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Basement Floods

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Guest Bathrooms

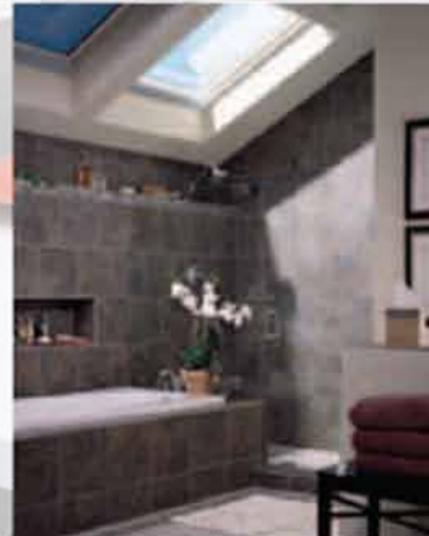
More Patio Choices

CONTENTS

features



- Web Site Gives Homeowners More Patio Choices
- Cleaning Up and Renovating After Your Basement Floods
- Has Your Guest Bath Overstayed Its Welcome?
- Curbside Wow: Boost Your Home's Look With New Shingles
- Six Simple Steps to Going Green
- Kitchen Couture -- Latest Trend for Upscale Kitchens
- Prevent Staining On Your Shower and Exterior Glass



Web Site Gives Homeowners More Patio Choices

To winter-weary homeowners, relaxing on the patio sounds like a dream come true. But when summer finally arrives, the patio often stands unused due to mosquitoes, flies, dust, wind, and inclement weather.

Fortunately, there's now a simple way to get more use out of a backyard patio. An innovative Web site now makes it possible for homeowners to cover and enclose their patios. The Web site lets you plan, design, specify and order a complete new covered patio - even a fully enclosed screen room - right from your keyboard, without the hassle of hiring an architect to draw up plans, and then locating and hiring a reputable contractor. The site - www.patiocoversdiy.com - offers complete do-it-yourself patio cover kits that are well within the capabilities of the typical "weekend handyman," according to Mike Madden, president of Madden Manufacturing, which fabricates the kits and markets them under the brand name "Patio Covers DIY." Every Patio Covers DIY kit includes all the necessary components and hardware, which are shipped directly to the buyer's home with no additional shipping charge.

"For most homeowners the kit makes an ideal weekend project," said Madden. "In fact, two people can usually install it in only a few hours."

He added that those who are unsure about tackling the project can turn over all the components and plans to a contractor if they prefer.

"Our goal was to offer the homeowner maximum flexibility," said Madden. "That includes flexibility in terms of how they install it, as well as maximum flexibility in terms of the style, size and design of their patio cover or enclosure."

In addition to choosing whether to install the patio yourself or hire a contractor, you can also choose how you attach the patio cover - either to the eaves or to a side wall of the home. You also can choose the original white baked enamel finish, or you can paint the cover to match your home's color scheme. Finally, you can opt to leave the sides open or enhance the patio even more by adding a screen kit complete with aluminum screen walls and optional screen door.

"The product's approach is all about giving the homeowner greater choice, flexibility and value," Madden said.

Patio cover kits are now available for virtually any size patio, from 8 inches by 8 inches to 12 inches by 30 inches, with or without optional screens and doors. Prices begin as low as \$600, and include free shipping in the 48 contiguous U.S. states.

Every kit is shipped with a step-by-step installation video along with easy-to-follow illustrated written instructions. The kits are assembled using common tools, such as a screw driver, drill, hacksaw, adjustable wrench, hammer, and pliers.

"The quality of the kits meets or exceeds the highest standards," said Madden, adding that the kits are designed to comply with virtually all local building codes. The Patio Covers DIY Web site even provides free downloadable engineering drawings to facilitate the permitting process. The site also offers detailed how-to-measure instructions to help ensure proper sizing, as well as installation tips and a list of frequently asked questions.

"Virtually everything you need for the entire project is available right on the Web site," Madden said. In addition, homeowners can call the company toll-free if they encounter any questions or problems during installation.

Every kit is manufactured from the highest quality components, including extruded aluminum support beams and posts, and durable .032-gauge aluminum panels. All components are either powder coated or finished with a baked enamel finish, and warranted for five years against peeling, flaking or chipping.

Madden's company is one of the largest suppliers of patio covers in the country. He first began offering patio covers in kit form to customers in rural areas who were outside the reach of the company's licensed contractors. The option proved so popular they soon began offering the kits online to customers nationwide under the Patio Covers DIY brand.

