

# HOMEVIEW

DES MOINES' HOME IMPROVEMENT AND REAL ESTATE GUIDE



SUMMER 2026

## English cottage vibes

Colyer sees historic home's potential

**A SPACE OF HER OWN**  
PAGE 8

**SAVING A SHERMAN  
HILL TREASURE**  
PAGE 12

**A "TREEHOUSE" RETREAT**  
PAGE 19





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## PUBLISHER'S COLUMN

# Make 'Someday' today

Every time I walk through my house, I get a tour of unfinished projects. The loose trimboard in the garage. The basement walls that still need attention. The flagpole. The finish trim around the deck posts. They all seem to whisper the same reminder: "You were going to finish me."

Someday.

As John Fogerty sang in the 1972 hit by Creedence Clearwater Revival, "Someday Never Comes." That lyric feels especially appropriate when staring at a growing to-do list.

The little jobs are bad enough. Then there are the big-ticket items: replacing the driveway, remodeling a bathroom and installing new kitchen cabinets. Those projects require more than a free Saturday. They require planning, budgeting and, in my case, professionals who know far more than I do.

I enjoy tackling smaller repairs, even if they take me three trips to the hardware store and twice as long as they should. Bigger projects are another story. I keep meaning to call the experts.

Someday.

The truth is, "someday" has a habit of staying on the calendar forever. Home improvement projects may not be life-or-death decisions, but they do not complete themselves.

As you flip through this issue, you will find plenty of ideas to improve your home — and trusted professionals ready to help. Pick one project, make one phone call and take one step forward. You might discover that "today" is a lot more productive than "someday." ■

*Shane*

### SHANE GOODMAN

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**COVER:** Judie Colyer modernized her 1917 home and give it a "European cottage" feel since she grew up in England. Photo by Todd Rullestad

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# English cottage vibes

Colyer sees historic home's potential.



The design of Judie Colyer's renovations incorporates vintage pieces with fresh, modern colors and textures. Photo by Todd Rullestad

Judie Colyer bought her home in Uptown Ankeny 10 years ago. It had sat on the market for a year and was in rough shape in many ways, but she saw potential in the historic home. Since it was built in 1917, the goal was to modernize the home but maintain its charm. She wanted to create a "European cottage" feel, since she grew up in England.

She decided to completely redo the existing bathroom, gut the kitchen, replace

the windows and interior trim, add light fixtures, and make the front porch laundry room into an inviting space.

Colyer's son flips houses, and he had a wonderful vision for the old home. She enjoys interior design and used social media for inspiration. Both contributed to the style of the house, which incorporates vintage pieces with fresh, modern colors and textures. Colyer says it is comfy yet not stodgy or dated.



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## MAINTAINING CHARM



Judie Colyer's "European cottage" décor extends to the bathroom. The new vanity and fixtures are a focal point. Photo by Todd Rullestad

Using the original wood floors and bringing in a period fireplace helped deliver the feel of a cottage. Mixing materials and using pieces that Colyer has collected over time brings interest. Incorporating pieces from her home country of England lent to the design, and she likes that it reflects her heritage.

“My son guided the process, but many volunteers from my church pitched in. I depended on good referrals for any work I needed to hire.”

As part of the renovation, Colyer now has an Airbnb in her home for additional income, and she enjoys meeting people from all over the country and introducing them to Ankeny. She also hosts people for English teatimes on a donation basis.

“My home is used in great ways for the community,” she says. “My favorite thing is that the house is so old. I love the vaulted ceiling in the kitchen, which we uncovered during the renovation. My son added false beams that look so real. It’s a living piece of history.” ■



The Colyer kitchen features a vaulted ceiling that was uncovered during the renovation. Photo by Todd Rullestad

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## CLIMATE CONTROL

# HVAC systems under stress

What happens when summer temperatures surge?

(Feature Impact) Stretches of scorching summer days may leave you and your family feeling like you just can't quite get (or stay) cool. If you find yourself resigned to cooler rooms or leaving ceiling fans on constantly, it might be time to check your air conditioner.

