

# your home

SEP/OCT 2017

*Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers*

## KILL THE clutter



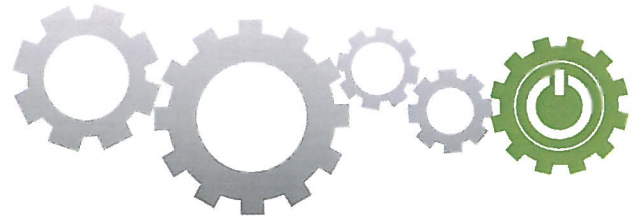
There's a reason REALTORS® always advise home sellers to remove all clutter when selling their homes: The difference is remarkable.

The clutter-free home often looks like a new one entirely, and homeowners even wonder how their home could look that good.

You don't have to wait to sell your home to make it look better. Plus, clutter can physically and mentally stress us out. By breaking your decluttering down into five-minute sessions, you can slowly conquer your clutter. Leo Babauta of Zen Habits offers some ways to start:

- ➔ Designate a spot for incoming papers, and don't put them anywhere but that spot until you can sort and file them.
- ➔ Clear one area and designate it your "no-clutter" zone. There is one rule for that area: Nothing can be placed there that's not actually in use. Everything must be put away. Once you have that, expand to more areas.
- ➔ Pick up five things and find places for them. These should be things you actually use, but which don't have a good spot to live.
- ➔ Pull everything out of a drawer, evaluate it and sort it into three piles: stuff that really goes in the drawer, stuff that belongs elsewhere and stuff to ditch.
- ➔ Create a "maybe" box. When you're organizing, you often know exactly which items you want to keep and which you can trash or donate. But sometimes there are items you can't trash, and yet you're not sure what to do with them. Put them in the "maybe" box and pull it out every six months to re-evaluate.
- ➔ Keep it going: After you've decluttered, don't get tempted to buy new things. Instead, create a 30-day list and put any non-essential items you want to buy on it along with the date. If an item has sat on the list for 30 days and you still want to buy it, you can.

## SAVE BY SAVING



You don't have to overhaul your home to make it more energy efficient. And you also don't have to guess at which projects offer the best ROI:

- ➔ ENERGY STAR®-certified windows can shrink energy bills by an average of 12 percent
- ➔ Fix common water leaks to reduce energy bills by 10 percent
- ➔ Turning your thermostat back 7 to 10 degrees from where you normally set it for eight hours a day (while you're at work or while you sleep) reduces your heating and cooling costs by 10 percent a year
- ➔ Reducing the target temperature of your water heater can save 3 to 5 percent of energy costs



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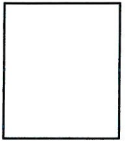


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## TO D.I.Y. OR NOT TO D.I.Y.?

Doing home projects yourself can help you save money, help you get to know your house better and fill you with pride at a job well done with your own two hands. But there are circumstances where a pro is the way to go. Neighborly, a community of home service experts, draws the line on three common projects:

### SAFE TO D.I.Y.

### CALL IN A PRO

	<p><b>Patching drywall:</b> Homeowners can easily cover nail holes in their walls. Make sure the wall is clean and spackle the hole. Sand the spackle down and clean the area with a damp sponge.</p>	<p><b>Too much spackle or too big of a hole:</b> If a hole in the drywall is larger than a nail hole or has been spackled repeatedly previously, it's best for an expert to repair the damage.</p>
	<p><b>Cleaning the air conditioner condenser unit:</b> Cleaning is essential for an efficient and healthy air conditioning system. Check the filters and change it when necessary. This will ensure the air in the home is clean and the unit isn't working any harder than it must.</p>	<p><b>Repairing or replacing any HVAC unit:</b> HVAC units are technical, use a large amount of voltage electricity and require the use of specialized tools, so these jobs are best tackled by the pros.</p>
	<p><b>Repairing plumbing hardware:</b> Items like seals, chains or clogs can become faulty or quit working, but they can be easily replaced. If the toilet feels wobbly or the seat comes loose, there are D.I.Y. kits available at local hardware stores that include necessary tools and parts to repair.</p>	<p><b>Remodeling renovations that require plumbing alterations:</b> Permits are often needed to move or expand plumbing. A professional will be familiar with the local handling of permits and building codes. A plumber will examine the current plumbing to ensure connections are done properly and correctly.</p>

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