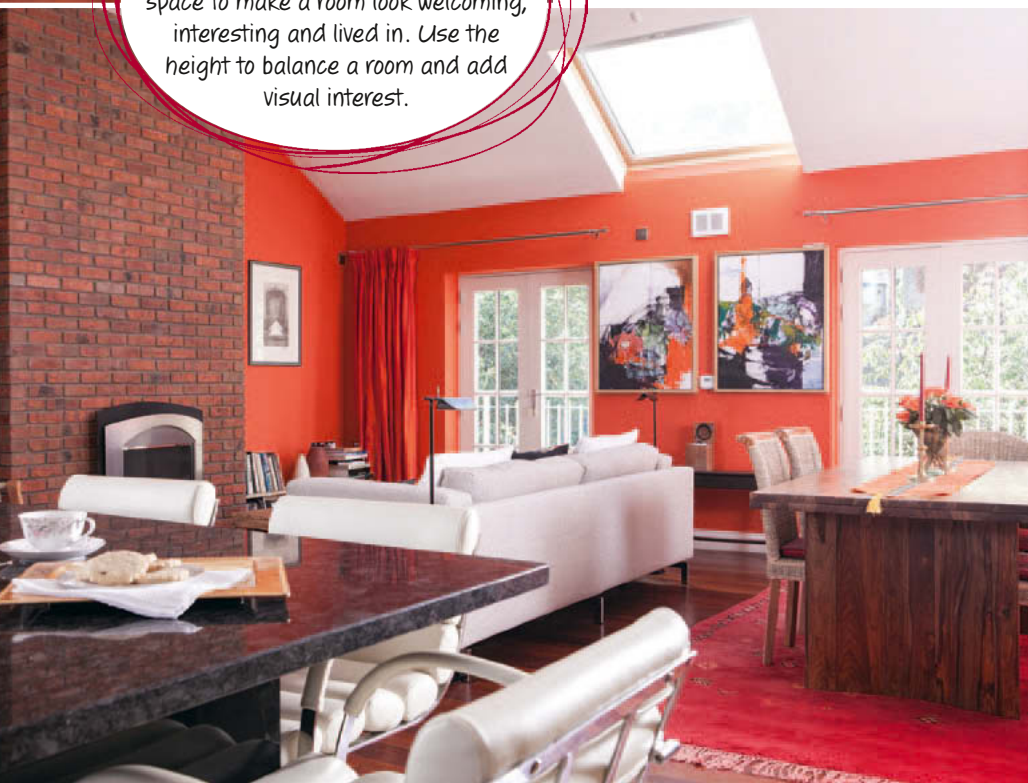


▲ Judy picked out the tones of Farrow & Ball's Charlotte's Locks from her vibrant abstract paintings and added silk curtains from Cabbages and Cushions. An Ikea sofa is softened with cushions also from Ikea and some bought during her travels to Bali, while the wooden floor is covered with two large rugs from Morocco

▼ Judy loves books which fill the low shelves from Ikea. She not only uses her paintings to inspire the colour scheme of a room, but also to create balance, height and interest. 'I like to display smaller paintings together or even use them as small floor standing screens,' she says

*Good idea!*

Use the walls as well as the floor space to make a room look welcoming, interesting and lived in. Use the height to balance a room and add visual interest.







**‘My rooms are all inspired by my paintings, which were the starting point for each floor of the house.’**

◁ house. As soon as I walked in and saw the sun pouring through the windows I thought ‘wow’, this would be heaven after the dark old cottage. I was really surprised by how light and spacious it was. It had been for sale for a while so I put in a silly offer and nearly fell through the floor when it was accepted.’

She sold most of her furniture with the cottage and moved into her new home with just a large leather-effect corner sofa left by the previous owners, her bed and her collection of paintings. It was literally a blank canvas. ‘The first thing I did was

choose bright, bold colours for all of the main living areas,’ says Judy. ‘The decorator thought I was mad, but it’s a big space and I wanted it to be warm and welcoming.’

Judy knew which of her large-scale abstracts would hang on each wall, so she took inspiration from their colours to create the backdrop to her modern new home, using Farrow & Ball Charlotte’s Locks in the main living area at the top of the house, then a specially mixed vibrant green for her own room and Farrow & Ball Babouche for the guest bedroom. ‘Some people are frightened to use colour,





▲ Light pours in through a high vertical window over the spiral staircase. The kitchen units were already in and the previous owner left the stools so Judy simply decorated the kitchen area white to create definition and contrast to the warm orange of the living area

but providing the tones work together and the house works as a whole, there is no reason why you shouldn't use lots of them,' says Judy.

The ground floor bedrooms are used as a studio and a storeroom for Judy's paintings, which she exhibits throughout the UK and abroad. 'You don't have to understand abstract art to appreciate it,' says Judy. 'My view is that if you buy a painting that you really like, for whatever reason, you have something that is not only original,

but also says something about you as an individual. It's much more personal than a piece of furniture which can be replicated or replaced.'

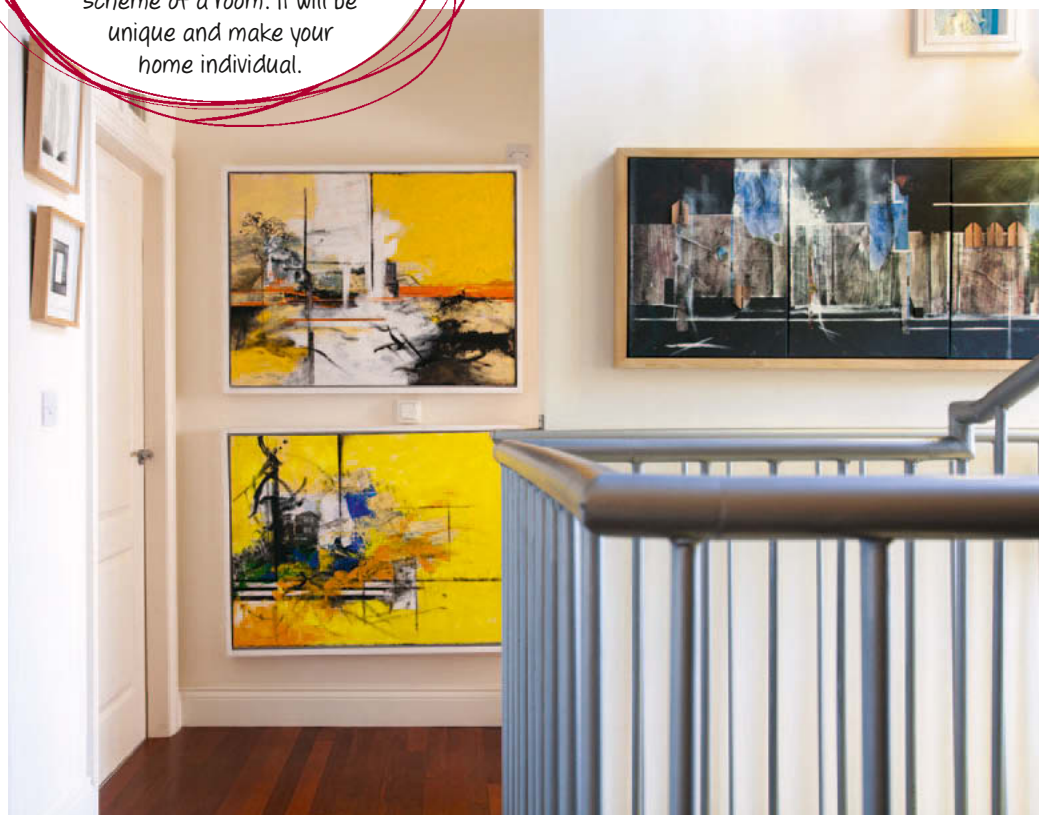
Judy has renovated many properties over the years, so moving into a home which required no structural improvements was quite a novelty. It also meant that she could focus entirely on the décor, lighting and furnishings. 'Good artificial lighting is as important to me as natural light,' says Judy. 'I met a specialist light designer in the village who fitted mood lighting to the spiral staircase – it's such a simple idea and the effect is amazing.'

The staircase looks striking, but it posed a logistical problem for Judy who had to carry her furniture up three flights of spiral steps. A friend helped her to carry the largest paintings and big furniture, carefully manoeuvring the bulky pieces round and round, with rest stops at each level. 'It would have been a lot easier if I could have brought furniture through the balcony doors, but they are on the top floor. The bottom line was that if I couldn't take something apart to get it up the stairs, I couldn't keep it.'

Judy thought the open-plan layout ►

### Good idea!

Buy a piece of original art – it should cost no more than a single item of furniture – and use it as inspiration for developing the look and colour scheme of a room. It will be unique and make your home individual.



▲ The spiral staircase is a central feature of the three-storey house and is fitted with mood lighting designed, supplied and fitted by Chris Thomas of Haworth. Judy's original paintings fill the walls, bringing more vibrant colour into the home

A throw from Italy was the starting point for the colour scheme in Judy's bedroom where the wall colour has been mixed specifically to match the throw. 'I don't have accent walls – I prefer to paint all the walls the same colour and then add focal points with original paintings,' says Judy

*'The room at the top of the house is where I spend most time because of its openness, the light and the views.'*



### Good idea!

Use uplighters to highlight a particular wall feature. Small lights can be placed discreetly around the floor to add to the ambience of a room and create striking focal points.

► A quilt cross-stitched by her mother is still used on Judy's guestroom bed, along with cushions and a runner from Thailand. Judy brightened the plain room with Farrow & Ball Babouche paint and voile curtains from Ikea, which create privacy without losing light







◁ of the top floor could have been a challenge to furnish, but it was clearly dictated by the kitchen and the exposed brick fireplace. Judy tends to buy furniture when she sees something she really likes, rather than visit stores on a regular basis. The table and chairs were found in a small shop in Scotland and were delivered to Yorkshire in a small trailer. Some of her smaller, antique tables were bought in the UK and abroad, while the Ikea sofa was chosen for its design and proportions. 'I would rather have a big piece of original art on the wall and an inexpensive sofa than a mass produced print and a very expensive sofa,' says Judy, who holds abstract art classes from home. 'I also think good lighting is really important in a home because it can alter the mood of a room as well as change the emphasis and focal points. It would have been useful to have sockets in the middle of the floor because the sofa faces the fireplace and I wanted lighting at either end. All the sockets are along the wall which means cables to any free-standing lighting have to be hidden under the rugs.'

But the benefits of having so much natural light and space in the modern townhouse far outweigh any disadvantages. 'I always said I would never live in a modern house but I love being here,' says Judy. 'It's a very easy house to live in – and while big paintings look great in any sized house, it's a bonus to have plenty of wall space for some of my favourites. I've lived all over the world in all kinds of places, but for me home is always where the art is.' 🏠



The bathroom tiles and fittings were already in when Judy bought the house so she added a set of Ikea drawers for storing towels and toiletries, which she painted – along with a small make-up box – to work with the colour of the accessories

## 5 IDEAS TO STEAL



### GREEN DREAM

Lime green will instantly brighten a bedroom, if you'd rather not use paint like Judy, accessories will still add some zing.

Indira bright green bedspread, £12, Ikea

### ABSTRACT THINKING

Abstract art is a great way to introduce colour to your walls, and if you shop around you'll find a piece to suit any budget.



Abstract, £23.99 for 30cm x 30cm canvas, AllPosters.co.uk



### PROP UP THE BAR

Chic white bar stools will bring an air of contemporary cool to a breakfast bar.

Aura upholstered gas lift bar stool, £39.99, Dunelm

### MAGIC CARPET RIDE

For an eclectic feel to your décor, opt for materials that reflect a wide range of cultures.

Vibrant border rug, from £70, Next



### LIGHT THE WAY

Judy has used clever lighting solutions throughout, such as task lighting in the living room.

Serious Readers Winston floor lamp, £25, John Lewis







# My home's eclectic style has evolved over time

Jane Day's home is the ideal testing ground for her interiors blog

As an interiors blogger and stylist Jane Day is constantly re-arranging her accessories, making cushions and thinking up new ideas for displays at her home in Billingham. 'I'm always reading interiors magazines, blogs and making moodboards on Pinterest,' she says. 'Things like cushions and stools get changed around every week, and I like cosying things up with blankets and throws in winter.'

Jane's eclectic style has evolved organically since she met husband Robert and they bought their first home together in 2002. 'We chose the area as it was close to work and handy for the A19,' says Jane.

'But the house itself was a horrible 80s throwback that needed lots of work. It had a dated yellow and blue colour scheme with wallpaper borders in the lounge, mock-wood internal doors, curtain swags and lots of artex, rag rolling and stipple-effect paintwork. It was like someone had been watching *Changing Rooms* and tried all the paint effects at once!'