Extreme heat is no longer rare for many parts of the country. According to recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 13 million households reported being uncomfortably hot for an extended period.

Not all air conditioning systems perform the same when temperatures spike. While most systems can keep up on typical summer days, prolonged heat can expose performance gaps, leading to uneven cooling and higher energy use. The difference often comes down to how the system is designed.

To better understand whether your HVAC system can stand up to summer, consider this information from the experts at Mitsubishi Electric Trane HVAC US (METUS), a world leader in residential air conditioning units with sophisticated, durable systems that deliver quiet operation and energy-efficient performance.



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Why some homes stay more comfortable than others

Not every home experiences summer heat the same way. Factors such as home layout, sun exposure, insulation and HVAC system design can all influence how effectively a home maintains comfort during prolonged periods of high temperatures.

For example, upstairs bedrooms, rooms with large windows and spaces exposed to direct afternoon sun often have different cooling demands than other areas of the home. Systems that provide more precise temperature control and flexibility can help address these differences and deliver more consistent comfort throughout the house.

Signs your system may be struggling

As summer temperatures rise, there are often clear signs that an HVAC system may be struggling to keep up with demand. One of the most common indicators is a system that seems to run constantly during the hottest parts of the day, yet fails to deliver the level of comfort homeowners expect.

Homeowners may also notice persistent warm spots in certain rooms, increased indoor humidity, or weaker airflow from vents. In some cases, increased noise from vents or equipment may signal the system is working harder than usual to maintain airflow and cooling performance.

Another warning sign often appears on monthly utility statements. A noticeable increase in energy use during peak summer months can indicate the system is consuming more power to maintain comfort under challenging conditions.

What makes the difference in extreme heat

Not all HVAC systems are built the same. Modern system design plays a critical role in how well a home stays comfortable during prolonged high temperatures. Zoned Comfort Solutions from Mitsubishi Electric include ducted and ductless options designed to deliver reliable comfort, efficiency, and control in demanding conditions like summer heat surges, along with important features like:

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Evaluating whether your current system is designed to handle sustained high temperatures can help prevent discomfort and avoid rushed decisions during the hottest days of the year. To learn more, visit MitsubishiComfort.com. ■

