

Sprucing up your home helps beat the February 'blahs'

Spring is still a few months away, fall is long gone and summer is just a distant memory. Guess what? You're stuck smack dab in the middle of winter and you've got the February blahs!

This is the time of year when Ontario homeowners go a bit stir crazy and need some relief to get over the 'hump'. Well, why not put the mid-winter blahs to good use and tackle some of those interior renovations and decorating jobs you've been putting off?

Now is a perfect time to take a look inside your home and get a head start on those upgrades that never seem to get done when the weather is nice. Things like carpeting, wallpapering, painting, adding new lighting, or even kitchen, bathroom and basement renovations can easily be accomplished right now while you have the time.

Your main consideration is to assess how much a job will disrupt the household. In winter, family members don't have the option of spending time outside during extensive renovations, so a job such as installing hardwood floors would be difficult. As well, most major painting jobs need to be undertaken in the summer when ventilation is possible.

On the other hand, many home improvements make ideal winter jobs. Installing new carpets is an extremely popular winter upgrade for many homeowners. Redoing a den, rec room or bedroom will not only add spice, but give greater comfort and warmth.

You shouldn't be concerned about replacing every carpet in your home, because slush and snow are bound to be tracked throughout. A good move would be to delay re-carpeting your living room or front hallway until the weather improves. Anything else is fair game.

Wallpapering is a chore ideally suited to win-

ter. It can be a bit messy, but can be completed room by room in a fairly short period. Bedrooms, dens and especially dining room are excellent candidates for sprucing up.

Papering your dining room can be accomplished with minimal fuss, and bright new papering job on a child's bedroom can do wonders to make the winter easier to take.

Lighting is another item that can make your winter more palatable. Replacing the chandelier in your dining room can be a real winner, and for an added twist, you could install track lighting in your living room or den. Don't forget hallways - an antique lamp picked up at a curio shop can greatly improve the ambience.

The above suggestions could all be considered cosmetic in nature, but you shouldn't discount the value of undertaking more major upgrades during the winter.

Functional improvements such as kitchen and bathroom renovations are among the most likely to increase the net worth of your home. Surveys have shown that most prospective buyers rate these above a new pool, deck or extensive landscaping. In addition, most contractors are busiest in the spring and summer, so you stand a good chance of getting a favourable rate if professionals are involved.

Adding new kitchen cupboards is a fairly workable upgrade. The kitchen can still be used for food preparation during construction and meals could be taken in the dining room or den.

If you're lucky enough to have two or even three bathrooms, why not select one of them for renovation? Again, contractors may work for less during the winter, so you may come out ahead of the game.


Another excellent opportunity for improvement exists in your basement. If you've been thinking about adding a new rec room or getting

started on an in-law apartment, the winter offers a chunk of time that could be put to good use. Apart from laying concrete floors, just about anything is possible including putting up walls and ceilings, or laying carpet.

While you're at it, you could take a look at your cellar or garage and build that shelving you've been promising yourself for the last


decade or so. It would certainly help during spring cleaning when you need somewhere to put all the boxes of winter stuff.

Don't let the February blahs get the better of them. The winter months offer a great chance to get some of those upgrades and improvements over with now so you'll have more time to enjoy the summer when it finally arrives!



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