The pair set about making it liveable during their first year before gradually updating each room as money allowed. One of the first things to be ripped out were the old carpets. In the hallway, the dark terracotta carpet was swapped for hard-wearing sisal, with softer jute in the





✦ The couple invested in a handmade kitchen with butler sink from Mary O'Brien Pine in Stokesley, choosing a contrasting Peagreen paint by Farrow & Ball for the walls. Traditional accessories such as the enamel bread bin from a reclamation yard and pendant light from Laura Ashley add to the cottagey feel of the room

✦ Jane loves the vintage scales, which were found in Robert's grandma's garage, while the Pepsi crate is from Dee Puddy

living room. 'I wanted the flooring to have a natural element to it,' explains Jane. 'And the underlay is made from recycled old jumpers so it's eco-friendly.'

They've also had a new handmade pine kitchen installed, to which they've added lots of accessories and artwork including a vintage advertising sign found in Robert's grandad's garage. 'The old kitchen was dated with dark oak doors that were hanging off their hinges,' explains Jane. 'We stuck to the same layout as there wasn't much scope for changing it dramatically, but we wanted something built with integrity that would last. Even the carcasses are wood.' ▷



## Good idea!

If you're short on space, hang a laundry basket on the wall for a cottagey feel. It's both pretty and practical.



✦ As there's no separate dining room, the kitchen table gets used a lot and doubles up as Robert's office since he works from home. 'We wanted an old pine table that would last forever,' says Jane. 'We're not precious about stains and marks as it just adds character.' The striped blind, from The Natural Curtain Company, adds some pattern to the space

## COME ON IN...



### THE HOME

A three-bedroom, detached 1980s house in Billingham, Teesside.

### WHO LIVES HERE?

Jane Day, 40, an interiors blogger and stylist, her husband Robert, 42, an IT consultant and their daughter Ruby, nine.

### WHERE DO YOU SHOP?

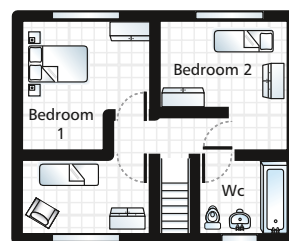
'I love eBay, car boot sales and vintage fairs. The White Company and Loaf are great for plain linens and RE is brilliant for quirky touches. One of my all time favourites is Cabbages & Roses, and I always seek out new places on weekends away in our caravan, such as Baileys in Bridstow, Herefordshire.'

### WHAT'S YOUR BEST BUY?

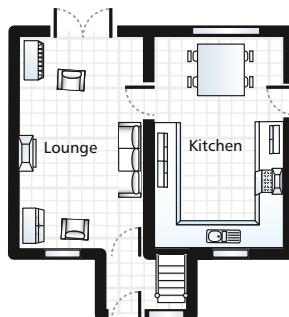
'My French bed, a £150 bargain on eBay, or the drop leaf table in the kitchen, which was just £30 at a car boot sale.'

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO CHANGE ANYTHING?

'I'd love to extend the house, but failing that we would change the windows and the lounge fireplace, as well as getting a new sofa. I'd also love an entirely new bathroom with clean modern lines featuring slate and natural wood.'



FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR

For stockists see page 120





★ Jane loves her railway carriage-style coat rack from Graham & Green. It looks great teamed with a table painted in Farrow & Ball's Hague Blue from upcycling specialist Peeling Paint and a 1960s Bakelite telephone

## Good idea!

Use a bed sheet to make a blind.  
Jane's friend Cath made the blind in the living room from a vintage French bed sheet bought on eBay for £20.

★ The living room has double doors overlooking the rear cottage garden where the couple keep three chickens. Jane has added some quirky touches to the room such as the Fortnum & Mason hampers from eBay, which double up as storage, and the stained glass window on the wall. 'Robert's grandparents were going to throw them away when they got new double glazing, but his parents salvaged them and we discovered them years later in their loft,' she says

◁ A few years after moving in, Jane had daughter Ruby, now nine, and decided to leave her IT job to become a full-time mum and focus more on her passion for interiors. 'I started doing china hire, then took an interior design course and started my blog [teawithruby.co.uk](http://teawithruby.co.uk), which just took over,' she explains. Through the online interiors community Jane met fellow interiors enthusiast, maker, and owner of The Linen Garden, Vicky Trainor. The pair became best friends with a mutual love of 'treasure hunting' at vintage fairs and car boot sales, which led them to set up [owenandhunter.co.uk](http://owenandhunter.co.uk). 'We sell homewares at fairs and pop-up shops, and we're in the process of developing an online shop,' says Jane. 'We have slightly different tastes, but when you put them together they just work. We just bounce off each other really well.'



★ Having banished the 1990s paint effects, Jane and Robert have painted the living room in Dimpse with a striking feature wall of Stiffkey Blue, both by Farrow & Ball. The chair was bought at M&S while the footstool is re-upholstered in an Ian Mankin fabric and is perfect for Jane's ever changing displays







‘When styling, I try to not to make things too symmetrical. Group odd numbers and use different heights, group things that go together such as natural materials or vintage pieces.’

These days Jane’s a big fan of French linen, vintage signs and upcycling, finding many pieces at car boot sales, reclamation yards and on eBay. For instance the lounge features a vintage ‘No Parking’ sign, old tennis rackets mounted on the wall, blinds made from French bed sheets and a stained glass panel from Robert’s grandma’s house. Her style is epitomised in the guest bedroom which features crates customised with vintage maps and a painted chest of drawers from her sister-in-law that Jane has re-painted white. In the master bedroom she’s gone for a more dramatic look having painted the walls a rich red to show off the ornate gilt picture frames and beautiful antique French bed.

Although Ruby’s bedroom is compact to say the least, she loves the cosy space which has furniture from The White Company, bunting and a crate customised with pretty bird wallpaper. ‘Like many people we’ve gone for a make-do-and-mend approach, doing bits and pieces to the house as and when we could afford it,’ says Jane. ‘Although ideally I’d like to ▷

▶ Jane likes to cosy up the house with blankets and throws for winter such as this checked throw from Atlantic Blanket Company. The ‘No Parking’ sign was found in a vintage shop in Honiton, Devon while the rackets were £2 each and the cushion was bought from Cabbages & Roses

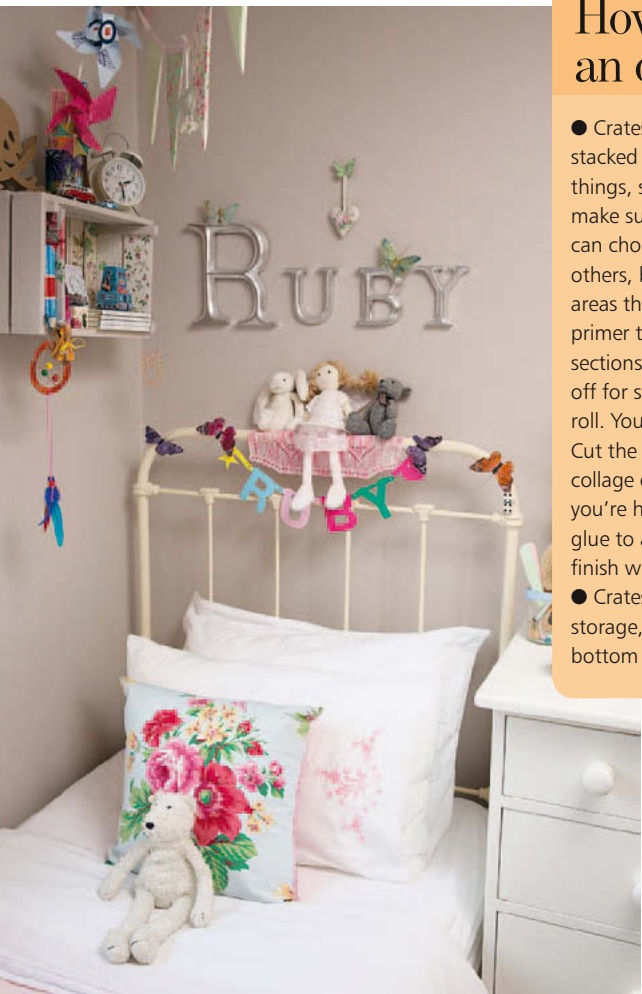




## How to upcycle an old crate

- Crates can be mounted on the wall alone or stacked in groups for displaying your favourite things, so decide where they'll be placed and make sure the size looks right for the space. You can choose to paint some sections and wallpaper others, both inside and out. Start by sanding the areas that will be painted or wallpapered. Use a primer then eggshell emulsion for the painted sections. Buy vintage wallpaper online or send off for samples so you don't have to buy a whole roll. You could also use pages from magazines. Cut the wallpaper up into pieces to make a collage on the floor, moving things around until you're happy with the arrangement. Use PVA glue to attach the wallpaper to the crate and finish with a matt varnish to seal.

- Crates are so versatile. If you want moveable storage, perhaps for kids' toys, add castors to the bottom instead of having wall-mounted shelving.



✦ Ruby's bedroom features a bedstead from French Finds, cushions from Notonthehighstreet and furniture from The White Company, against a backdrop of Farrow & Ball's Elephant's Breath paint. 'When Ruby was born we didn't want a typical baby's room with pink or blue, as we'd only have to redecorate,' she says



The pretty guest bedroom epitomises Jane's style with a traditional-style daybed from Laura Ashley and painted shelving unit from Cox & Cox where she can display her favourite things





### Good idea!

Frames are often beautiful objects in their own right so you don't always need a picture to complete them.

**'Don't rush into decorating as you could make costly mistakes. Paint everything neutral shades when you move in so you can see where the light comes from.'**

Rich red walls are the ideal backdrop for Jane's collection of railway-style clocks and frames. 'A great place for frames is Lucy Vintage Lifestyle, she has a concession at The Vintage Room in Matlock,' says Jane, who made the red cushions herself. The blind is from The Natural Curtain Company

change certain things it would be quite an expense so we've worked around what's already here.'

The bathroom is a prime example of this approach. They've kept the simple white suite, but updated it by ripping up the laminate flooring, painting the walls and floor white and adding French-style accessories such as a grain sack bathmat. 'I love grain sacks as they are so versatile,' says Jane. 'As well as a bathmat, they can be used for bench cushions in the kitchen or re-upholstering chairs.'

As for the future, Jane and Robert would love a bigger place, but with Ruby settled at school they'll undoubtedly stay put for now. 'We often talk about building our own modern open-plan house,' says Jane. 'So maybe if we find the right plot of land we'll end up in the countryside.' **YH**



Despite the limited space, Jane managed to squeeze in a cabinet from Next, which displays shells, bottles and branches, as well as a wire basket from Croft Interiors in Stokesley

## 5 IDEAS TO STEAL



### EXCESS BAGGAGE

Look for quirky storage solutions for your hallway, as Jane did with the luggage rack.

Vintage-style luggage rack hook shelf, £58, Magpie Living



### SIGN OF THE TIMES

Opt for a vintage metal advertising sign or those with fun wording.

Please take off your shoes sign, £18, Vincent and Barn Ltd

### BACK IN TIME

Opt for Roman numerals and a distressed finish when choosing a clock to suit a vintage-style room.

Newgate Bordeaux wall clock, £80, Red Candy



### FADED GRANDEUR

Jane loves vintage-style cushions with a faded floral design.

Small floral cushion, £5, George Home



Best buy



### GALLERY STYLE

For a simple yet striking look take an attractive frame and hang on a painted feature wall.

Classic gold gilt picture frame, £30, Ayres & Graces



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# My little home is perfect for me

Student doctor Hayley has turned an investment into a home she doesn't want to leave

**M**oving from Vancouver to Dublin was always going to be an adventure, and the process of finding accommodation would be difficult, but when Hayley Spurr gained a place to study in The College of Surgeons, she couldn't wait. However, the rental prices for accommodation gave her pause for thought. 'I quickly realised that over the years I would be spending a lot of money renting in Dublin. As I was lucky enough to have the support of my family, it seemed a more sensible option to look for somewhere that I could buy as an investment opportunity.'

After moving over in September 2013, at the top of Hayley's property hunting





✦ To make the small living room feel as big and light as possible Hayley opted for a limed oak laminate from Mulvey's of Dundrum and Perspex tables from Harvey Norman. The grey hues which feature on the sofa, chair and rug, all from Ikea, help to create a subtle, uniform scheme. The fireplace was stripped back to the brickwork to make the most of this original feature

list was that it had to be within walking distance of downtown and close to transport links as well as having outside space. 'I really hoped for a light and bright space that had a garden to sit and relax or to entertain friends,' she says. However, it proved a tall order to source and organise a home to buy while taking on her studies too. Fortunately Hayley was lucky enough to have a helper on hand. 'Interior designer Wesley O'Brien had been the facilitator and project manager when a friend of my parents was looking for a place in Dublin and he came highly recommended, so we contacted him and thank goodness we did!' she says.