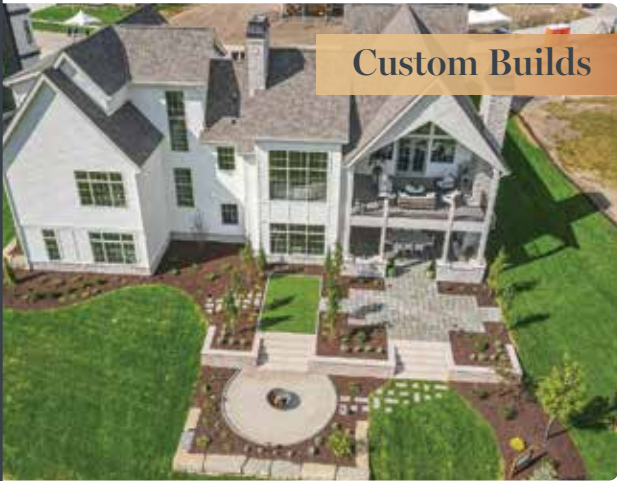


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# A space of her own

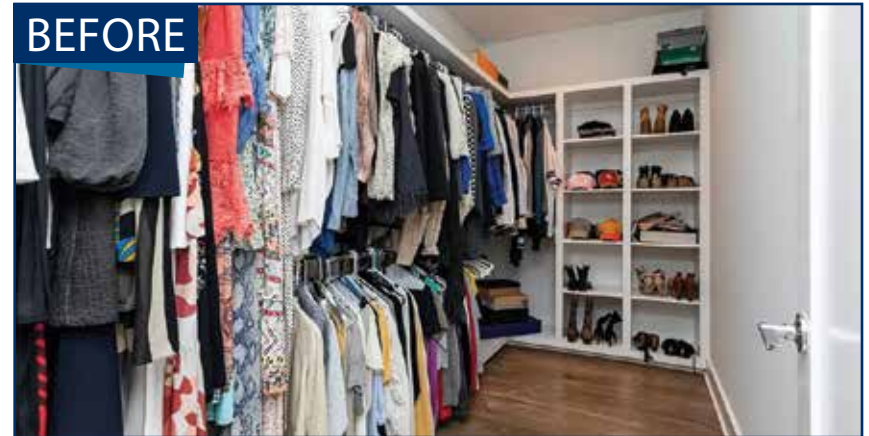
Miller customizes for shoes and books.

When Becci Miller moved to Urbandale two years ago for her corporate job at Enterprise Rent-A-Car, she was looking for the perfect home for herself and her beloved dog, Remi. She found a great house in Urbandale in a nice neighborhood and, importantly, a fenced-in backyard to let Remi roam. It was perfect.

Well... almost.

She tackled the outside of the house first, adding a white rock border around the foundation and inserting plants and shrubs. She planted some trees along the back lot line and replaced all of the drapes with motorized blinds for increased privacy. She buried all of the downspouts to improve water run-off.

Once the outside of the house was done, she turned her attention to the inside. First on her list: her closet.



Becci Miller's closet did not fit her needs, so she had it gutted and then customized. She now has designated spaces for clothes, as well as features such as jewelry drawers.

## BEFORE



“I ripped it out. It was not functional for me. I have a lot of shoes,” she says, smiling.

She found Closets By Design, and owner Arielle Blazek made sure there was room for the more than 100 pairs of shoes Miller owns.

In addition to a dedicated space for her shoes, she also wanted special hanging racks that would accommodate her dresses, blazers and dress suits. The closet also includes jewelry trays, “which I have never had before but absolutely love now,” she says. And that’s not all. The closet has scarf racks, valet rods and pull-out hampers tucked into the built-ins “to keep things tidy until laundry day.”

The process of tearing out the old closet and putting in the new one left the walls a mess.

“I hired Mark Sloan to patch, prime and paint the walls. I also had him put up the wallpaper. I’ve always wanted wallpaper in my closet,” she says.

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## CLOSET UPGRADE

**AFTER**



When remodeling her basement, Becci Miller, pictured with her dog, Remi, had additional shelving installed so she would have plenty of room for her books.

With the closet redesign accomplished, Miller turned her attention to the lower floor.

“It was like a sports bar with a large projector and multiple TVs,” she says. “There were custom shelves that displayed football jerseys and signed helmets. It was all very dark wood. It was not a usable space for me. I hired a carpenter to add more shelves into the existing built-in and match the stain to the existing color.”

Her plans for the space?

“Books. I have hundreds and hundreds of books,” she says.

Even with all of these improvements, the house still does not match Miller’s final vision.

She still plans to install floating shelves and more wallpaper on the main wall by the fireplace.

“I will also have the kitchen redone with a new stove, new countertops and a new sink,” she says.

“Then, I will be done,” she says. ■



# Rhubarb season just got crispy

As a kid, you could find me following my mother around the yard while she planted, weeded and tended to her flowers and plants. Our backyard wasn't overflowing with produce — just a small strawberry patch lined with rhubarb. Back then, I wasn't a fan. Rhubarb was a little too bold for my taste. But, over time, especially when paired with apples and a bit of sugar, it won me over. Now, I look forward to it every year.

Rhubarb is also one of the easiest and most rewarding plants to grow. Give it a sunny spot — ideally on the south side of your house or garage — and it will thrive with very little fuss.

This crisp is inspired by my mother's classic apple crisp. Sort of. Like my mother, I don't really measure ingredients for these kinds of treats, which has made sharing the recipe a

bit tricky over the years. Sometimes I add nuts or oatmeal. Sometimes I mix in apples. But one thing never changes: a generous, crispy crumble topping. If it's not crisp, we're not doing it right.