"It's never been easier or more convenient to add a cover to a patio, or even to convert an open driveway into a carport," Madden concluded.



Cleaning Up and Renovating After Your Basement Floods

Each year, several hundred home basements experience some water penetration. And, even if the flooding in your basement isn't catastrophic, if left unattended, it can create a health hazard and cause immediate and long-term damage to your basement and its contents.

Cleanup and restoration professionals offered these suggestions for dealing with minor basement flooding: First, find where the water is coming from and stop the leak. Unless the leak is clean water from a burst pipe, flood waters should be considered contaminated. Even rainwater picks up pesticides, lawn chemicals, and other pollutants and care should be taken to limit exposure to it.

Act quickly to remove the water to minimize moisture damage and prevent the growth of mold. The longer water stands, the more it penetrates wall and flooring materials. And, with the right combination of temperature and high levels of humidity, mold will begin to grow on exposed surfaces within 24 to 48 hours.

Check floor coverings, walls and furniture to determine the extent of water penetration. If dampness has wicked up your finished walls, it's time to call in the professionals, says Ed

Perryman, president of Perryman Consulting & Construction Services, Barrie. In such cases, the potential for hidden mold growth is very high and it is essential that the wet sheetrock be removed, the affected area dried out and new sheetrock installed.

Remove everything, including furniture, exercise equipment and electronics gear from the wet areas and dry each item. In addition to preventing water damage, removing these items eliminates pockets of moisture that could be trapped underneath, and allows you to pull up your finished floor. If, for some reason, you can't remove something, put it up on blocks to keep it away from the dampness and allow air to flow underneath. Porous items such as upholstered furniture, carpets and padding that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and dried should be discarded.

Lift up the finished floor — carpet, laminate, vinyl or wood — and remove any padding or underlayment materials, and the subfloor, if you have one.

Dry out the area and clean it thoroughly. Remove standing water with a special wet vacuum, not a regular household vacuum cleaner and then damp mopping with mild detergent

and hot water to kill bacteria and remove mold.

Continue the drying process by renting large fans and blowers designed specifically to create adequate air circulation to evaporate the remaining moisture. Run a dehumidifier. You'll need to reduce the relative humidity to 50 percent or less, at a temperature of 72 F. It's also a good idea to invest in a humidity sensor that will read humidity levels. Use it to monitor the drying process.

REBUILDING AFTER A FLOOD

If the flooding gives you the excuse you need to embark on a total basement makeover, the contractors recommend hiring a professional who specializes in flood restoration and can offer solutions that will manage basement moisture, prevent mold growth and foster a healthy living environment. But in any case, they identify several "must-do's" that are frequently overlooked in planning a basement project, but are essential to protecting your investment.

- Install vapor barriers on concrete walls before putting up drywall. Do not try to cut corners and eliminate the vapor barrier because without it, moisture from condensation can

infiltrate walls and allow mold to grow unseen in wall cavities.

- Plan for adequate ventilation and air exchange to prevent stale, moisture-laden air from accumulating in corners and "dead spaces." Locate heat registers and cold-air returns low on the walls to encourage air movement and evaporation at floor level, where moisture is most likely to accumulate.
- Finally, Perryman suggest installing a subfloor, such as DRICore (www.dricore.com), instead of laying the new finished floor directly over the concrete. This all-in-one modular subfloor has a built-in moisture barrier that will prevent future small leaks from ruining your basement and its furnishings. The subfloor's raised design allows air to circulate between it and the concrete to help evaporate moisture. It also keeps the finished floor from coming into contact with cold concrete for a warmer, drier floor.

Has Your Guest Bath Overstayed Its Welcome?

If your guest bath is trapped in the past -- don't despair! There are some quick and inexpensive changes you can make that will trick your guests into thinking you spent the time and money on a major remodel. Just follow this timeline and soon you will be showing the old bath the door.

One to Two Weeks Prior to Guests Arriving - Tackle the Walls

Metallic foil or floral wallpaper? Dark, damaged trim? Hideous paint color? If your bathroom walls are still living in the 70s or 80s, you'll need some time to get down to the basics so you can refresh and update the look.

To remove wallpaper, use a solution made from water and white wine vinegar to loosen the old adhesive. Next, carefully scrape off the paper. You may need a scoring tool from your local home improvement store to get under the paper and make it easier to remove.