Initially they were looking for a one-bedroom apartment, but prices were spiralling and having been gazumped several times, Wesley persuaded Hayley to look at a small cottage which he was convinced represented far better value. 'It had two bedrooms and needed renovation so we were all dubious at first, but once we had seen the place, it was just too hard to say no. It was an old fireman's cottage and had such character that I fell in love



with it straight away,' says Hayley.

Renting an apartment for the interim, the renovation of her new home was worked out between Hayley and Wesley, with Hayley on site at least twice a week. 'The planning of the house was always going to be limited by the size of the site,' explains Hayley. 'But one thing I wanted was a big, bright kitchen. I spend a lot of time in the kitchen, and the existing one was only two metres square, so it wasn't going to work for me.' To give Hayley the space she wanted they planned a bright kitchen extension to the rear, while retaining the 25m<sup>2</sup> garden required by planning permission. They also collaborated on a way to create a vista from the front of the house to the back, giving this tiny home a feeling of spaciousness and bringing the light right through the house. The ▷

*Good idea!*

A small space feels much bigger if it has a big view; the 'vista' created from one side of Hayley's house to the other means the small rooms don't feel claustrophobic.



## THE HOME

A two-bedroom period cottage, built circa 1880, in Dublin.

## WHO LIVES HERE?

Hayley Spurr, a student doctor.

## WHAT MADE YOU CHOOSE THIS PARTICULAR PROPERTY?

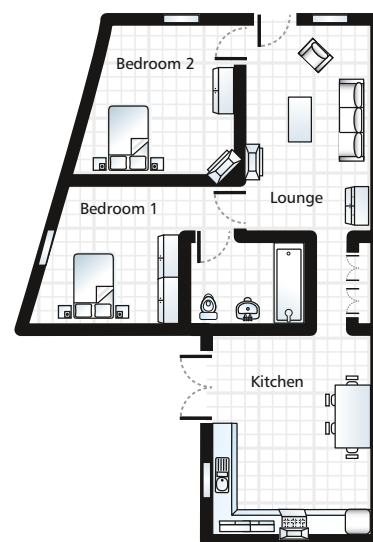
'I really hoped for a light and bright space that had a garden to sit and relax or to entertain friends, so the south-facing garden off the kitchen was a real positive. I loved this property too because of the historical aspect of being one of the original artisan cottages of the fire brigade.'

## WHAT WAS YOUR BEST FIND?

'I have to honestly say that Wesley O'Brien was the best find! He guided us through the purchase and renovation process and helped us choose an exceptional contractor.'

## DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE PIECE OF FURNITURE?

'I think my favourite find was the yellow chairs in the kitchen. They were bought at Ikea and they are great to sit and have coffee in the morning and dinner at night.'



FLOORPLAN

For stockists see page 120



An unusual feature of the kitchen extension is the raised coffered ceiling which Wesley added to create a cottage feel. The kitchen was made by Elphin Fitted Furniture and is finished in French Grey Pale from Little Greene, and it's teamed with neutral floor tiles and a splashback from Tilestyle. The bright yellow chairs from Ikea add a punch of colour, as do the triptych of prints from The West Pier Art Studio in Howth

*'The old fireman's cottage had such character that I fell in love with it straight away.'*



In the guest bedroom the original cast-iron fireplace was retained as the room was simply too small to take an exposed brickwork wall. The walls are painted in French Grey Pale from Little Greene and the grey wool throw was a find from Article

◁ tiny kitchen was redeployed as a utility corridor as well as a viewing link, one side is lined with units containing the washing machine, dryer and storage, the other side with coat hooks.

Once the structural work had been completed Hayley and Wesley could turn their thoughts to the décor. 'The other thing I really wanted to do was to strip back that beautiful brick fireplace,' says Hayley. 'My first time living away from home was in Montreal, where I lived in a really wonderful old house with lots of period features and exposed brick, and that loft-style stayed with me as something I really loved.' Stripped, cleaned and repaired, the fireplace openings have been cleverly used as spaces for lighting and for a television. Long term, the living room opening is designed to take a wood-burning stove, but as a student doctor with a hectic schedule, Hayley doesn't have much time to build fires or clean out a stove, so for now it's a great place to put the television, leaving the floor space clear and uncluttered.

The colour scheme in the kitchen grew from the triptych Hayley bought on her



## Good idea!

Another great idea for a small period house with high ceilings is to drop the level to give extra storage space in areas where the ceiling height is no advantage.

Dropping the ceiling in the corridor outside from 3.3m to 2.4m has provided additional space accessed from the bedroom. The brass bed was left in the house by the previous owners and has been dressed with floral print cushions and herringbone wool throws from Article



second day in Ireland. 'I went with my parents on a mad hike across Howth Head, and we bought these prints in the West Pier Art Studio, so they're pretty special. The other thing that is important in the kitchen is the clock; I've had it in every home I ever lived in, always in the kitchen. When I moved to Ireland, we went out and bought a new identical one in Ikea.'

Originally just an investment opportunity to serve a practical purpose

while Hayley was studying in Dublin, she's since become emotionally attached to her home. 'When I bought the house I thought, 'That'll be great for the years I'm in Dublin, then I'll sell and go home.' Now I'm not so sure. Even after a month at home in Vancouver this summer, I was happy to get back to my little house, to come in to the kitchen and get a coffee and go out on the patio and chill. I'm not so sure I'm going to want to leave.' **YH**



The small bathroom is painted in Mucky Swan from Colortrend, and an Ikea vanity unit provides some much needed storage. The Sonas mirror came from KCR Plumbing, while the neutral wall tiles in the shower were bought from a selection at Right Price Tiles

## REAL HOME

### 5 IDEAS TO STEAL



#### REFLECT YOUR STYLE

Like Hayley use a large round mirror to add a stylish touch to an empty wall.

Grey Portland wall mirror, £125, The White Company

#### RAY OF SUNSHINE

Give a plain kitchen a burst of colour with some vibrant dining chairs.

Charles Eames-style olive dining chair, £69, Cult Furniture



#### NEW NEUTRAL

Grey fabrics are ideal for chairs and sofas as they are understated and work well with a wide range of colours.

Grey Martha fabric wingback chair, £249.99, Argos

#### BLUE HUES

In a kitchen that's predominantly cream add some subtle colour with baby blue accessories.

Annie blue mug, £8.50, Berry Red



#### CLEAR THE TABLE

In a small space clear furniture is a fantastic way to help the room appear uncluttered.



Hygena Mistral nest of three clear acrylic tables, £89.99, Argos

# We decided to start from scratch with this house

Lisa and Neil Chamberlain gave away everything to create their dream home

Lisa and Neil Chamberlain gave away most of their worldly goods when they moved into the house they had dreamed of owning for 11 years. Not only did they give away televisions, sofas, beds and white goods, but they also gave away a conservatory and all the kitchen units so they could make a completely fresh start. 'I had sold a small business and we were in the fortunate position of being able to create a home exactly as we had always wanted, but we didn't want to just throw everything away,' says Lisa. 'The conservatory went to someone who wanted it as a playroom for his children; three old sheds went to someone with a wood burner; the kitchen went to my brother-in-law and was fitted as a Christmas present; a friend took the range cooker and the rest of the furniture went to local charities and organisations.'

Their 'clear-out' not only benefitted friends and neighbours, but also paved the way for the house of their dreams. Lisa and Neil had always admired the modern estate house in a wooded cul-de-sac just round the corner from where they were living. They even put in an offer when it



▲ 'We wanted to create an open-plan feel to the extended kitchen and living room, but with the option of using them as separate living areas,' says Lisa. The doors, from Appleyard Joinery, include glass panels to take light between the rooms





➤ Lisa and Neil were quoted more than £5,000 for a walnut staircase but the joiner created a striking alternative for £900 with stained pine and glass banisters

came up for sale 11 years ago, but the sale fell through and they decided to extend their previous home instead. However, just hours before the foundations for the extension were due to be excavated, Lisa and Neil discovered that their dream home was back on the market. 'We were just about to go on holiday and rang up from the airport to arrange a viewing,' says Lisa. 'We saw it two days after we got back and although it was a mess inside, we put in an offer straight away. The girls were absolutely horrified when they saw what we'd bought. We were moving from the home they had been born and raised in ▶



*Good idea!*

Feature walls create focus in any room, but use a neutral pattern or textured wallpaper on all four walls to give a large room a warm, cosy look.



The calming taupe and brown tones of the living room fabrics and furniture, all from Eyecandy Interior Design, and the warmth of the wood floor from Appleyard Joinery, make this Lisa and Neil's favourite room

*COME ON IN...*



## THE HOME

A four-bedroom, detached house near Wakefield.

## WHO LIVES HERE?

Lisa Chamberlain, 44, a social worker, her husband Neil, 49, a highways engineer, with their daughters Eden, 17, and Libby, 20. They have a border cross called Ellie.

## WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT YOUR HOUSE?

'It's very quiet, at the end of a cul-de-sac which backs onto a small wood, yet we are still very close to the cities of Wakefield and Leeds when needed.'

## WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

'Choosing the décor. In the end we sought the advice of a designer who came up with some great ideas.'

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE ROOM?

'The living room because the colours are so calming that you literally feel yourself relax as soon as you walk in.'



For stockists see page 120





✦ Lisa bought all kinds of green glassware from Country Baskets which add a splash of colour to the kitchen windowsills and work surfaces

◁ to live in a house with smaller bedrooms which badly needed updating and extending.'

But Lisa stood her ground, knowing that the house, with its double garage and private corner plot garden, had huge potential. 'I knew we could turn it into a really special family home,' she says. 'There were times when we wondered whether we'd done the right thing, especially when the house was upside-down with building works, but I always kept the end result in mind.' In a further twist to the tale Lisa and Neil decided to keep their old house and rent it out, even doing a temporary house 'swap' with the previous owners. 'We rented our last house to them for a few months so we could move into this one,' says Lisa. 'We wanted to start work on it straight away.'

The first job was to strip, skim and decorate two bedrooms for Eden and Libby, then they stripped out the rest of the house while planning permission went through for a single storey

extension which would more than double the size of the original kitchen and add to the length of the living room. Building

✦ The crisp, uncluttered style of the kitchen is enhanced by splashbacks from Harrogate Glass Solutions and granite worktops from Precious Stone



▲ Pale painted cupboards provide contrast to the walnut units made by Abbeydale Joinery, with cream floor tiles, supplied by Matthewson and Rosemond, that extend into the hall. 'The house is often full of teenagers so we wanted the main rooms to be practical as well as looking good,' says Lisa. The contemporary dining table, chairs and bar stools were all spotted on a trip to Eyecandy





### Good idea!

Many modern faux flowers look just as natural as the real thing. For best results, mix with natural flowers to create year-round splashes of colour for any season.

## ‘This was our one-off opportunity to create the home we wanted without compromise.’

work started in June 2013 and they ‘lived in chaos’ until November when the new kitchen was created by knocking down the wall into the extension, taking out stud walls that had created a utility and fitting new units with a central island. ‘It was a pain living in chaos for so long, but by living in it we were able to make changes and adjustments as we went along. At one stage we were getting by with just a sink, a microwave and a mattress on the floor – our bed had been specially made to fit the room in our last house so we decided to buy a new one for here,’ says Lisa. ‘We literally gave away everything from water butts to curtain poles and started again. It was a one-off opportunity to create the

home we wanted without compromise.’

