

MIKE'S Tool Box

Mike Forner's Home Services:

My mission is to treat your home with the same passion and attention to detail that I use on my own home.



10 Energy-Efficient Home Improvements That Save Money



As energy costs rise, you might be looking for ways to be more energy-efficient without selling your youngest child for the money. Here are eight money-smart moves to consider when making home renovations.

Anything "Low Flow": In addition to saving water, low-flow fixtures will save you more than a buck or two. Low-flow fixtures can reduce your home water consumption by as much as 50 percent and can save you up to \$145 per year.

Insulation: Insulation keeps your house warm in the winter, cool in the summer and can reduce heating and cooling costs by as much as 20 percent.

Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs (CFL'S): Fluorescent bulbs last 4 to 10 times longer than regular light bulbs. While they're more expensive initially, you'll save on your monthly energy bill.

A Clean Dishwasher: Modern dishwashers use an average of 5.8 gallons of water per cycle, while older models can use as much as 10 gallons per cycle. You could save money every year in energy costs by making this upgrade.

Ceiling Fans: A ceiling fan will not only help keep your home at a comfortable temperature while reducing your energy bill throughout the year, but it also circulates air that would not otherwise be circulated.

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Stay tuned for next month's newsletter!

Upcoming Events In September That Might Interest You...



* Labor Day On Monday, September 2nd, 2013.



* The First Day of Autumn (Autumnal Equinox) on Sunday, September 22nd, 2013.



* University of Michigan Home Football Schedule for September 2013:

When: 09/07/2012

Who: Central Michigan

Where: Michigan Stadium, Ann Arbor, MI

What Time: 3:30pm E.T.

When: 09/14/2012

Who: Notre Dame

Where: Michigan Stadium, Ann Arbor, MI

What Time: 8:00pm E.T.

Check the Big Ten Network's [Gamefinder](#) to determine where to find a game in your channel lineup.

*Come check out the Sunday Artisan Market located in the Historic Kerrytown District in Downtown Ann Arbor. The Market is open Sundays from 11 am to 4 pm, early April through mid-December. You can shop right up to the last Sunday before Christmas!

10 Energy-Efficient Home Improvements That Save Money

Continued...

Weather Stripping: You might be surprised to find how much money you could save by having that draft in your kitchen or bedroom stopped. In homes that haven't been weather stripped, air leaks account for up to 40 percent of heating and cooling loss.

A Programmable Thermostat: Most homeowners can save at least 10% on their monthly heating bill simply by turning down the thermostat 10-15 degrees for 8 hours a day. This makes sense when you're at work & the kids are at school, and a programmable thermostat will bump the heat back up right before you get home.

A Tankless Water Heater: Tankless water heaters allow users to shave 20 percent off their water bill. In addition to lasting 5 to 10 years longer than tank heaters, tankless heaters never run out of hot water. Plus, you may be eligible for a federal tax rebate if you purchase one.

Seal Heating Ducts: Most homes lose 20 percent of their heat through leaks and poorly sealed connections in heating ductwork. Have you ever turned your heat on full blast only to feel like your house **still** isn't warming up? If so, then you might have some leaky ductwork. Having your ducts sealed can pay off big-time in the long run.

Change Your Furnace's Air Filter: Many people leave their furnace's air filter in all winter long. But when filters become clogged with dirt and dust, your furnace has to expend more energy to force the air through. This, in turn, raises your electric and/or gas bill.

Consumer Reports recommends changing your furnace filter once a month during the winter months. And some experts say that this can improve your furnace's efficiency by up to 20 percent.

Last Word: Improving your home's energy efficiency doesn't have to cost a fortune. And since more people are starting to choose to stay in their homes longer, these small improvements can make a big difference in your budget over the long run.



Joke of The Month

Skeptical of his son's newfound determination to become Arnold Schwarzenegger the father nevertheless followed the teenager over to the weight-lifting department, admiring a set of weights.

"Please, Dad," pleaded the boy, "I promise I'll use 'em every day."

"I don't know, Michael. It's a significant commitment on your part," the father pointed out.

"Please, Dad?" the boy continued.

Finally won over, the father paid for the equipment and headed for the door. From the corner of the store he heard his son yelp, "What! You mean I have to carry them to the car?"

Tips For Getting Your Home Ready For Fall



Clean out the rain gutters, downspouts, & underground drainage (if applicable): If you have rain gutters on your home; fall, after the leaves have fallen, is the best time to get them cleaned. Cleaning rain gutters isn't that difficult of a task; it's just a tedious one. The easiest way to get rid of the junk is to use a high-pressure hose, and then use a small trowel to get rid of the rest of the debris. Once the debris has been removed, the gutters are sprayed down.

Take care of your pots and planters: If you're like most homeowners, you have some planters of potted plants sitting around the yard. Before it gets too cold, be sure to empty the dirt out of any pots or planters or put them in a place where they won't freeze. If you don't empty or store your planters, there's a good chance the plants will wither & the pots will crack or fall apart.

Weed and feed the lawn: The best time to weed and feed the lawn is in the fall. Have weed killer added in the fall, weeds will store the poison in their roots during the winter

season, which will prevent a breakout in the spring. By feeding your lawn with fertilizer in the fall, you are promoting healthy root growth, and this will help your lawn grow greener and faster in the spring.

