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Advertorial



How empty-nesters can transform their homes

After bringing home a bubbly baby boy or girl, it can be hard for parents to imagine that a day will come when their kids are off to college and then onto their own apartment or house. After spending decades nurturing and caring for children, parents are then left with a suddenly quiet house and probably much more time to spare. If saying goodbye to the kids also means extra space, there's the option to downsize or make that extra space more useful.

Homeowners who choose to stay put can renovate vacant rooms into spaces that meet their newfound needs.

Hobby haven: If you've always meant to set up a crafting room, home-brewing station or an artist's studio, now is an ideal time to do just that. Figure out which supplies you will need and begin reworking that former bedroom into a new sanctuary for leisure interests.

Guest suite: If you've never had a spare bedroom to entertain guests, a child's former bedroom can fit the bill. It may not be that difficult to transform such spaces into relaxing and inviting rooms for overnight guests. Be sure there is at least a queen-sized bed and a dresser or chest

of drawers to stash belongings. Select paint colours and linens in neutral tones so the room will be inviting to company.

Living room redo: When there's an entire soccer team coming over to hang out, that large sectional sofa or modular seating may be ideal. Now that the kids are out of the house and their friends are no longer coming over for movie night, living rooms can be made more intimate with small-scale seating. A small sofa and two comfortable chairs may be a more fitting option.

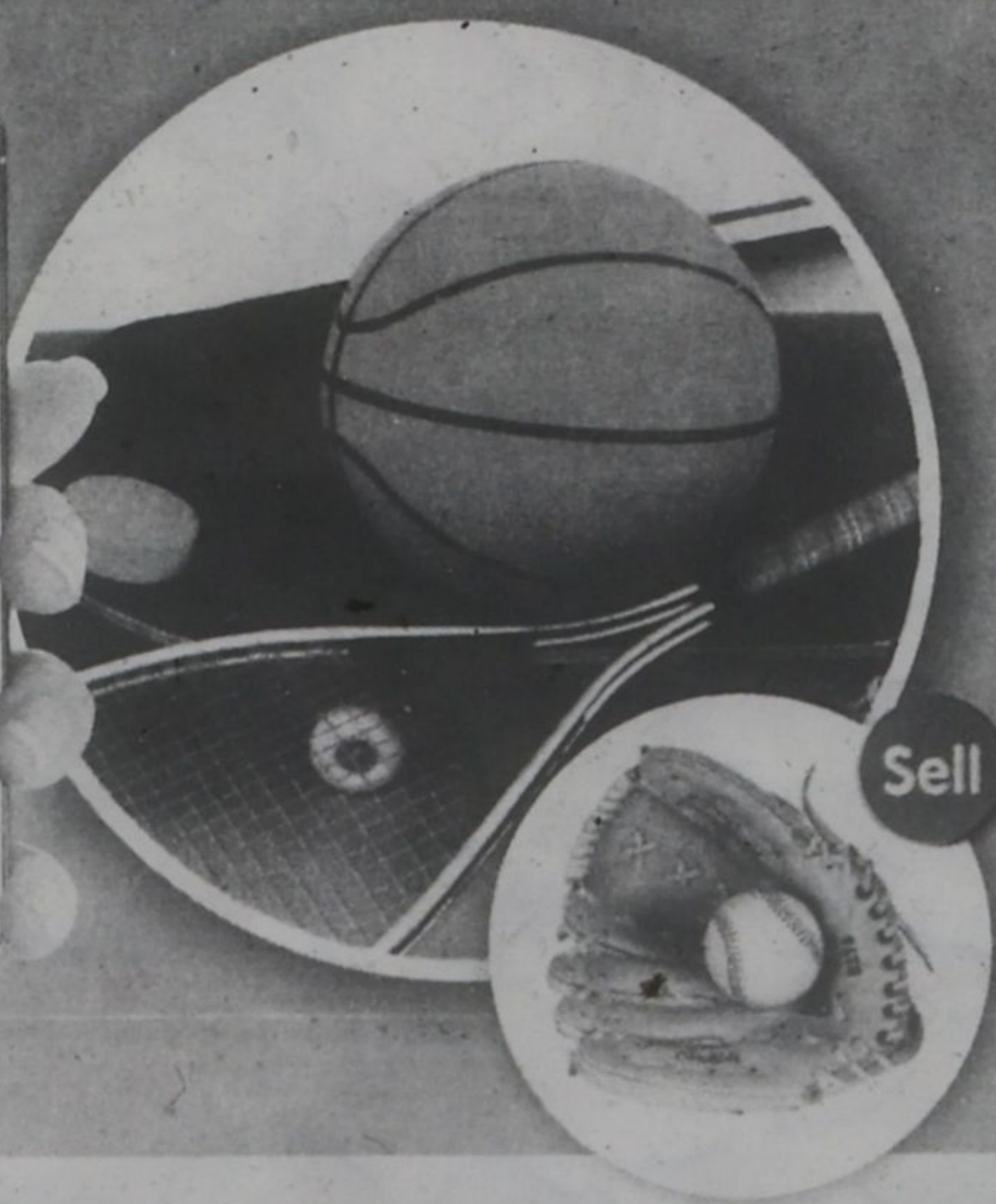
At-home gym: Save on gym membership fees by building a mini studio right at home. Choose one of the larger bedrooms and then fill it with some fitness equipment, such as an elliptical trainer, a bench press bench and some free weights. Store rolled-up mats in the closet for yoga or Pilates sessions.

Expanded bathroom: If space has always been at a premium in the bathroom, borrow area from an empty bedroom and turn it into a spa. Install a soaking tub separate from the shower, and fill the room with other amenities, such as a warming lamp or a small sauna.

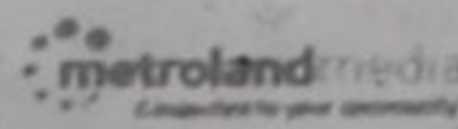
Home office: Working from home a few days a week may be more plausible when nearing retirement, as it will be a smoother transition from heading to the office each day to spending more time at home. Turn a bedroom or den into an office space with a new desk and bookshelves.

An empty nest can be a bittersweet experience, but parents can make such situations work for them by transforming their homes to better reflect their current needs. (MCC)

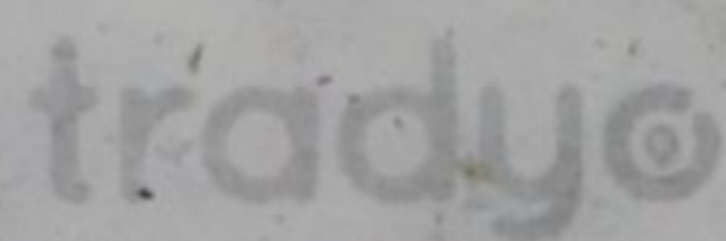
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