But when it came to decorating and furnishing their new home, Lisa and Neil decided to seek the help of an interior designer, Emma Gordon from Eyecandy Interior Design, who worked closely with Lisa to create a warm, welcoming home. ‘People think hiring a designer is really expensive, yet we wouldn’t think twice about hiring a builder or a painter and decorator,’ says Lisa. ‘So why not let an expert create the look you want to live with? Plus, the savings she made on the furniture offset what we paid for her ▷

➤ The smooth, rounded work surface adds interest to the kitchen design







✦ 'There was a cupboard containing a storage tank off the spare bedroom, so we moved the boiler and a water tank into the garage and turned the cupboard into a walk-in shower,' explains Lisa. The fittings and tiles were supplied by Matthewson and Rosemond plumbing merchants

✦ The wallpaper, blinds, furniture and bedding in the main bedroom came from Eyecandy Interior Design. 'I was happy to let a professional designer interpret our ideas,' says Lisa

## Good idea!

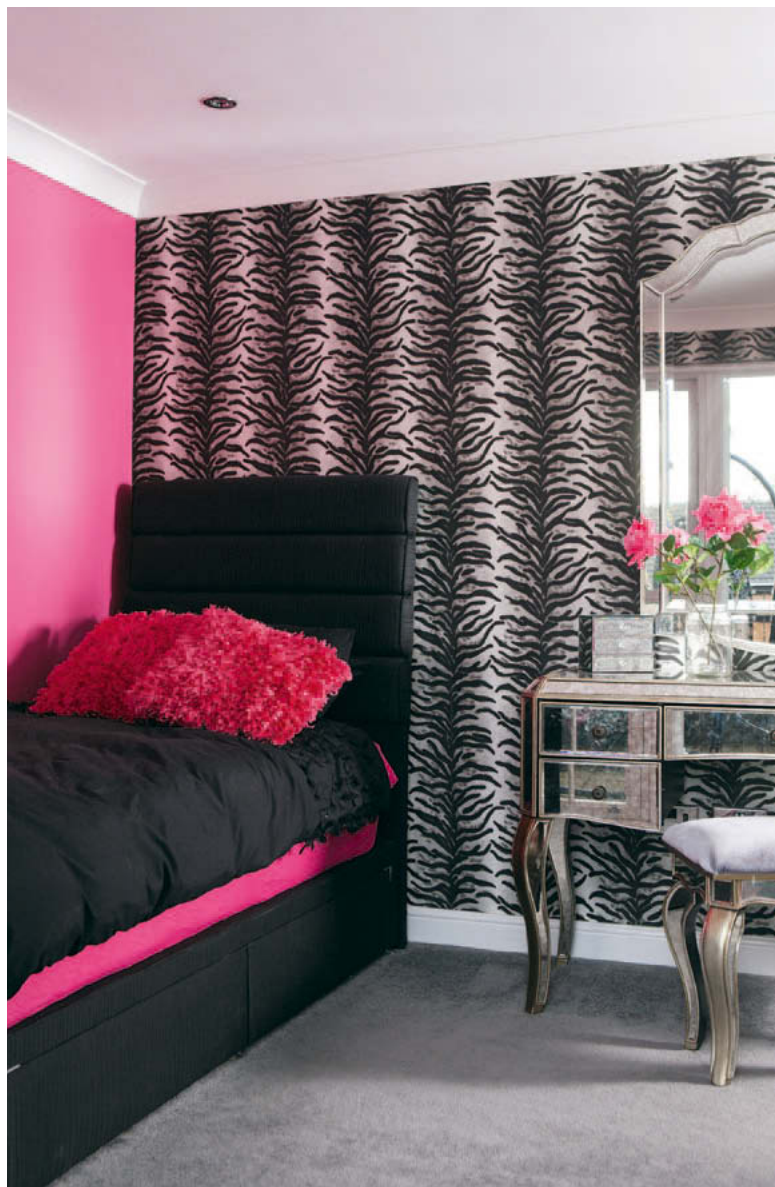
Mirrors are not the only way of reflecting light – mirrored radiators and furniture, along with glass, draw masses of natural light through the house.







✦ Eden chose her black and fuchsia colour scheme, keeping the style simple and uncluttered to offset the striking wallpaper



✦ The en suite fittings were supplied by Matthewson and Rosemond and the colour scheme used co-ordinates with the bedroom, creating a lovely flow between the two rooms

**‘I knew we could turn this into a really special family home.’**

◁ expertise. And by hiring a professional we avoided making any costly mistakes, as Emma understood exactly what we wanted to achieve.’

The girls chose the décor for their rooms while Lisa and Neil wanted something more neutral for their room and downstairs. ‘We were so unsure about the finishing touches that we thought it would be a false economy to try to do it on our own.’ Lisa did have doubts when Emma suggested brown wallpaper on all four walls of the sitting room, but she is delighted with the result – layers of natural textures and calm colours which have

turned the once bland living room into her favourite part of the house. She has also used large mirrors, including mirrored radiators, to reflect light around the house and added subtle colour on the stairs and landing with a striped carpet.

The house is now exactly how Lisa and Neil had planned it and they and their daughters love living there, despite Eden and Libby’s initial reservations. ‘Eden and Libby couldn’t understand why we would want to leave our last home, which we all liked, and move into a house which needed so much doing to it,’ says Lisa. ‘Now they love it and wonder why they ever had doubts.’ **YH**

## 5 IDEAS TO STEAL



### MIRROR IMAGE

A striking mirror above your mantelpiece will help to draw the eye and create a focal point.

Gold edge mirror, £49.99, Dunelm

### LOOKING SHEEPISH

For a luxurious look add some indulgent texture to your home with a sheepskin rug.



Ludde sheepskin, £30, Ikea



### HIT THE TILES

In a small bathroom, mosaic tiles in a bold colour will make a design statement.

Violet mix tiles, £16.95 per 30cm x 30cm sheet, Walls and Floors



### GLASS ACT

Using mirrored furniture is a great way to bounce light around a room as well as to add some glamour to a space.

Shard Dusk mirror dressing table, £199, Wren Living



*Best buy*

### ANIMAL MAGIC

Give your walls an instant ‘wow’ factor with some daring zebra-print wallpaper.

Rasch Savanna zebra wallpaper, £7.97, Wilko





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\* (IRI value data. 52 w/e 22 Feb, 14).



# Food & Drink

Keep everybody happy with our healthy family meals on a budget...



## 3 ways with... rhubarb

- When making vanilla ice cream, perk it up with swirls of rhubarb. Chop **450g rhubarb** into 5cm pieces, add to a pan with **2 tbsp honey**, and gently heat with the lid on until broken down. Make your vanilla ice cream base as usual and then combine  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the rhubarb with the mixture and churn for 40 minutes in an ice cream maker. Transfer to a freezable container then swirl through the remaining rhubarb to create a ripple and freeze until solid.
- Chop **5 sticks of rhubarb** and add to a pan with, **1 tsp vanilla extract**, **50g caster sugar** and a **knob of butter**. Heat until softened, but not broken down. Meanwhile, grill **4 slices of brioche** sprinkled with a little **sugar**. Top with the warm rhubarb.
- Rhubarb goes really well with **goat's cheese**. Soften some in a pan and add to a salad with the cheese and a **red wine vinegar** and **mustard** dressing.

## If you do one thing this month...

Add instant flavour, not just to sweet cakes and desserts, but also to give added depth to savoury dishes such as gravies, salsas, soups and tomato sauces, with Nielsen-Massey Coffee Extract, £3.85 for 60ml, from Waitrose. Forget keeping ground coffee for cooking,



which can quickly lose flavour, instead use 1 tsp in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of water – the equivalent to  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of brewed coffee.

## This month we love...

For a fruity start to the day pick up an On The Go Breakfast pack from Whitworths, perfect to pop in your handbag when you're in a rush. Packed with fruit and nuts, there are six varieties to choose from, including Strawberry & Banana and Maple Pecan. Priced at £1.49 from selected supermarkets.



## Try me...

The popularity of Spanish food is growing but finding an authentic tapas bar can be tricky. Andalusian beer brand Alhambra, as well as making Spanish beers to enjoy with your tapas, has launched the Tapas Tracker to help you locate an up-to-date list of restaurants. Visit [apps.facebook.com/tapas-tracker](https://apps.facebook.com/tapas-tracker), or [managemessage.co.uk/canvas/](https://managemessage.co.uk/canvas/). Alhambra beers are available from Tesco, Booths and [www.beersofeurope.co.uk](http://www.beersofeurope.co.uk).



## Eat me...

Two girls who swear by the versatility of cold-pressed, organic Vita Coco coconut oil are Jasmine and Melissa Hemsley, the sisters behind cookbook *The Art of Eating Well*. They use the oil as an alternative to processed vegetable and sunflower oils, to bake, roast and fry, as well as raw. Available from Tesco and Amazon, from £5.99 for 250ml. To find out more about how Hemsley & Hemsley use coconut oil visit [www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk](http://www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk).



## Buy me...

Being gluten-free doesn't mean you have to miss out on enjoying pancakes with everyone else this Shrove Tuesday. Try making a batch for everyone with Doves Farm Gluten Free Buckwheat Flour, £1.47 per 130g, available from Ocado and [www.dovesfarm.co.uk](http://www.dovesfarm.co.uk). Not actually wheat, as the name would suggest, buckwheat is in fact a fruit seed so is naturally gluten-free. To find tasty pancake recipes visit [www.dovesfarm.co.uk](http://www.dovesfarm.co.uk).



CHECK OUT [WWW.YOURHOMEMAGAZINE.CO.UK/FOOD](http://WWW.YOURHOMEMAGAZINE.CO.UK/FOOD) FOR MORE TASTY RECIPES



# Healthy helpings, on a budget



Keep your family happy and healthy with these tasty dinnertime recipes



## Egg fried quinoa

PREPARATION TIME 10 MINUTES

COOKING TIME 20 MINUTES SERVES 2-4

### YOU WILL NEED

✓75g quinoa ✓1 tbsp sesame oil  
✓2cm piece ginger, peeled and grated  
✓1 cooked chicken breast, skin removed and shredded ✓100g prawns ✓3 spring onions, sliced ✓50g frozen peas ✓50g sugar snap peas, sliced ✓3 small pak choi, shredded ✓3 the happy egg co. eggs, whisked ✓1 tbsp soy sauce

### DIRECTIONS

- Place the quinoa in a medium-sized saucepan and half fill the saucepan with water.
- Bring to the boil and then simmer for 10-15 minutes until the quinoa is cooked but still has texture. Drain and reserve.
- Heat a wok or large frying pan and add the sesame oil and ginger and stir.
- Add the chicken and prawns and stir for 1-2 minutes.
- Add the spring onions, peas, sugar snaps and pak choi and stir for 1-2 minutes. Add the quinoa and stir.
- Scoop the contents of the pan to one side and pour in the eggs and soy sauce – allow the mixture to settle and start to cook in one place for 1-2 minutes – before starting to stir.
- Stir the mixture until the egg is incorporated into the mixture and serve.

Recipe courtesy of [www.thehappyegg.co.uk](http://www.thehappyegg.co.uk)



## Sticky cranberry sausages with ratatouille

PREPARATION TIME 15 MINUTES

COOKING TIME 45 MINUTES SERVES 4

### YOU WILL NEED

✓450g plum tomatoes, halved ✓2 red onions, peeled and cut into wedges ✓1 red pepper, deseeded, cored and cut into chunks ✓1 yellow pepper, deseeded, cored and cut into chunks ✓2 garlic cloves, unpeeled ✓2 courgettes, trimmed and cut into chunks ✓2 large rosemary sprigs ✓2 tbsp olive oil ✓4 tbsp Ocean Spray® Whole Cranberry Sauce ✓2 tsp wholegrain mustard, optional ✓8 good quality thick pork and herb sausages

### DIRECTIONS

■ Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Place the tomatoes, onions, peppers, garlic, courgettes and rosemary into a large roasting tray. Drizzle over the olive oil and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper and toss well. Roast for 10 minutes.  
■ Arrange the sausages on top and roast for a further 25 minutes. Remove the garlic from the tin and squeeze the flesh from the skin. Mash with the cranberry sauce and mustard and spoon over the sausages. Return to the oven for 10 minutes until sticky.

Recipe courtesy of Ocean Spray

## Minted pea soup

PREPARATION TIME 5 MINUTES

COOKING TIME 20 MINUTES SERVES 2-4

### YOU WILL NEED

✓2 tsp olive oil ✓1 onion finely diced ✓1 clove garlic, crushed ✓450g fresh or frozen peas ✓750ml vegetable stock ✓2 sprigs of mint, chopped, plus a few leaves to garnish ✓3 tbsp Yeo Valley 0% Fat Greek Style Yeogurt

### DIRECTIONS

■ Heat the oil over a medium-low heat in a large pan, add the onion and garlic and sweat for 8 minutes until soft but not coloured.  
■ Add the peas then pour in the stock and bring to the boil. Simmer for 8-10 minutes until the peas are tender.  
■ Blend the soup and season to taste then stir in the chopped mint and the yogurt. Reheat the soup but don't boil. Serve garnished with the additional mint leaves and an extra dollop of yogurt.

