



EASY PAYOFF WITH SIMPLE UPGRADES

Sometimes home upgrades can seem a daunting task, and on many levels. In the worst case scenario they require vast amounts of time, energy, living disturbance and of course, money. But, there are some simpler approaches to upgrading your home in order to have it looking up to snuff for the real estate market and to, ideally, boost its market value. So, no need to fret. Just consider the following easy upgrades and see what might be manageable for you while you begin to prepare your home for sale.

As the foyer is the first impression a potential buyer will have of the interior of your home, you'll want to begin here. Now, you may be thinking, "But it's not the most functional and used area of my home, so why should I bother?". You'd be shocked at how many buyers are led by their "impressions" of a home, and for better or for worse, the ones that'll stick hardest, are those "first impressions". Like a first kiss, you want to go in for the kill and not offer up something boring (or dirty, for that matter!) that'll potentially turn away prospects.

If you have carpet or linoleum in your foyer, you'll definitely want to get rid of it and move to some tile alternative. Anything that looks like stone offers a timeless quality and one of wealth and establishment. Of course, stone may be too pricey of an option. There are also choices in porcelain, that can look equally as appealing.

Thankfully this re-flooring job is going to be contained to a smaller room, so it won't be a huge time investment. What you'll need to do, is rip up the existing flooring and install a layer of plywood. Cut the tile. This will be the hardest part of the job, but you might try inquiring with the tile store and see if they'll provide a free cutting service. Next you'll be grouting and sealing. All in all, this is a job you can do in a day, and that'll cost you in the ballpark of \$200-300 dollars. (for a four by four foot foyer)

Another easy upgrade you can do yourself to improve the overall look and feel of your home is to replace the overhead fixture in the dining room. Good lighting is critical throughout your home, but especially in a dining area where the right chandelier, or fixture can set the tone and make a lasting impact on the buyer.

When choosing a fixture you'll want universal appeal in terms of styling. Also be aware of proportions. Think of the goldilocks conundrum. You don't want a light that's too small, or too big for the space. Try to find the golden, "just right" fit.

The basics of installation include shutting off the circuit breaker in your home. Unscrew the wire nuts to remove the previous fixture and expose the wires. Next you'll use your electrical expertise to match up the wires from the lamp with the wires in the box. Shouldn't be rocket science, won't take you long, and won't break your budget. Depending on what you go for in terms of a fixture, you'll be looking at between \$40-500 for a chandelier, and maybe another \$40 for tools.

Okay, now don't run screaming when you read this one. Take a look at your kitchen. You may have read that the kitchen is the most important room to focus on in terms of re-sale for your home. And, even though this is true, it doesn't mean you have to go and put in renovations that'll set you back thousands. If you and your pocket book are not ready for a complete overhaul, consider minor alterations that'll spruce up what you already have in a kitchen.

Paint can do wonders in any room, and the kitchen is no exception. Re-painting your kitchen cabinets can truly transform the room. You'd be surprised how much wear and tear cabinetry suffers, and paint can easily bring a new fresh look to this high traffic area. A coat of paint is cheaper than refurbishing your cabinets and certainly way less than fully replacing them. You'll want to choose colors, ideally in the neutral palette and ones that blend or provide subtle contrast.

In order to start the job you'll need a drill, bits, sandpaper, primer, oil-based or latex acrylic paint or stain, paintbrushes and some spanking new hardware to complete your spiffy new paint job! If you give yourself two days and budget for about \$130-\$160 (knobs included), then you're flying!

After you've accomplished three significantly easy, but certainly important upgrades for your home, you'll want to attend to the niggly details of fixing whatever minor flaws might be lurking about. This will be time well spent, as you don't want your home to signal neglect or wear- this can make buyers extra suspicious and critical of the entire state of the house. Squeaky floors and doors, uneven wall textures, leaky faucets should all be attended to.

So remember, sometimes it's just a matter of some elbow grease, a few pennies and a few days to get your home good for the market.

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