So, for the sake of sharing (and finally having something more useful to say than "just eyeball it"), I actually paid attention while making it this time. What you will find here is my best attempt at a real recipe. That said... I probably added a little extra of something along the way. I encourage you to do the same. That's where the magic happens. ■

Information provided by Jolene Goodman, vice president of Big Green Umbrella Media.



## Jolene's Rhubarb Crisp

### INGREDIENTS:

- 5 cups of rhubarb
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup oatmeal
- 1/3 cup chopped pecans
- 1/2 cup butter, room temperature (if it gets too dry, add a little more butter)



### DIRECTIONS:

- Chop rhubarb in half inch pieces and place into an 8-inch by 8-inch dish.
- In a separate bowl, mix dry ingredients, then add butter.
- Cut butter into the dry ingredients until crumbly.
- Spread crumble mixture over rhubarb.
- Bake uncovered at 350 F for 45 minutes.
- Serve warm with vanilla ice cream.

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# Saving a Sherman Hill treasure

After years of painstaking restoration, Silent Rivers Design+Build transformed a crumbling historic double house into an award-winning showpiece while preserving its architectural legacy.

Sherman Hill is Des Moines' oldest neighborhood. It is home to the Hoyt Sherman Place mansion, award-winning restaurants and rows of architecturally significant homes. Thanks to Silent Rivers Design+Build, one of the neighborhood's most significant homes has been restored.

The “double house,” a residential building containing two separate living units under one roof, similar to a duplex, is located on 19th Street in Sherman Hill. Its restoration won multiple awards locally and nationally. It received the 2026 Preservation Iowa Preservation at Its Best Award, the 2025 NARI Regional Remodeler of the Year Award and a silver award in the NAHB Best in American Living Awards. We spoke with Chaden Halfhill about the work his company did on the once-crumbling home.