Recipe courtesy of Yeo Valley





## Lamb keema bake

PREPARATION TIME 35 MINUTES

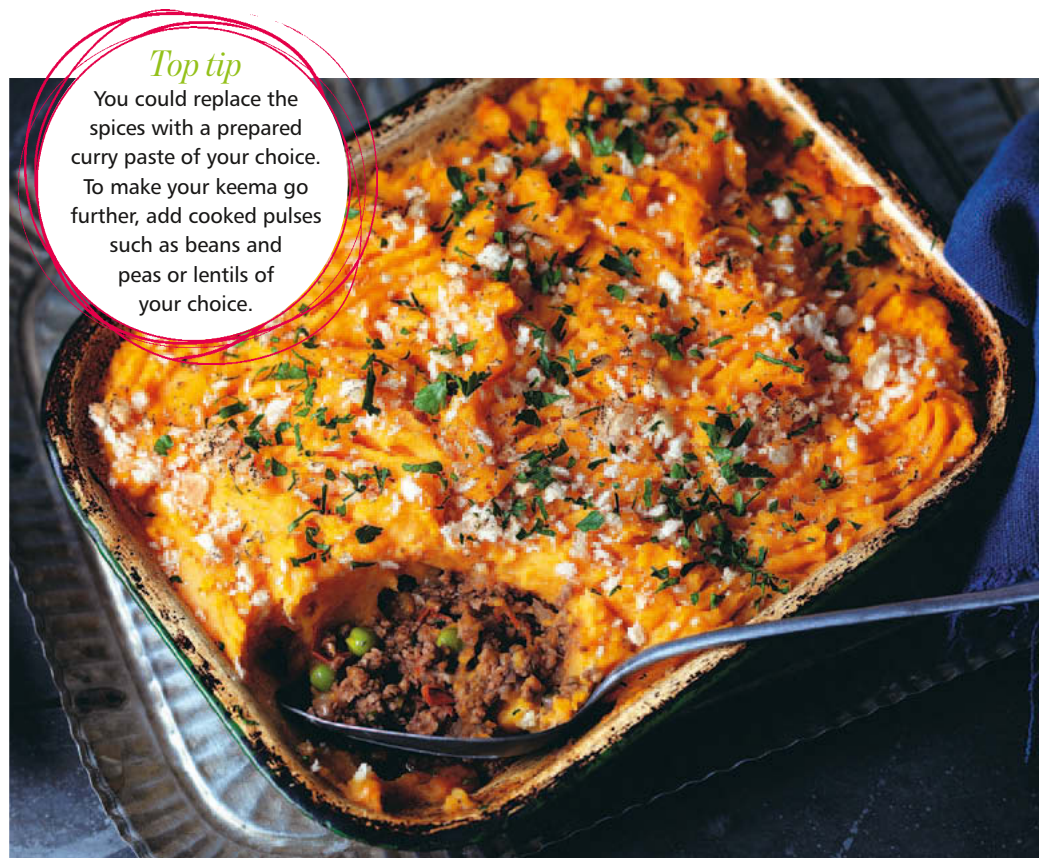
COOKING TIME 1 HOUR SERVES 4

### YOU WILL NEED

For the keema ✓2 tsp sunflower or vegetable oil ✓1 large onion, peeled and finely chopped ✓2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped ✓2.5cm piece fresh root ginger, peeled and finely chopped ✓1-2 green chillies, deseeded, finely chopped ✓2 tsp ground cumin ✓3 tbsp garam masala or medium curry powder ✓450g lean lamb mince ✓4 medium tomatoes, chopped ✓1-2 tsp white sugar ✓2 tbsp tomato purée ✓100g fresh or frozen peas ✓large handful freshly chopped coriander, to garnish For the bake ✓150ml hot lamb or vegetable stock ✓675g prepared root vegetable mash or any mash of your choice ✓2 tbsp fresh or dried breadcrumbs ✓2 tbsp freshly chopped flat-leaf parsley or coriander

### DIRECTIONS

■ Heat the oil in a large non-stick frying pan and cook the onion and garlic over a low heat for 10 minutes or until soft and lightly golden.  
■ Add the ginger, chillies, cumin and garam masala or curry powder. Cook over a moderate heat for 1-2 minutes, stirring occasionally.  
■ Add the lamb and stir-fry for 2-3 minutes, then add the tomatoes, sugar and tomato purée and bring to the boil. Season with salt and pepper, reduce the heat and gently simmer uncovered for 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add a little water, if needed. Add the peas 10 minutes before the end of the cooking time.



### Top tip

You could replace the spices with a prepared curry paste of your choice.  
To make your keema go further, add cooked pulses such as beans and peas or lentils of your choice.

■ At this point you could garnish with the coriander and serve with flat or naan bread, plain basmati rice or poppadums and a selection of relishes, or continue to turn into a bake with a rustic topping. Keema can be frozen successfully and used at a later date. Simply cool, transfer to a rigid container, label and freeze for up to 2 months. Remember to defrost overnight in the fridge and reheat until piping hot.  
■ To make the bake, put the keema in a large non-stick pan with the stock and heat for 3-4 minutes until piping hot, breaking up the mixture

with a wooden spoon. Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4.

■ Spoon the lamb into a large ovenproof baking dish or 4 small ovenproof dishes. Heat the mash and spoon over the keema. Sprinkle over the breadcrumbs.

■ Cook in the oven for 20 minutes until the mash is golden. Garnish with the herbs and serve with a selection of seasonal vegetables.

Recipe courtesy of  
[www.simplybeefandlamb.co.uk](http://www.simplybeefandlamb.co.uk)



Recipe by Sophie Wright, courtesy of [www.britishleeks.co.uk](http://www.britishleeks.co.uk)

PREPARATION TIME 15 MINUTES  
COOKING TIME 20 MINUTES SERVES 4

## Leek, white bean and smoked haddock stew

### YOU WILL NEED

✓30g butter  
✓2 leeks, trimmed and sliced thinly into rings  
✓200g potatoes, peeled and cut into 1cm dice  
✓400ml milk  
✓600ml fish, chicken or vegetable stock  
✓1 bay leaf  
✓400g smoked undyed haddock fillet  
✓30g plain flour  
✓195g tin of sweetcorn  
✓2 x 400g tins white beans; drained and washed (cannellini, butter or haricot)  
✓1 tbsp chopped parsley  
✓1 tsp smoked paprika

### DIRECTIONS

■ Place a medium-sized saucepan or sauté pan on the stove and add the butter. Allow it to melt before adding the leeks and potatoes with a pinch of salt and a generous twist of pepper. Cook for 10 minutes until the leeks are soft.  
■ Meanwhile, pour the milk and the stock into another pan with the bay leaf and add the fish. Bring to the boil before removing the fish from the poaching liquor. When cool enough to handle, flake the fish into chunks and remove and discard any skin. Set the cooking liquor aside.  
■ Add the flour and the sweetcorn to the leeks and potatoes and stir well. Cook the flour and sweetcorn for a few minutes before adding the hot poaching liquor. Mix well and bring to the boil. Add the drained beans and simmer until the potatoes are tender.  
■ Add the flaked fish to the stew and heat through. Taste for seasoning. Stir in the chopped parsley and sprinkle with a little smoked paprika.





## Egg stuffed peppers and tomatoes

**PREPARATION TIME** 10 MINUTES

**COOKING TIME** 25-30 MINUTES **SERVES** 3-4

### YOU WILL NEED

✓1 tsp olive oil ✓1 onion, finely chopped  
 ✓1 garlic clove, crushed ✓50g chorizo, sliced  
 ✓1 tbsp smoked paprika ✓400g tin chopped tomatoes  
 ✓1 tbsp tomato purée ✓2 large handfuls of kale or spinach  
 ✓1 beef-steak tomato, cut in half, seeds removed  
 ✓1 orange pepper, cut in half, seeds removed  
 ✓1 red pepper, cut in half, seeds removed  
 ✓6 the happy egg co. eggs

### DIRECTIONS

- Preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/Gas Mark 6.
- In a large pan heat the oil and add the onion and garlic. Cook for 2-3 minutes until the onion starts to soften. Add the chorizo, paprika, canned tomatoes and tomato purée and bring to the boil and simmer for 5-10 minutes. Add the kale in the last 5 minutes, if using spinach just stir through at the end of the cooking time.
- Place the vegetable halves in a deep baking tray. Spoon the mixture into the vegetable halves but leave space at the top for the egg – any remaining mixture can be served with the vegetables.
- Make a slight indent in the mixture; carefully crack the eggs and place in the centre of each vegetable. Place in the oven and bake for about 25-30 minutes until the eggs have set.
- Serve with any remaining tomato sauce and an extra pile of your favourite seasonal vegetables.

Recipe courtesy of [www.thehappyegg.co.uk](http://www.thehappyegg.co.uk)



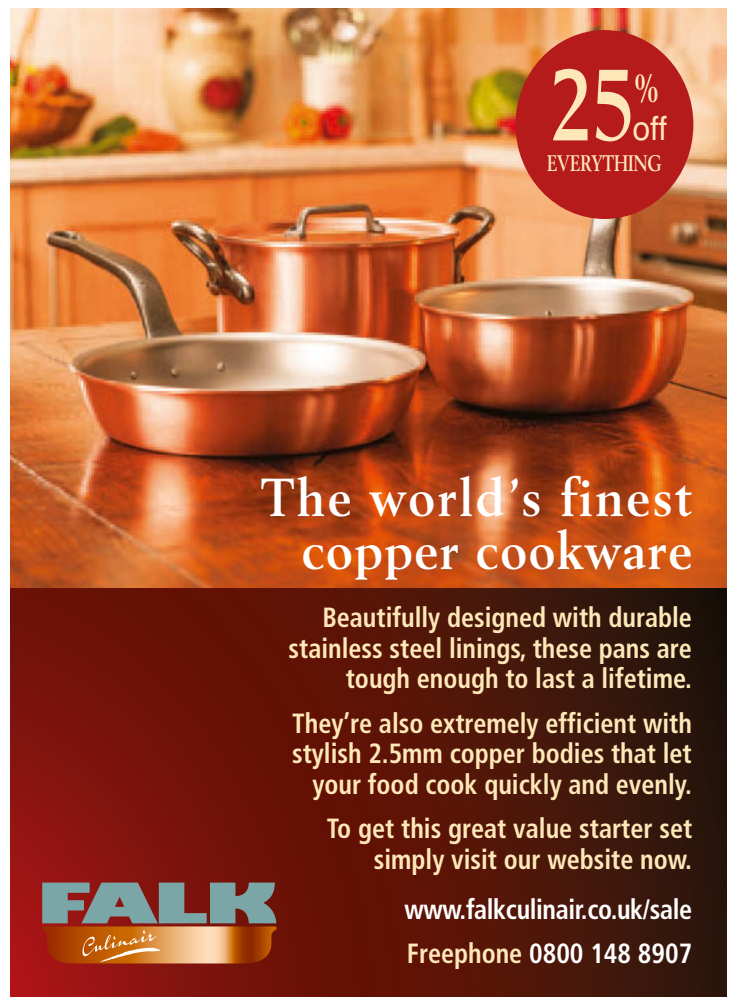


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# Home IMPROVEMENT

Turn the page to find out the best ways to add value to your home



## High-tech under-floor heating

Topps Tiles has teamed up with Warmup to stock a new generation of smart thermostat as part of its extensive under-floor heating portfolio. The new Warmup 4iE Smart WiFi thermostat is a state-of-the-art control system that can work with central heating systems as well as electric and hydronic under-floor heating, giving personalised energy advice based on your specific household needs and letting you manage your heating via the built-in touch screen, as well as a tablet, smartphone or computer. You can also inject your own creative flair to the touch screen by uploading any image, from a family photograph to a work of art, and it's available in a range of finishes including sleek cloud white, which is exclusive to Topps Tiles.

Feature Lisa Hibberd



Warmup 4iE Smart WiFi thermostat, from £199.99, Topps Tiles



## Small but perfectly warmed

If you often feel that your living room needs an extra burst of heat during the winter months, you may want to consider investing in Dimplex's new MicroStove, which is priced at just £69.99. It measures a compact H42cm x W31cm x D22cm, has a smart black cast-iron-effect finish, and offers a heat output of around 1.2kW. As it's electric,

it simply plugs in and fits neatly into any setting, and its small size means it can easily be moved from room to room. It features Optiflame technology, for a realistic flame effect, and can also be used on a flame-only setting.



Save  
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## Smart selling

Sellmyhome.co.uk, one of the UK's leading online estate agents, has launched a free app, which means that vendors can manage the sale of their home from their iPhone. The new app is split into four sections, allowing you to answer questions, organise viewings, collate feedback and manage offers. The number of properties sold online has been steadily increasing, with many people wanting to avoid expensive estate agent fees and confusing processes. Search the App Store to find the app and download for free, or visit [www.sellmyhome.co.uk](http://www.sellmyhome.co.uk) for more information.

