

THE RISE OF THE BASEMENT

Top tips for creating a beautiful space down below

(BPT) - With fewer homes for sale and record returns on remodeling investments, more homeowners are reclaiming their lower levels and transforming their basements.

What's driving this trend? A tight housing market, for one thing. With houses at a premium, more homeowners are inspired to reclaim their unused space and expand their living area.

A smart, affordable upgrade

Updating your lower level is a sound investment in your home. Remodeling magazine's 2016 Cost vs. Value Report put the average basement remodel at \$61,303, with a 70.3 percent payback - a far better investment return than adding a bathroom or garage.

Props for your property value

Depending on local regulations, the additional space can often be added to your home's total square footage, making your market listing more appealing to buyers and potentially increasing your property value.

To recoup the most from your remodeling efforts, make sure your design and decorating choices are attractive and functional - not too quirky or customized.

Look up, look down: Banish water all around

Before you begin making decorating choices, tackle any needed repairs, including waterproofing your lower level. It's a good idea to seal your walls



and floors first, and important enough to hire a professional.

And since below-grade spaces are usually cool, humid and prone to water damage, consider investing in a good dehumidifier and choosing moisture-resistant products.

Elevate your ceiling style

Ugly or damaged ceilings can ruin the look of your newly updated basement space, so take steps to repair or replace your ceiling. Plaster any cracks and replace yellowing tiles.

If you're updating the ceiling, look for products from companies like Armstrong Ceilings that are specially treated to resist the growth of mold and mildew. From there, the sky - or the ceiling - is the limit. Savvy design choices, like coffered ceilings, or wood planks add style and the results are easier to achieve than most people think.

Flooring: Think warm and dry

Make sure your flooring choices stand

up to moisture, too. Patch any cracks in the concrete floor and consider adding a subfloor if the surface is uneven.

Many homeowners gravitate to the warmth and soundproofing effect of carpeting in basements. Low-pile or Berber carpets resist wear and are inexpensive options. A moisture-barrier pad between the carpet pad and the carpet adds another level of water resistance and reassurance.

Now is a great time to finish your basement. You'll enjoy the added living space, and likely realize a healthy return on your investment.



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RENOVATION SAVVY

Working with professional designers pay off

Although winter is not usually the best time to buy or sell a home, today's hot housing market is changing the rules. Whether you are getting your home in shape to sell or renovating to stay in place, working with professional designers is a good way to get started.

A consultation with an architectural designer is definitely a smart way to start bigger projects, such as an addition. But even smaller renovations can benefit from an architectural consultation if the project involves moving structural walls, creating a basement apartment or a new rear deck. These projects require working drawings and approved building permits, which an architectural designer can arrange. An



initial consultation will cost about \$75. Fees for the design process will vary according to the scope of the project.

Once you have the drawings and permits in hand, you can gather quotes from contractors to complete the job.

Another professional that can help move your project along is an interior designer. Booking a consultation early in the process will ensure that the final space has the look you want. An interior designer can give you an overall game plan, or work with you every step

of the way, shopping for materials and furniture and providing fabric, paint and flooring swatches. A consultation - usually about \$175 - will provide all the information you need to create the interior of your dreams.

Designers also provide you with the tools you need to get accurate quotes from the trade professionals who will ultimately bring those ideas to life.

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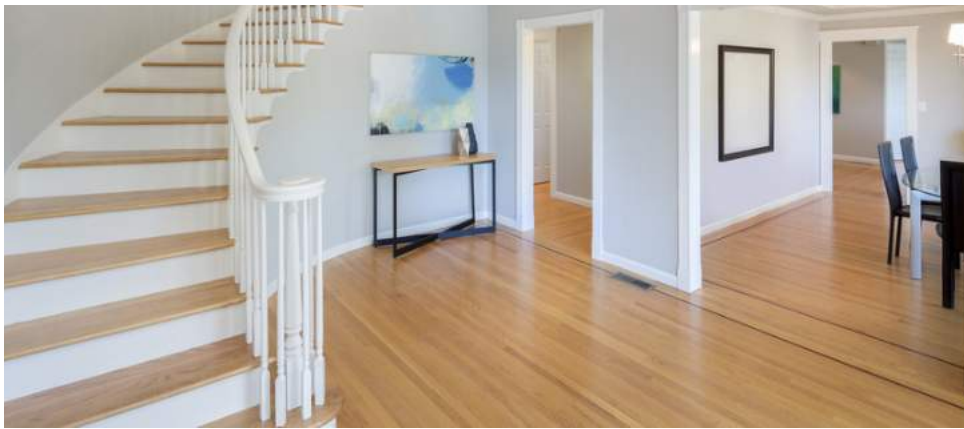
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FLOORING FACTS

The largest area of your home deserves special attention

Flooring occupies the most real estate in your home's interior and choosing new flooring is an important design statement. Here are a few of the flooring trends to look for in 2017:

HARDWOOD

Always a classic and classy choice, hardwood offers endless design choices. Colours are trending either dark or light with not much in between. Blonde and natural light colours are gaining in popularity with the advantage of making a room seem bigger and brighter and ease of maintenance. Dark colours remain popular but tend to close in a room and show the dust and dirt. Grey tones continue to be hugely popular and will dominate colour trends once again in 2017. Parquet and herringbone patterns are also trending. Matte and satin finishes are more popular than gloss and plank sizes are wider and longer.

TILE

The trends in tile also lean towards

wider and longer in 2017. Large format tiles are being used in rooms of all sizes to create a clean, modern look with fewer grout lines. As with hardwood, grey tones top the colour choices. The biggest trend is to tiles with the look of feel of other finishes - wood, brick, marble, and cement, and metallic.

LAMINATE

Laminate continues to be a popular choice by both homeowners and designers, with the designs and styles for 2017 making it ever more difficult to tell it apart from the real thing. Today's finishes are more realistic, stylish and durable than ever before. Add to that the ease of installation and maintenance, versatility (laminates can go where hardwood isn't recommended, like basements and bathrooms) and a lower price tag and it's easy to explain the popularity. Like hardwood, grey is a popular colour with blonde and natural gaining momentum and expected to increase in popularity in coming years.

UP ON THE ROOF

If your roof is 15 years or older, it is time to consider replacing it before expensive repairs are required. Here are a few things to keep in mind when choosing the right style for your home:

- Lighter colours will simplify the lines of your home, making it look larger.
- Darker colours provide a contrast to the colours of doors, windows and trim and architectural features.
- Complementary colours will highlight architectural elements.
- Consider extending the life of your new roof by having a roof ice melting system installed to protect it from winter damage and ice damming.
- Redoing the roof is the ideal opportunity to add or replace skylights.
- Since gutters are crucial to the good health of your roof, this is the time to repair or replace them if required.

A new roof is a lasting investment that will provide protection and comfort for years to come.

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