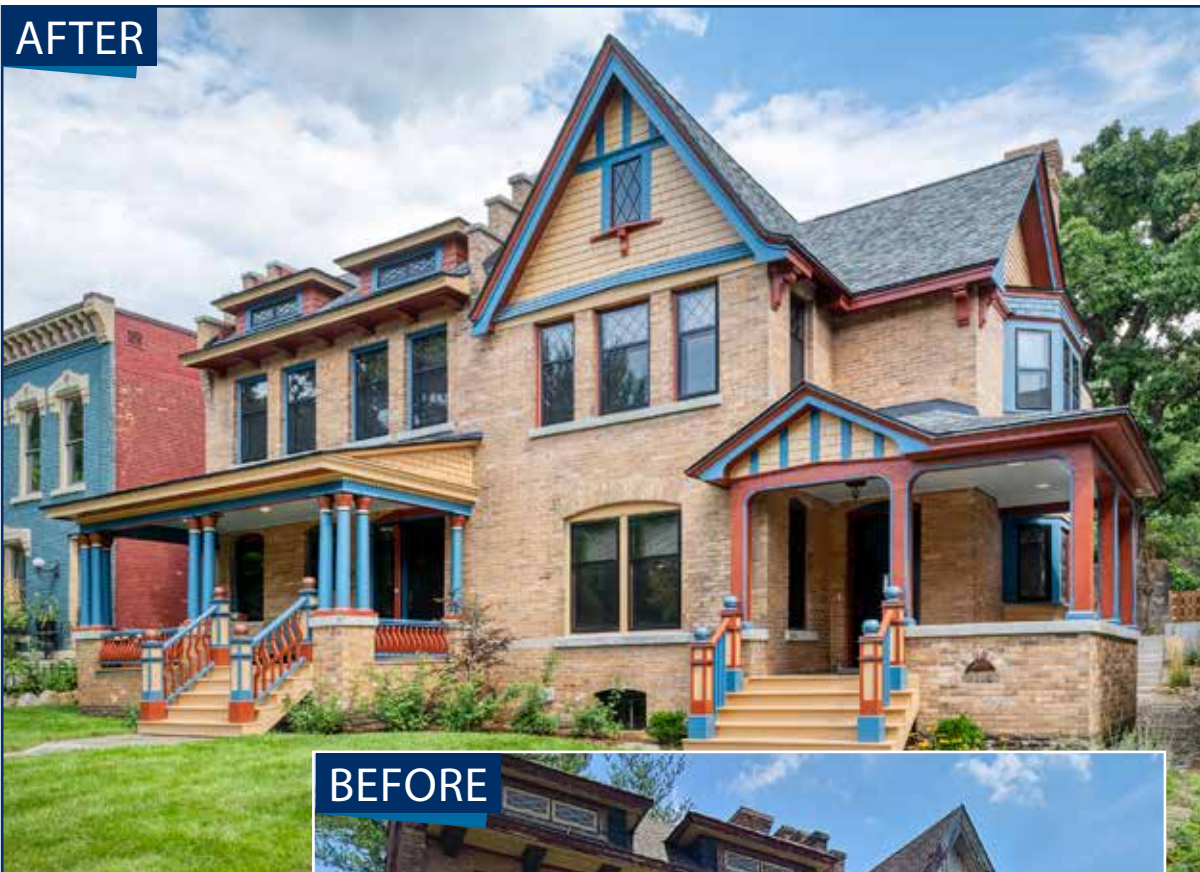
## An important part of the streetscape

“I’ve had history with living in Sherman Hill in my 20s and 30s and really caring about interesting historical properties. Everybody in the neighborhood wants to protect that house. It’s a really important part of that streetscape. It was a banker who built the house for his two daughters,” Halfhill said.

Having a connection to the neighborhood and learning more about the history of the home made it all the more important to Halfhill to bring it back to its former glory. But that required finding all of its problems.

“That one in particular had fallen into complete disrepair, and yet it’s a real gem. It had lost all of its rear siding; it had peeled away. The whole floor system had deteriorated, and it was just a mess. The sides were both brick, and they were at risk of falling. The kitchen was moved up to the second floor. It was just kind of a hodgepodge. They had punched through the two walls,” Halfhill said. “We also had lots of water issues, not only because the siding was deteriorated, but it’s on a hillside, and all the water would go into the three properties to the north and our own, and it would just end up infiltrating the walls.”

The inside of the home had water problems as well, specifically in the

**AFTER****BEFORE**

“We wanted to bring back that feel of it, the painted lady look, and the integration of stylistic variation that exists in this particular home,” Chaden Halfhill said. Photos courtesy of Silent Rivers Design & Build

basement. Because of moisture intrusion, the rear wall had collapsed, and the entire back one-third of the house had to be rebuilt. Thankfully, the main living areas were in better shape — but not by much.

“The inside was still generally intact, just not well cared for. Its infrastructure was totally negated. The cherry kitchen that was built in the 1980s for the south unit, the whole floor collapsed, and it had sunk 3 to 4 inches.

BEFORE



Everybody who looked at it was like, how do we get this done?” Halfhill said. “What I really wanted to avoid was somebody coming in and flipping it with disregard for that property. I’m a really big advocate of protecting the honor of the home. It was a legacy home for somebody at one point. It deserves to have and maintain that level of care,” Halfhill said.

Halfhill completed the restoration with the help of a tax credit because Sherman Hill is designated as a historic district. The Historic Preservation Commission of Des Moines works to ensure buildings continue to fit the neighborhood after they are restored.

AFTER



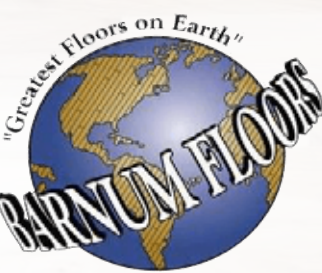
**Favorite changes and improvements**

Halfhill shared some of his favorite changes and improvements they made to the home.