## Fact file

A recent survey by Solvite has revealed some interesting statistics about our DIY and decorating habits. When it comes to DIY projects, it seems that men are still doing the lion's share. 61% of women, however, say that they wish they could do more DIY tasks, indicating that some lack the skills but not the motivation. Kirstie Allsopp is Britain's most popular celebrity when it comes to homes and interiors, with one in three women and one in four men claiming that she is their favourite. Solvite is celebrating its 100-year anniversary this year – for more information on its product range visit [www.solvite.co.uk](http://www.solvite.co.uk).



FOR MORE EXPERT ADVICE AND CASE STUDIES GO TO [WWW.YOURHOMEMAGAZINE.CO.UK](http://WWW.YOURHOMEMAGAZINE.CO.UK)





Project managing a build can save you as much as 20%, as long as you're willing to put in the time and effort



# Cut home improvement costs without cutting corners

Save £££

Upgrade your home for less this year with our useful money-saving guide and expert tips

**K**eeping an eye on your budget is vital when improving your home, particularly when money's tight. Whether you're tackling a minor repair or gearing up for a major build, thinking ahead, planning wisely and shopping carefully mean it's easy to make significant savings without compromising the quality of the work.

## 1 DO IT YOURSELF

Doing or project managing a job yourself always costs less than paying someone else to do it. But you'll need to put in time and effort to make those savings, and should only attempt tasks you feel competent to do, and always leave gas and electrical work to qualified professionals. You can reduce your outlay by

buying flat-packed products which are cheaper than ready-assembled. Manufacturers realise that DIY doesn't come naturally to everyone, and have introduced products designed for novices and nervous would-be handymen. Examples include easy-to-use fillers and heavy-duty self-adhesive hooks, allowing you to hang pictures without the hassle of nails or screws.

Brighten up your kitchen with an eye-catching splashback, created with squares of paint



Compact sanitaryware enables you to create a cloakroom or en suite in the tightest space, without having to add an extension. Twyford's Energy range can be installed by a competent DIYer and this corner basin costs £434







Rather than yo-yoing prices, B&Q now offers low cost kitchens all year round backed by a price promise that means it will match the cost of a comparable specification. The IT Cream Gloss Slab kitchen can be fitted by an experienced DIYer, and costs £850 for eight units



Adults and accompanied children can learn new DIY skills at B&Q's workshops, free for B&Q Club members

## 2 LEARN NEW SKILLS

Once upon a time, the only place where you could learn DIY skills was a class at your local adult education centre. These days, you can find out how to do everything from fitting wooden flooring to installing a wet room from the comfort of home, via a myriad of apps and online how-to guides and videos. For starters, try The Ultimate Handyman, Wickes and B&Q. If you'd rather be taught alongside others – and have the opportunity to try out new tools and techniques – try enrolling on one of B&Q's DIY workshops, which are held at 15 of its larger stores across the country. These are free to members of the B&Q Club loyalty scheme, and there are even sessions for children aged 7+ so that they can get involved too.

## 3 WORK WITHIN YOUR HOME'S FOOTPRINT

Look at where wasted space could be put to better use before committing to the more expensive option of adding extra rooms. To expand your kitchen, consider going open-plan by knocking down an internal wall, and think about the viability of, for example, slotting a cloakroom in under the stairs, or turning part of the landing into an office area. Converting existing space is less pricey than extending, so first examine the potential of transforming the loft or garage. Get recommendations when hiring builders and tradesmen and, if possible, choose a small business that isn't required to be VAT registered (with a turnover of under £81,000) so you won't have to pay an additional 20%.

## 4 FAKE IT

It's frustrating when your heart's set on a top-end product or finish which you can't justify or afford. But there are so many good-quality replicas out there that you should be able to source something very similar that doesn't break the bank. Porcelain or ceramic floor tiles are a popular alternative to natural stone, with very good reason – they cost less and, unlike the real thing, require minimal maintenance. A laminate worktop is far more affordable than granite, and self-adhesive frosted window film is virtually indistinguishable from blow-the-budget sandblasted glass. Paint effects are back in fashion, so get creative to transform tired walls and furniture – try applying uniform blocks of colour to make a striking kitchen splashback.

TURN OVER FOR MORE ADVICE ▷



Command self-adhesive hooks and strips from 3M enable you to hang pictures and mirrors with no hassle



Achieve the effect of a wood panelled wall with Peeling Planks wallpaper by Clarke & Clarke, available from Wallpaperdirect for £46 per roll





## Saving money without sacrificing style

We asked Simon Mitchell, founder of Sybarite Architects, [www.syb.co.uk](http://www.syb.co.uk), for his top tips...

- In the kitchen, use standard Ikea carcasses and design your own door fronts, which can be made up by a joiner. This gives the impression of bespoke cupboards.
- Engineered floors are just as good as solid floors. Don't be afraid of using them as an alternative.
- Create canvas-covered wall panels: tightly glue canvas onto MDF, lip the edges on the back and secure with staples. This is inexpensive but brings incredible texture and interest to a room.

The Worx Slider Driver is a versatile cordless screwdriver with a rapid reloadable cartridge, six bits, an LED light and powerful battery, for tackling DIY tasks efficiently

## 5 ONLY BUY WHAT YOU NEED

Work out the exact quantities of materials needed for the job so you don't overspend. Measure rooms and use online calculators that let you know the required amount of paint, wallpaper or tiles. When refurbishing a kitchen or bedroom, don't rip out cupboards or wardrobes without examining the carcasses first, as if they're in good condition, replace the doors rather than the entire units, keeping expenses down. Investing in multi-purpose tools is more cost-effective than buying ones with a single function, or, if you're unlikely to use a particular piece of kit again, hire it instead. Sell any left over materials on eBay, Gumtree or a specialist website.

## 6 GRAB A DISCOUNT

From cashback sites and loyalty cards to money-off vouchers, there's no reason why you should ever have to pay full price again. Online shopping is usually cheaper than buying in-store, and you always have the right to return goods for a full refund. Mega-discount sites Amazon and eBay have huge home improvement sections, and some big supermarkets have branched into DIY – for example Asda has introduced George Home paints and wallpapers. Join Topcashback and Quidco for money back every time you make a purchase from a participating retailer, and sign up to Myvoucher codes for daily coupons and codes. B&Q's Diamond Card gives a discount to over 60s every Wednesday, and buy from your local builder's merchant to get trade prices.

▼ Build a handy workbench for less using a Simply Build It kit which includes screws and heavy duty connectors – the only extra is the timber, which costs around £45 for a 1.2m bench. The kit is also £45, from [www.simplybuildit.co.uk](http://www.simplybuildit.co.uk)

## Useful contacts

- B&Q's site [www.diy.com](http://www.diy.com) is full of tips, guides and videos, and includes paint and wallpaper calculators.
- [www.ultimatehandyman.co.uk](http://www.ultimatehandyman.co.uk) features videos to assist with every DIY dilemma.
- [www.hss.com](http://www.hss.com) and [www.jewson.co.uk](http://www.jewson.co.uk) hire out tools for as long as needed.
- Buy and sell surplus building materials at [www.surplusswap.co.uk](http://www.surplusswap.co.uk).



Brume's decorative window film is a wallet-friendly alternative to frosted glass. This new Log Pile design costs £49 for a 1m x 1.2m panel



# CASE STUDY

*'Saving money doesn't have to mean scrimping on style'*



▲ A dab hand with a paint brush, Gaelle saw her new home as a blank canvas

**G**aelle Collins was so keen to secure her new home that she made an offer on the property before her husband, Will, had even seen it! 'Fortunately, he trusts my judgement but we couldn't hang around as places were being snapped up as soon as they hit the market,' she explains. The pretty Victorian terraced cottage was a big step up from the one-bedroom flat they'd already sold, but they stretched themselves

to buy it and had little left over for home improvements.

As the couple had been living with Gaelle's parents while house-hunting, they were under no pressure to move in straight away. 'We were lucky to have the whole place empty while we re-decorated from top to bottom, and roped in the whole family to help with the work so that we didn't have to pay for a decorator,' says Gaelle.

The existing kitchen units were in reasonable condition but the old slate floor was in a sorry state. However, with the help of some restorer and lots of elbow grease, it came up like new for just £12. Needing new appliances, Gaelle and Will negotiated a substantial discount, including free installation, in a local electrical store, where they also picked up



▲ The exterior of the pretty Victorian cottage needed little attention, apart from a fresh coat of gloss paint to spruce up the front door



their best bargain – an ex-display fridge for half of its £400 price tag.

A big selling point of the house was the living/dining room with enough space for two sofas, bought in a sale, a large dining table and chairs and an old pine dresser rescued from Gaelle's parents' garage. After painstakingly restoring it with a £25 pot of Annie Sloan chalk paint, she added some £1 ceramic knobs from Amazon to give it a modern twist. A junk shop coffee table was given a similar treatment.

Having lavished lots of TLC on the house, Gaelle and Will are now saving up to tackle the next big project which is the scruffy garden. In the meantime, it's had a budget facelift. 'My only expense was a can of Cuprinol paint which totally transformed the old garden gate and fence, which will eventually be replaced,' says Gaelle.

◀ Inexpensively decorated in pale, neutral shades, the cosy living room includes a pair of sofas and a second-hand coffee table, which Gaelle lovingly revamped. The newly-renovated hand-me-down dresser takes pride of place at the far end



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# Property know-how with George

This month property developer, architect and presenter of Channel 4's *Amazing Spaces*, **George Clarke**, looks at some affordable home improvements that will help you sell your home in 2015

If you're thinking about selling your home you want to do the best you can for it to stand out amongst the property crowd. Even though the market is much improved than it was during the recession and house prices have bounced back in most areas to pre-2007 levels, you still want to get the best price you can if you want to sell up and move.

There are a number of things you can do to make your home more appealing to a potential purchaser, most of these are really easy and affordable, others might take a bit more time, effort and money, but they are all well worth doing because a small amount of investment can either make your home sell quickly or for a better price or even both!

Here are my 10 top tips for making worthwhile improvements to your home:

**1** A tired and drab kitchen is one major thing to put off a potential buyer. Especially if you're trying to sell a family home an ugly and unhygienic kitchen will put off any family with style and taste. These days there really is no excuse for a grim kitchen when a new kitchen can be bought and installed in the most affordable way imaginable. I'm still amazed at how affordable some new kitchens can be today.

**2** Investing in a new bathroom suite would definitely be my number two home improvement. Anyone looking to buy a home will find a new bathroom suite that has been nicely tiled and decorated really appealing. Yes, kitchens and bathrooms can be one of the larger improvements to invest in, but don't underestimate the effect that they have on potential home buyers. If you make the right choice and don't over invest you will definitely get a return on your hard work.

**3** Replacing your old boiler with a new, more energy-efficient one and even considering upgrading your single glazed

windows to double-glazing are both really attractive home improvements. Both are big selling points as they make the home more energy-efficient, but also make the home more comfortable in terms of heat, reducing coldness and draughts and making your home quieter.

**4** Give your home a coat of paint both inside and outside. This is one of the easiest jobs to do and you can even do it yourself. People genuinely notice a freshly painted home the second they walk through the door. On that note there is nothing smarter than a newly painted front door with new ironmongery.

**5** If there are any rooms that have tired-looking carpets in them then have them changed. With a bit of research and shopping around you can find the most affordable carpets that look great. Don't go for anything too funky or too personal as this can have the negative effect of actually putting people off! You don't want to live there anymore so stick to simple, neutral colours. Personally I avoid anything bland like cream or beige and go for colours that have a bit of depth like shades of bluish grey, which are neutral but cool.

**6** If you have any exposed timber floors think about giving them a makeover if they have seen better days. You can hire a sander for very little money and giving your timber floors a light sanding is something you can easily do yourself, but do make sure you do this before decorating any rooms because the dust gets everywhere. Reseal the floors with oil that gives the timber a natural look. Avoid varnish as it can make your beautifully sanded floor look like it has a plastic finish.

**7** Lighting is such an important part of a good 21st-century home so make sure



you make an effort to change all of your LED bulbs and replace any tired looking lamp shades or light fittings. This is more important than you could possibly imagine especially if you are trying to sell your home during the autumn or winter seasons when it will be dark in the evenings when people finish work and want to make an evening viewing. They will obviously want to make a second viewing during the day, but first impressions do last.

**8** Styling your home in the right way is as important as home improvement work. Remove any old and tired furniture, particularly any furniture that is over-sized and makes any rooms in your house feel smaller. There are enough affordable furniture companies for your home to look really smart.

**9** Give any outside spaces such as front and back gardens, roof terraces or balconies a bit of TLC. This is more manual work and involves lots of cleaning and tidying up, but first impressions last and a grim front garden isn't great.