Now is also the perfect time to remove the old medicine chest or drab mirror. Once the walls are clear, clean the walls and trim thoroughly with a damp rag or sponge and fill any nail holes, scratches or other damage with wall putty or joint compound. Sand walls and trim and wipe down again for a clean smooth canvas.

Next, use a primer specially formulated for the bath that offers mildew protection and stain resistance. Before you begin to paint the walls, tape around any windows or door trim for a professional appearance. Apply one to two coats of high-quality, washable paint. For trim, choose high-gloss paint in a neutral color for a cool contrast.

Time: 8 - 24 hours
Paint and Supplies: \$50 - \$100

Three Days Before - Swap Out Your Fixtures

Even if you can't afford to change the style of your current vanity, switching out the faucet is an easy way to create a new look. Try a faucet that will add some style and personality to your bath like Moen's new Brantford lavatory faucet. With its high arc spout and traditional design, it adds timeless appeal and distinction right to your sink.

"Older fixtures can make your bath look dated and show your home's age," says Beth Allison, Moen's wholesale group product manager. "Today's faucets come in great finishes like brushed nickel



and oil rubbed bronze, allowing you to easily freshen up the appearance of your bathroom."

The Brantford collection offers matching accessories including a towel ring, towel bars and a robe hook for a completely coordinated look. As an added touch, even the toilet tank lever can be upgraded to blend with the rest of the bath. Install two robe hooks on the back of the bathroom door or on the wall near the shower and hang fluffy robes for guests to enjoy.

"Paying attention to the details with coordinating accessories can dramatically change the appearance of the bath," adds Allison.

Time: 2 - 4 hours
Cost: \$225 - \$350

Day Before - Finishing Touches

With just one day to go before guests arrive, put the finishing touches on your bath and impress them with your stylish accommodations.

Be sure to have plenty of clean, plush towels including bath towels, hand towels and washcloths. Scatter some colorful soft rugs and bath mats on the floor. Not only will this disguise floors that may need some changing, but will add soft, warm comfort underfoot.

And don't think your old tub/shower has to look it. Install a curved shower rod, like one from Inspirations by Moen, and add six more inches of elbow room to your bath. With a new stylish shower curtain and decorative curtain rings, you'll have a great new look in no time. And, for a luxury shower experience, update your showerhead with a new rainshower, such as Moen's Velocity Multi-function rainshower or Inspire nine-inch rainshower.

As if they are visiting an upscale hotel, fill a unique basket with luxurious lotions, shampoos, facial and body soap so guests can indulge, but don't forget the basics like toothpaste as well.

Finally, finish off the room with some fresh flowers or green plants to add that extra special touch your guests will be sure to appreciate!

Time: 4 - 8 Hours
Cost: \$100-\$250

By following these tips and this timeline, you'll be amazed at how easy it can be to transform your guest bath so it looks and feels "guest ready." ARA

Curbside Wow: Boost Your Home's Look With New Shingles



If you buy a new car, you don't drive around with bald tires. When you buy a new suit, you don't wear it with old tennis shoes. So, when it comes time to remodel your home's exterior, don't forget the roof.

From the curb, the view of your house could be as much as 50 percent roof, which gives it a large visual presence. Updating the roof can have a tremendous impact on the overall look of your home. With that in mind, you should approach your exterior color choices with the same care given when choosing interior colors.

Update the worn, tired looking shingles with fresh shingles, coordinated with your trim and siding in today's popular colors, and you have a whole new look. Nothing helps pump up curb appeal faster, not to mention the additional value for your home.

"Choosing a roof color is just like choosing flooring or wall color. Think about what you like most and what complements your style and your home," says Bert Elliott, product segment leader for residential roofing divisions of Owens Corning.

Here's a hint: cool colored homes that have blue or grey hues look good with black- or gray-based roofs. Warm colored homes with red or yellow hues are complemented by a brown-based roof. If you look closely at the shingle color, you'll see a combination of different colors that blend together. For example, a shingle that appears brown actually is a blend of cream, tan, green, dark brown

or black granules. By "pulling out" an individual granule color and using this color to paint other exterior elements like siding, trim and entryways, your entire exterior will be coordinated. And your home's appeal from the street will dramatically increase.

Here are some tips from Elliott regarding shingle color:

- * Complementary colors and shades -- Use the highlight color to bring out the special architectural style of your home, as well as the beauty of brick, stone or even trees surrounding your home.
- * Darker color blends -- Provide contrasting color for accenting windows, doors and other architectural elements.
- * Lighter color blends -- Simplify a home's lines and angles, making the home appear larger.