“I happen to like the staircase on the south side, being able to restore half of the spindles on the screen and shore it up so it didn’t squeak.”

Halfhill said he also enjoyed using historic light fixtures he purchased that had been salvaged from a person he met on the Sherman Hill walking tour. He said those lights sat in storage for 10 years before he was able to use them, but he was glad they ultimately became part of the restoration.

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"I enjoyed what we did with both primary suites and the bathrooms, with the use of brick in the center wall as a backdrop to a tub that was a standalone. I'm particularly proud of putting in an original tub from a 1920 Greene

and Greene home."

Halfhill said the tub came from a Simpson College home he purchased, and getting it upstairs and operational was a major task.

"It has a valve that's in the drain that is in the middle of the tub. It's really unique, and I would say there are only a few in the United States," Halfhill said.

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Halfhill reflected on everything they were able to accomplish while maintaining — or rebuilding — the home’s original charm.

“It’s really the fact that I was able to pull parts from other projects that got discontinued or deconditioned or decommissioned and utilize them here because of the period relevance,” Halfhill said. “The simple historical meaning, the narrative that it brings to the home, just further enriched what we did.”

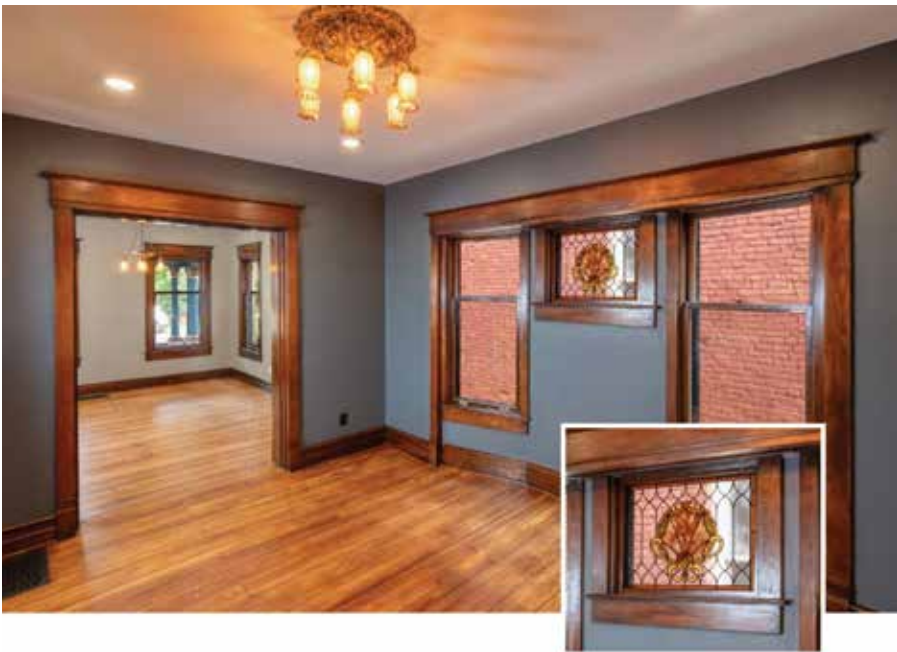
Halfhill said the masonry work by Atlas Masonry was a significant undertaking.

“All of the historical woodwork on the outside of the building was restored by one of our tenured carpenters who really took a lot of care and attention to restoring the cedar and the original siding, which is so often just torn off and replaced with cement siding.”

### Incredible satisfaction

The project, from start to finish, took about seven years. The design-build portion took roughly two years. That was longer than Halfhill would have liked, but he said seeing the finished product made it worthwhile.

“There’s incredible satisfaction in bringing a project back from near death. There is both the satisfaction and the joy of its completion. It’s greater when the project is really complex, and you’ve had to balance shrewdness with



aesthetic goals. There’s also the exuberance of the fact that the financial plan worked, because when it doesn’t, you end up having to plug holes that you weren’t anticipating, and that’s any project, even with a homeowner,” Halfhill said. ■



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## Room-by-room tips for clutter-free spaces

(Feature Impact) A well-organized home isn't about perfection. It's about creating systems that make everyday life easier. When everything has a place, it's simpler to maintain and keep clutter from creeping back in.