**10** When you know you have someone coming to view with an estate agent make sure you make an effort to clean the place, declutter, buy flowers, light a few perfumed candles to make the space smell clean and fresh and even pop on a pot of fresh coffee. Honestly, it makes a difference! Good luck!

■ For more tips and advice from George, check out his website at [www.georgeclarke.co.uk](http://www.georgeclarke.co.uk)



# 15 ways to improve your home *on a shoestring*



Tighten those purse strings with our guide to cost-cutting decorating, shopping and home improvement ideas

**W**e all love to refresh our homes and give them a new look, and the new year is an ideal time to do this. If your finances are still recovering after the added expense of the festive season, however, it can be tricky to splash out on expensive decorating tools and materials. Think outside the box though, and there are plenty of ways in which you can update your home without spending too much. Check out our expert advice for some great ways to save...

## 1 CHOOSE VALUE PAINT

With so many paint brands available, it's sometimes difficult to know which to choose, and, if you're a keen decorator, even buying enough paint for just a couple of rooms can end up costing a lot. We're big fans of Wickes' chalky flat matt emulsion – an ultra-flat paint which absorbs light and helps to hide any imperfections for a rich, luxurious finish. And the best news is, it's only £7.49 per 2.5 litre tin, a huge saving when compared to some other paint brands.



Image istock



## 2 RE-USE AND RECYCLE

Unleash your creative side and make use of something which might have otherwise ended up in landfill. There are endless opportunities when it comes to building your own furniture, or updating an item which has seen better days. If you have got your hands on an unwanted wooden pallet, for example, see how to transform it into a stunning headboard by visiting our website [www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk](http://www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk) and heading to the craft projects section.

## 3 SWAP SKILLS WITH A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOUR

If the thought of making curtains sends you into a spin, why not make a deal with a friend or neighbour? If one of your friends is an expert with a sewing machine and you're a bit of a whizz at woodwork, why not swap skills so that you can both benefit from some handmade interior accessories?



## 4 MAKE YOUR OWN CURTAINS

Window dressings can be expensive, so if yours are in need of an update, why not make them yourself? You don't need to be an expert seamstress, especially to make a simple blind, and practise makes perfect! We love Merrick & Day's website, which offers a wide range of curtain and blind making essentials, including linings, tracks and heading tapes, plus simple kits to help you make your own blinds. There's also a selection of fantastic books, for all the inspiration and advice you need, plus projects from making a simple Roman blind to more complex curtain designs.



## 5 UPDATE FLOORING FOR LESS

New flooring can make a huge difference to any room, so if you're looking for a smart update without breaking the bank, check out your local DIY store for a good range of value options. We love Wickes' range of bargain buys, which includes this beech-effect design. It's hard-wearing, so will resist the wear and tear of day-to-day living, and as an added bonus, it's under £5 per square metre.



## 6 LOOK OUT FOR BARGAIN FABRICS

Whether you're a keen seamstress, or just a beginner, buying fabrics for your home can be an expensive business. Shop carefully, however, and you could save £££s. Look out for discontinued designs which may be reduced, and end of roll remnants. You might be lucky enough to have a local market or fabric shop which offers good prices, or why not pay a visit to one of our favourite fabric wonderlands from the list below?

### ● IKEA

With its ever-changing range of fabrics and prices from as little as £1.50 per metre, Ikea is definitely worth a visit if you're on the hunt for fabric.

### ● WALTHAMSTOW MARKET, EAST LONDON

Take a stroll through this busy market from Tuesday to Saturday, where you'll find a range of stalls with fabrics from just £2 per metre.

### ● EDINBURGH FABRICS

Close to Princes Street, Edinburgh Fabrics stocks a wide range of haberdashery and fabrics.

### ONLINE

#### [www.stonefabrics.co.uk](http://www.stonefabrics.co.uk)

From fleece and faux fur to lace and linen, there's something for everyone at Stone Fabrics, which is based in Devon. You can filter your selection by cost, and if you're looking for a bargain, prices start from just £5.

#### [www.eternalmaker.com](http://www.eternalmaker.com)

This fabulous website is one of our favourites – if you're trying to save money then check out the 'last chance to buy' section for bolt ends at discounted prices. You can also sign up for a subscription to the 'fat quarter club' – you'll receive six fat quarters of the newest fabrics, quarterly!

#### [www.fancymoon.co.uk](http://www.fancymoon.co.uk)

You'll find a whole host of fabrics at Fancy Moon, from plain cottons to quirky patterns, plus there's a sale and clearance section featuring some great bargains.



Beech-effect laminate flooring,  
from £4.75 per sq m, Wickes



## 7 LOOK OUT FOR END-OF-LINE PRODUCTS

If you're decorating a room, shop around carefully before you purchase materials. For example, if you're wallpapering a room, check out the bargain bins at your local DIY store – you may find something suitable with prices slashed. Don't forget though, that when buying more than one roll of wallpaper you should aim to use rolls with the same batch number, to avoid any slight difference in colour. You'll often find discontinued designs at bargain prices, but make sure that you buy enough, as usually, once they're gone, they're gone!

Arthouse Eco Songbird wallpaper, £13.23 per roll, B&Q



## 8 USE LOYALTY CARDS AND BOOST SCHEMES

There are now so many loyalty card and points schemes, including Tesco, Morrisons, Nectar and Boots Advantage. Look out for extra points offers on your everyday essentials, and make the most of these to boost your balance. And don't forget special periods where you can double or even triple your points value when you redeem it on certain items. Sign up to the mailing or email list to receive notifications of all offers. Tesco and Morrisons, for example, also offer discounts on fuel when you have spent a certain amount or earned enough points.

## 9 ENROL ON A COURSE

One of the best ways to learn new skills is to enrol on a course. What you choose is up to you – there are hundreds available at various venues across the country. One of our favourites is West Dean College, nestled in the sensational setting of the 6,400-acre West Dean estate in the South Downs. It offers a wonderful selection of short courses, in a wide range of subject areas including basketmaking, furniture making and gardening. Prices aren't cheap, and courses range in length, but your skills will save you money when it comes to updating your home, and, who knows, could even be the start of a new business venture. Check out your local community centre or library for details of what's going on locally – why not join a painting or drawing class to practise your skills while also making new friends?



## 10 CLEAN CARPETS INSTEAD OF REPLACING

Replacing carpets throughout your home can be expensive, but the difference a good clean can make is fantastic. Carpet care expert, Rug Doctor, has devised a carpet cleaning programme which includes deep carpet cleaners – both for sale and rental – and a range of cleaning products designed to help keep carpets, household and car upholstery in tip-top condition.



We asked Paul Fildes, marketing manager at Rug Doctor, to expose some of the UK's carpet cleaning myths...

### ● CLEANING YOUR CARPET TOO OFTEN IS BAD FOR IT

Carpets need to be kept fresh and clean with as much of the bounce and colour that they had when they were new. You should vacuum clean your carpet as often as possible and deep clean it at least twice a year. Vacuuming will remove the surface dirt, while a wet extraction deep clean will remove airborne contaminants that have penetrated it like road dust, pollen, fungus and bacteria.

### ● WET CLEANING MAY SHRINK MY CARPET

It won't if done properly. Carpets that have been fitted properly will not be affected by wet extraction cleaning. Some types of carpets such as wool, that have not been secured with carpet grippers, can shrink when over wetted or exposed to extreme heat. When cleaning wool carpets only lukewarm water should be used with a dedicated carpet detergent. This will do a thorough and effective job and will not damage your carpet in any way. The Independent Carpet and Rug Institute recommends wet extraction as the most effective way to keep carpets in their cleanest, freshest and best condition.

### ● I DON'T HAVE TO CLEAN MY CARPET BECAUSE IT HAS BUILT-IN STAIN RESISTANCE

Although carpet shield-type coatings work in preventing some stains from penetrating the carpet fibres, dirt still gets trapped deep down in the carpet pile. Stain resistance also isn't permanent, while heavy foot traffic around kitchen entrances and hallways can actually drive greasy dirt deeper into the pile. In this instance, a product such as a High Foot Traffic Cleaner as a pre-treatment to machine deep cleaning, is needed to lift soil out of your carpet by breaking the bonds of embedded dirt and grease.

### ● I ONLY NEED TO DEEP CLEAN MY CARPET IF THERE IS A SPOT OR STAIN

Dirt will build up over time even if there are no spills or stains. A regular once over with a vacuum is necessary and will mean less dirt builds up on the surface but it doesn't remove the deep down dirt. If you have pets, it's still advisable to wet clean the carpet at least two or three times a year, as it will help to eliminate odours and remove fur, oil and protein stains.

Rug Doctor carpet cleaning rental machines can be found in B&Q, Homebase, Morrisons, Tesco, Asda, Johnsons the Cleaners, The Range and selected branches of The Cooperative. Rental prices start from £21.99 for 24 hours. To find your nearest location visit [www.rugdoctor.co.uk](http://www.rugdoctor.co.uk).







Image istock

## 12 SCOUR SECOND-HAND SHOPS

Instead of buying new, don't forget to check out local second-hand shops and charity furniture stores to see what you can find. Whether you're looking for something specific or just browsing, you may come across a real gem. We're big fans of Emmaus, a charity group which supports those who have experienced homelessness and social exclusion. Our local shop offers a wide range of second-hand furniture and knick-knacks, with all money made ploughed back in Emmaus communities, paying for food, accommodation and essential items for those in need. For more information visit [www.emmaus.org.uk/shop](http://www.emmaus.org.uk/shop).

## 13 LOAN AND SWAP ITEMS WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

A furniture swap can be a great way to update your home – have a chat with friends to see if they have any items lurking in the garage that they want to get rid of. You never know, they might come across something that they are hanging on to but know they will never use, and it could find the perfect home with you. They may even be happy for you to give the item a facelift, especially if you have something that you can swap in return.

## 11 CHECK OUT DISCOUNT STORES

If you're heading out on a bargain hunt, make sure you check out any discount stores such as Home Bargains, which can be found on the high street as well as retail and outlet parks. As well as offering a wide range of branded food and toiletries at discounted prices, you'll often find a selection of furniture and home accessories. Stock tends to change on a frequent basis, so you may need to visit regularly to keep an eye on the best deals, but they're well worth a look if you're looking for low-cost home buys.



Image Sainsbury's



## 14 TRY SUPERMARKET HOMEWARES

Although it's nice to splash out on something a bit pricier for your home every now and then, most of us need to keep costs down as much as possible. Over the past few years many of the supermarkets and department stores have really upped their game when it comes to homewares, widening their ranges, increasing quality and lowering prices. Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's and Morrisons all offer a good selection, from clocks to cushions, and, as you'll often find similar trends across all stores, you can mix and match items to create the perfect look for you.



Image LASSCO

## 15 VISIT SALVAGE YARDS

Scouring reclamation and salvage yards has become a popular pastime over the past few years, and if you have the time to trawl and rummage, you could come across just what you've been looking for at a great price.

● **FAGINS ANTIQUES** - [www.faginsantiques.com](http://www.faginsantiques.com)

Based near Exeter, this large premises offers antique furniture, architectural antiques and reclaimed building materials.

● **LASSCO** - [www.lassco.co.uk](http://www.lassco.co.uk)

With two outlets in London and one in Oxfordshire, Lassco is a treasure trove for all sorts of furniture and materials.

● **COX'S ARCHITECTURAL SALVAGE** - [www.coxsarchitectural.co.uk](http://www.coxsarchitectural.co.uk)

With 123,500 square feet of covered warehouse and half an acre outdoors, this large salvage yard is great for old doors and handles, beams, flooring and brassware.

● **WELLS RECLAMATION** - [www.wellsreclamation.com](http://www.wellsreclamation.com)

Near Glastonbury in Somerset, Wells Reclamation offers everything from flooring to radiators.