Give your tools a tune-up: once you have finished your fall maintenance chores, make sure you clean your tools and store them in a dry place so they will be in working order once spring arrives. Be sure to store metal shovels with the head upwards, as this will help detour rusting when it dries. Sheers need to be oiled up, wheel barrels should be left upside down and don't forget to scrape and spray off the underside of the lawnmower.

Tune-up your furnace & A/C system: before the chilly weather of fall begins, make sure your furnace is tuned up for the winter and have the filter changed. Homeowners with a fireplace should have the flue checked and have the fireplace cleaned if it is wood burning. Fall is also a good time to have your furnace air ducts cleaned.

Beware of bugs: If you start to find more cobwebs around your house in the fall it is because the spiders are coming in to get out of the cold. Bugs and mice are looking for a warm place to stay for the winter. It's a good time to check for rotted, cracked or damaged wood around the house, which is the perfect entrance for critters into your home. Wood is like straw; it sucks water up, which causes rot, splitting, and damage. It is important to keep your home painted, sealed and caulked.

Other home maintenance tasks for the fall include:

- Putting away summer equipment, such as outdoor tables and chairs, umbrellas, grills and children's toys.
- Touching up paint on decks, trim, and railings.
- Draining and storing garden hoses. Have sprinkler systems blown free of water.
- Have your washing machine hoses inspected for bulges, cracks or splits. Have them replaced every other year.
- Have your dryer exhaust tube and vent checked for built-up lint, debris or birds' nests. Make sure the exterior vent door closes tightly when not in use.



Maple-Cinnamon Applesauce Recipe

Turn fresh fall apples into delicious maple-and-cinnamon-spiked homemade applesauce.

Ingredients:

- 6 McIntosh or other tart apples, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 Golden Delicious or other sweet apple, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- ¼ cup water
- 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Directions:

Combine apple pieces and water in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil, and then reduce heat to maintain a simmer. Cover and cook, stirring once or twice, until the apples are very soft and falling apart, about 30 minutes. Mash the apples to the desired consistency and stir in maple syrup and cinnamon.

Make ahead tip: refrigerate for up to two weeks and freeze up to 6 months.

By Dale Carnegie

Part 4: Be a Leader: How to Change People Without Giving Offense or Arousing Resentment.

Chapter 5: How To Spur People On To Success.

When criticism is minimize and praise emphasized, the good things people do will be reinforced and the poorer things will atrophy for lack of attention. Abilities wither under criticism; they blossom under encouragement.

Single out a specific accomplishment rather than just make general flattering remarks. When praise is specific, it comes across as sincere – not something the other person may be saying just to make one feel good. We all crave appreciation and recognition, but nobody wants insincerity. Nobody wants flattery.

“Praise is like sunlight to the warm human spirit; we cannot flower and grow without it...”

~ Psychologist Jess Lair

Principle 6: Praise the slightest improvement and praise every improvement. Be “heartly in your approbation and lavish in your praise.”

Stay Tuned...



Wise Home Owner Tip:

4 Tips For Adding Value To Your Home:

1. *Kitchen Upgrades:* In case your budget is limited, you can always consider undertaking kitchen upgrades as a matter of priority. The kitchen is considered one of the most important areas of the home that have the capacity of improving the value of the home. When upgrading the kitchen, homeowners are advised to consider their countertops, cabinetry, appliances, and layout.

Countertops are an important part of the kitchen therefore when decisions are made to upgrade the kitchen they should not be ignored. Homeowners are choosing granite countertops as opposed to plastic laminate common in older homes. The cabinets are also noticeable; therefore, they need to be updated as well. Although cabinets are an expensive part of upgrading the kitchen they have the capacity of adding a substantial amount of value to the home, generating more returns. The appliances should also be up-to-date.

2. *Roof upgrades:* The roof is one of the most visible parts of the home. Interested buyers are first attracted by the condition of the roof. In case the roof is in perfect condition this means other parts of the home are in good condition. Any roof older than 10 years should be inspected to facilitate repair or replacement.

In case you are planning to sell the home, you should consider carefully the need for replacing the roof. Some roofing options include metal roofing, copper roofing and clay tiles. These types of roofing have the capacity of adding more value to the home and making the home look modern.

3. *Floor upgrades:* The floor can be forgotten easily particularly if it is carpeted. Nevertheless, it is an important section of the home, which needs an upgrade if you are planning to sell the home. Many homeowners are choosing natural stone or wood in place of vinyl flooring and carpets. Wood and stone are selected because they are more durable when compared with other types of flooring.

4. *Going Eco-friendly:* As the world becomes more environmentally conscious, undertaking eco-friendly upgrades will generate more value to the home. Popular eco-friendly upgrades include using renewable materials, water saving plumbing and energy saving windows.

Uplifting Quote of The Month

"In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing."

~ Theodore Roosevelt

Did You Know...

That brass doorknobs disinfect themselves? It's called the oligodynamic effect: The ions in the metal have a toxic effect on spores, fungi, viruses, and other germs — eliminating the nasties within eight hours.

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