Experts often recommend tackling organization one room at a time, sorting items into categories like keep, donate or discard before finding the right storage solutions. If your home could use a refresh, start small and work your way through each space with these organization tips.

### Entryway

A dedicated "drop zone" ensures items used daily don't end up scattered throughout the house. However, the entryway is also one of the easiest places for clutter to pile up. To keep it tidy:

- Install wall hooks for coats, bags and backpacks
- Use a small bench or basket for shoes
- Add a tray or bowl for keys, sunglasses and everyday essentials



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## Kitchen

One of the most-used rooms in nearly every home, kitchen organization is key to making daily routines smoother. To stay organized:

- Clear unnecessary items off countertops
- Group pantry items by category, such as snacks, baking supplies and canned goods
- Store rarely used appliances in cabinets or a pantry

## Living room

Living rooms often serve many purposes, from relaxing and entertaining to working or studying. The key is creating storage that blends seamlessly with your decor:

- Use decorative baskets for blankets, magazines and toys
- Choose furniture with hidden storage like ottomans or coffee tables
- Keep remotes and small electronics in a designated tray or organizer

## Bedroom

Your bedroom should feel like a sanctuary. Too much clutter can make it harder to relax and unwind. To maintain order:

- Keep only essential items on nightstands
- Rotate seasonal clothing to free up closet space
- Use under-bed storage bins for extra linens or off-season clothes

## Bathroom

Bathrooms often have limited space, so smart storage solutions are essential:

- Keep countertops clear except for frequently used products
- Separate backup supplies from daily-use items, which should be stored for quick access
- Use over-the-door organizers for towels or extra storage

## Home office

Whether you work remotely or simply manage household tasks, an organized office helps you stay focused. To improve productivity and reduce distractions:

- Digitize or recycle unnecessary paperwork
- Use desk trays and organizers for supplies
- Create labeled folders or a filing system for important documents

## Storage areas

Garages, basements and storage rooms can quickly become catch-all spaces. A little planning can make them much easier to manage:

- Label bins for seasonal decorations, tools or sports equipment
- Use shelving and wall storage to maximize vertical space
- Keep an inventory list for larger storage areas

With a little planning and the right habits, a well-organized home becomes easier to maintain. Find more ideas at [eLivingtoday.com](http://eLivingtoday.com). ■

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# How to avoid moving nightmares

(StatePoint) When it comes to DIY moves, snafus are almost expected. Perhaps you have your own horror stories about broken furniture, last-minute cancellations or friends who mysteriously weren't available on moving day.

But not every move has to be a nightmare. In fact, it can be one of the most positive transitions you'll ever make. Especially if it's tied to a relationship milestone and built on preparation, smart decisions and the right support.

In a recent nationwide survey of over 750 Americans commissioned by Mayflower, one of the most trusted full-service moving companies in the United States, and conducted by Talker Research, 48% of respondents are or have been in a long-distance relationship. For them, moving isn't necessarily just about changing addresses. It's about sharing a life. That added emotional weight makes getting all the details right even more important.

## Why moves go wrong

A third of survey respondents reported having a "moving mental breakdown" in the past. The biggest mistake people make? Treating a move like a simple task instead of a complex life event.

This is especially true among younger adults. With Millennials making up 45% of the long-distance relationships in the survey and Gen Z another 32%, many people navigating moves are doing so during high-change phases in their lives. Add in tight timelines, budget concerns and emotional stress, and it's easy to see how things could unravel.

Another factor: assuming moving is just about transportation. In reality, it involves logistics, planning, protection and coordination. Without someone in charge of the big picture, such as a professional moving coordinator, those seams can quickly unravel.

## Moving right

A smooth move starts with a plan and tends to come from a shared understanding of priorities.