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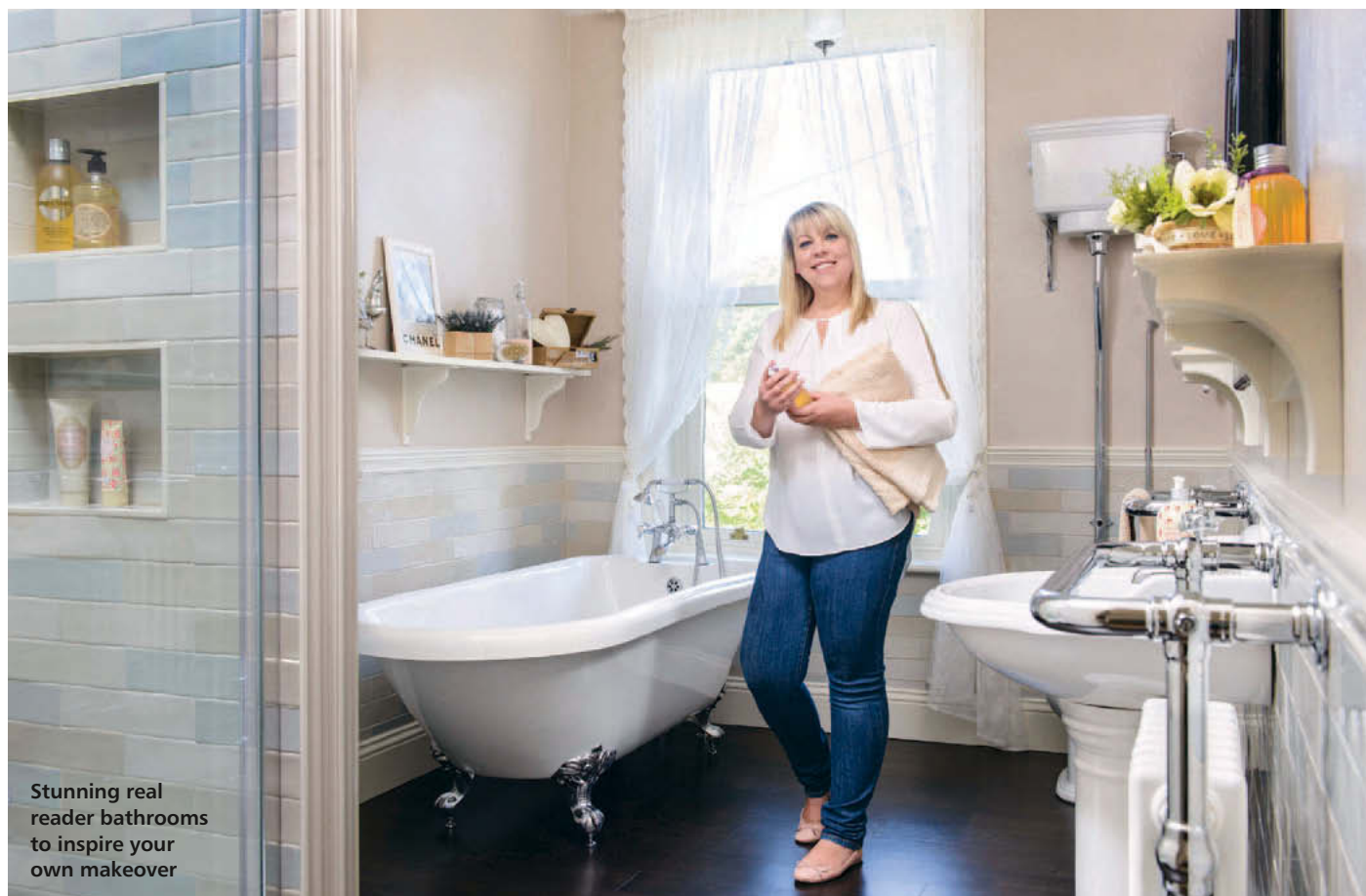
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The Edible Garden Show will be bursting into bloom at Alexandra Palace from 20th-22nd March alongside a fantastic new lifestyle event, Good Life Live, and we've got 25 pairs of tickets up for grabs.



The UK's ultimate 'grow your own' event is introducing exciting new features and attractions to its popular 'plot to plate' format, while Good Life Live will showcase a broader range of outdoor living experiences and adventures. Visit [www.theediblegardenshow.co.uk](http://www.theediblegardenshow.co.uk) for more information.

**ENTER ONLINE!** Visit [www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk](http://www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk)

**TEXT ENTRY OPTION!** Text YHGIVE2 followed by a space then your name and address to 87080. Texts cost 50p.\*\*



☎ 0901 819 0682\* Calls cost 26p per min

## Win tickets to The National Homebuilding & Renovating Show



The National Homebuilding & Renovating Show returns to the NEC in Birmingham this year from 26th – 29th March. It's the place to go for expert advice on eco living, architectural design, interior design and financial and planning permission issues. At the heart of the show, you'll find free seminars and thousands of new, innovative products from over 500 local and national specialist suppliers to help you make the most of your project.

We have 50 pairs of tickets to give away to lucky readers.

For more details about the show visit

[www.national.homebuildingshow.co.uk](http://www.national.homebuildingshow.co.uk).

**ENTER ONLINE!** Visit [www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk](http://www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk)

**TEXT ENTRY OPTION!** Text YHGIVE3 followed by a space then your name and address to 87080. Texts cost 50p.\*\*

50  
lucky  
winners

☎ 0901 819 0683\* Calls cost 26p per min

Image Steve Burden



## Win a luxury showering package from Roman

Leading UK shower designer and manufacturer, Roman, has an extensive range of products to satisfy all of your showering needs. Their shower collection and new Roman at Home accessories are guaranteed to transform any bathroom into a spa-like sanctuary.

Roman is offering one lucky *Your Home* reader the chance to win a luxury showering package. The prize includes a stunning, space-saving Lumin8 Quadrant Shower Enclosure, Shower Tray, including Roman's Shimmer Finishes to add a bit of sparkle, a handy shower basket, a luxury Egyptian cotton bathrobe and a towel bale in the colour of your choice.

For more information on Roman's luxurious range of products please visit [www.roman-showers.com](http://www.roman-showers.com) and [www.romanathome.com](http://www.romanathome.com). To request a brochure please email [brochures@roman-showers.com](mailto:brochures@roman-showers.com) or call 01325 311318.



1  
fantastic  
prize

**Terms and Conditions:** The prize must be claimed by 30th September 2015.

**ENTER ONLINE!** Visit [www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk](http://www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk)  
**TEXT ENTRY OPTION!** Text YHGIVE4 followed by a space then your name and address to 87080. Texts cost 50p.\*\*

☎ **0901 819 0684\*** Calls cost 26p per min

## Win a Spontex cleaning kit

Would you like spring cleaning to be less of a chore? With over 80 years of know-how, Spontex has developed a range of clever cleaning products to make cleaning better, quicker and easier! They're dedicated to ensuring every product is made to the highest quality and with an extra 'trick' to help lighten the housework.

We're giving away 15 home cleaning kits worth over £50 each. The kits include an Easy Max Mop, bucket and a selection of cloths and scourers designed to tackle every job in the house.



To find out more about their complete range of innovative, high quality products and to purchase online visit [www.spontex.co.uk](http://www.spontex.co.uk).  
**ENTER ONLINE!** Visit [www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk](http://www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk)  
**TEXT ENTRY OPTION!** Text YHGIVE5 followed by a space then your name and address to 87080. Texts cost 50p.\*\*

15  
great  
prizes

☎ **0901 819 0685\*** Calls cost 26p per min

## Win a home ventilation system



*Your Home* has teamed up with ventilation manufacturer EnviroVent to offer one lucky reader the chance to win a Mr Venty ECO2 Loft Unit, plus installation, worth £1,000. Mr Venty ECO2 Loft Units are renowned for gently ventilating the home to reduce humidity and prevent condensation, damp and mould, creating a healthier indoor environment. These energy efficient condensation control units fit into the loft and are suitable for most homes.

For more information visit [www.envirovent.com](http://www.envirovent.com).

**Terms and Conditions:** Winner must be the home owner.

**ENTER ONLINE!** Visit [www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk](http://www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk)  
**TEXT ENTRY OPTION!** Text YHGIVE6 followed by a space then your name and address to 87080. Texts cost 50p.\*\*

1  
lucky  
winner

☎ **0901 819 0686\*** Calls cost 26p per min

**To enter:** Phone or text your name and address for the prize you would like to win or enter online at [www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk](http://www.yourhomemagazine.co.uk). Phone and text entries must reach us by midnight on 28th February 2015, and three working days later for online entries. \*Calls cost 26p per minute and last approx. 2 minutes. Calls from mobiles may vary. \*\*Texts cost 50p plus your standard network charge. This is not a subscription service. Lines close at midnight on 28th February 2015 and three working days later for online entries. Winners will be selected at random from all correct entries received after the closing date. If you call to enter after the advertised closing date you will not be entered into the competition, but you may still be charged. **RULES:** 1) Hubert Burda Media UK may use your details to let you know about other products and services we think may be of interest to you. If you do not want offers from us, please end your text message with BURDA NO. 2) The competition is open to anyone in the UK over the age of 18, apart from employees of Hubert Burda Media UK, Spoke and any other companies involved in the competition. 3) Unless otherwise stated prizes include delivery to the UK mainland but not installation or removal of existing appliances or products. 4) No cash alternative is available and products will not be changed or upgraded, but should the prize become unavailable *Your Home* has the right to offer an alternative prize. 5) Only one online entry per giveaway per person. 6) Winners must be willing to participate in publicity if required. 7) Proof of postage is not proof of receipt. 8) The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. 9) Unless otherwise stated prizes must be claimed within six months. 10) Holidays and breaks are subject to availability at the time of booking and unless otherwise stated do not include travel, insurance or extras. 11) Reproduction of this competition in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Hubert Burda Media UK reserves the right to prosecute any offending parties. 12) Allow 8-10 weeks from selection for completion. 13) Entrants are asked to provide their full name and address when entering the competition. SP: Spoke - 0333 202 3390.





# Shopping guide

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Photograph shows the Bellingham 12SE, a Defra-exempt stove that can be used for wood-burning in Smoke Control Areas.



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Discover the latest eco-friendly buys and advice this month

## WORK IT OUT

With energy bills continuing to rise, installing solar panels on your roof at home is a great investment for the future, but it's also an expensive one. Take the guesswork out of finding out how much money you could save with The Eco Experts' new online solar calculator. This clever device allows you to type in your postcode, find your house using Google Earth and input factors such as the direction your house faces and the slant of the roof to work out how much you could save compared to the initial buying and installation costs. If you're considering fitting solar panels, visit [www.theecoexperts.co.uk](http://www.theecoexperts.co.uk).

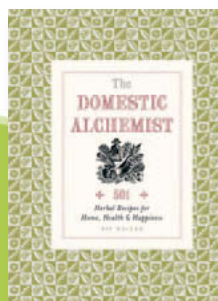


Image iStock

The Domestic Alchemist  
by Pip Waller, £19.99,  
Leaping Hare Press

## Become a domestic goddess

With the annual spring clean just around the corner, the launch of The Domestic Alchemist by Pip Waller couldn't come at a better time. In an effort to get our homes gleaming it's sometimes easy to forget that all of those cleaning products can be damaging to the environment and our health. The Domestic Alchemist includes over 500 recipes for natural, non-toxic cleaning products and health and beauty remedies to get us concocting our own eco-friendly potions and lotions. From zesty lemon furniture polish to a 'deep sleep' room spray, this is the perfect buy for someone who's looking to reduce the amount of harmful chemicals they use in their day-to-day life and have a bit of fun in the process.



## Hi ho silver lining

If you're looking for a quick, eco-friendly way to warm up your home without the increased energy bill, take a look at Radflek radiator reflectors. The laminated aluminium foil reflectors can simply be clipped onto the back of your radiator to reflect up to 95% of the wasted heat energy that would normally escape through your wall. They're also covered in a long-lasting coating to stop oxidation and once they're in, you'd never know they were there if it wasn't for the difference in your heating bill.

Radiator reflectors, from  
£21.99 for a pack of three  
120cm x 60cm sheets, Radflek



Your Home readers can receive 20% off their order using the code YHFB2015. Just visit [www.radflek.com](http://www.radflek.com) or call 020 7828 8085 to claim your discount before 28th February 2015.

## Eco Expert

We spoke to **Tori Teague** at **therM** about the benefits of modern heating controls.



'A report published in 2013 by the University of Salford revealed that homeowners can save up to 40% on energy bills if they have heating controls throughout their homes. There are a number of heating controls on the market, including the recently launched therM, which is simple to install yourself, easy to use and even controls your hot water too. Heating controls with apps for smartphones and tablets mean you can alter your heating or water temperature even when you're not at home. This is great news for the environment and for your pocket, and because they're so simple to use, it's an easy way to do your bit for the environment.' Visit [www.thermcontrols.com](http://www.thermcontrols.com) for more information.

## WEBSITE WATCH... [www.inthetrees.co.uk](http://www.inthetrees.co.uk)

Spruce up your home for the new year with some sustainable, handmade furniture and accessories from eco-friendly company, In The Trees. All of its products are made from wood sourced from sustainable forests, with some also using natural hemp and rattan, a material that is easy to grow and harvest and so provides a sustainable income to poorer farmers. Find everything from mango wood kitchen utensils to rattan garden planters to add some green style to your home.





# beauty

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