Put time on your side. Create a timeline with key deadlines. Break the process into manageable steps instead of trying to tackle everything at once.

Know when to get help. The results of the study revealed that 61% of people feel that for long-distance or out-of-state moves, hiring full-service movers is the right choice. That's not just about convenience; it's about reducing risk. Professional support means benefitting from experienced handling, coordinated logistics and fewer surprises.



## The emotional side of moving

Moving is both physical and emotional. This is especially true when relationships are involved. The survey found that decisions about moving are increasingly based on practical considerations (such as careers) versus traditional expectations (such as gender). That's a positive shift, but it also means both partners need to be aligned.

To start your shared life on firm emotional ground, talk through expectations before the move. Discuss how responsibilities will be shared, what the transition will look like and how you'll support each other during the adjustment period.

## Avoiding common pitfalls

If you want to stay out of nightmare territory, avoid these key mistakes:

- **Waiting too long to plan:** Last-minute moves rarely go smoothly. Give yourself about eight weeks in advance of move day to make informed decisions.
- **Underestimating what you own:** People often own more belongings than they realize. Take inventory early and avoid surprises.
- **Not organizing properly:** Labeling boxes, keeping essentials accessible and maintaining a simple, step-by-step system can make a huge difference on moving day. And, you can always turn this task over to the professionals if you need support.
- **Doing everything alone:** Even if you're capable, support from a full-service mover can save time, energy and stress. For long-distance moves, Mayflower offers personalized services based on your needs, like packing, car shipping, storage, move protection, unpacking and debris removal. Get a quote at [mayflower.com](https://www.mayflower.com).

For couples closing the distance, settling in together can signal a fresh start. While it's a significant step, it doesn't have to be chaotic or unpredictable. ■



# A 'treehouse' retreat

Hutzell creates cozy getaway above it all.



Kip Hutzell isn't done with his treehouse. He says an addition may be upcoming.

Though often associated with younger children, playsets and treehouses can be fun for adults, too. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Kip Hutzell was watching "Treehouse Masters" when he decided to take on a new project.

"I decided right then and there that I wanted to make a treehouse. I figured that I had enough of a skill set to do it, so I immediately went out and began collecting the materials to make one," he shares. "I knew I could make it into a fun place for friends and family to hang out. It was a hot summer, and it was somewhat difficult for me to do it by myself, but I am the kind of person who, once I start a project, I keep going and going on it."

The structure is not built in a tree but instead sits on four old telephone poles about 11 feet off the ground next to a hillside. Hutzell used 2-inch by 12-inch boards for the framing, along with Douglas fir and pine, and ash around the windows. The treehouse also features a metal roof.

The interior measures about 12 by 12 feet, with an additional 6-by-14-foot deck. Hutzell designed it with vaulted ceilings and large windows to let in sunlight and provide a view of the river. Inside, he installed a wood stove, heated baseboards and a futon.

Originally, the structure included a window air-conditioning unit, but Hutzell later removed it to replace the window with a sliding door. He installed a ramp for entry.

"My wife wanted me to make sure we could plant flowers around it, and she didn't want a stairwell, so I have a ramp on the treehouse, and she has flowers all around it."



Who says only kids can enjoy a treehouse? Kip Hutzell was inspired by "Treehouse Masters" to build a retreat even adults can enjoy.

Hutzell worked without a blueprint, planning the project as he went. The build took most of the summer, but he is pleased with the result. He and his wife enjoy spending time in the treehouse year-round — inside during the winter and on the deck in the summer. Their grandchildren visit and enjoy it, and friends sometimes use it as an extra place to sleep.



Kip Hutzell's treehouse is comfortable and roomy.

Looking ahead, Hutzell is considering upgrades.

"When I built the treehouse, I did it in such a way that I could add on to it. I've thought about adding on a bedroom to it," he says. "I would remove the ramp and build the bedroom all the way to the hillside. I've also thought about putting in a PTAC unit like what you see in hotels for air conditioning and heat, but that is just a thought for now." ■

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