Shingle color isn't the only factor that affects the look of your house. The style of shingle you choose will also help to distinguish your home's exterior.

If you prefer a more consistent, smooth look to your roof, consider a muted color-blend architectural grade shingle. If you want to add more visual interest to your roof, choose a thicker dimensional shingle with bolder, more vibrant colors. Or, consider slate- or wood shake-look asphalt shingles. These premium grade shingles create a distinctive look without the high cost or concerns that come with slate or shake roofs. ARA



WHAT DECORATING STYLE FITS YOU?

Many homeowners do not know where to begin when decorating or redecorating their homes. What they may know is that they want to impart personalization and use a style that expresses their likes and interests. However, narrowing down a particular design style can be difficult if you're not exactly sure what components make up these styles. Here's a look at a few popular considerations.

DESTINATION DECORATING

One of the most popular trends is to bring European influences into the home by mimicking the ambiance and decorating elements unique to these areas of the world.

French countryside: At home in the country or Victorian homes, this rustic style evokes feelings of bright sunshine and delicate mountain scapes. An important part of this style is to use natural materials — from exposed wood beams to an impressive stone fireplace — to give the home a cozy, yet simplistic look. Colors run the gamut from fiery reds to creamy yellows, balanced with blues and grays. And don't overlook the use of toiles on upholstery and walls.

Swedish simplicity: If you're one who appreciates a light and airy home, borrowing from Swedish style could be key. Known for enduring long, dark winters, Swedes combatted the dreary weather by transforming their homes into bright showplaces. Furniture has straight or slightly curving lines;

fabrics are composed mostly of whites and creams with touches of sunny colors like blues and yellows; and benches are a staple of Swedish design.

Tuscan retreat: For those who appreciate a home that is bathed in comfort, Tuscan style is perfect. Again, comprised of natural materials, like stone, marble and earthy clays, Tuscan style also intermixes wrought iron, hardwoods and shutters to add to the appeal. Exterior design is also important, where a patio or portico should also be part of the structure. Nothing should look shiny or new in a Tuscan home — it should blend with nature and have an overall warm tone.

TRADITIONAL STYLES

These styles never go out of fashion: **Contemporary:** At the heart of this style is line and form. That's why it's a popular choice of architects and artists. Some say

it seems stark, but with clean lines and a minimalist look of a neutral palette with a splash of bright color, it still remains popular.

Traditional: These styles are classic and comfortable, and for some, predictable. They can seem old-fashioned and fussy, but for others they exude an unsurpassed comfort. Colors are muted and often include plaids, florals and are accented by wooden furniture, typically with darker stains and carvings.

Casual: This style is all about what the name implies: a home that's easy to live in and is comfortable and inviting. These homes have simple horizontal lines; textured, not shiny fabrics; and simple details. Furniture is typically oversized and comfortable.



Kitchen Couture -- High Style Is the Latest Trend for Upscale Kitchens

Stylish extras give your guests the impression they have stepped into a gourmet kitchen, even if you're not a gourmet chef. Create a culinary masterpiece with the latest upscale kitchen products that not only cater to your sense of style, but to your sense of taste as well.

Bottom to Top Luxe

For years, granite countertops were a luxurious addition to many high-end kitchens. But as the look has become more mainstream, why not use it in an unexpected way -- on your floors? Not only is it durable and virtually stain-proof, it comes in thousands of colors and textures for a beautiful addition to your room -- where you least expect it, under foot.

Kitchen Aids

Dramatic kitchen statements can be made with remarkable commercial-grade cooking tools now available for your home. "Consumers are continually looking for unique luxury items to create a distinctive look in their kitchens

and they are willing to spend money to achieve that," says Judy Riley, Moen's vice president of design. "This has led to a demand for high-end cooking items and culinary instruments that are crossing over into residential applications."

Perhaps your family enjoys wood-fired pizza and artisan breads. Add a hearth-stone oven to make these dishes in your own kitchen. For extraordinary roasting, look to a commercial-style rotisserie for delicious duck, lamb or chicken. Or, to spice up your kitchen with a great conversation piece and a cooking tool rarely seen in the United States, try a tandoor oven. This Ancient Middle Eastern clay oven is ideal for whipping up delicacies such as curries, spicy masalas and naan breads.

Gourmet chefs seldom do the heavy lifting when cooking up their eclectic cuisine, so why should you? New pot fillers, like the stylish model from ShowHouse by Moen, mount easily to the wall above your cooktop or range -- allowing for less spills and more safety in the kitchen. Previously only available in commercial kitchens, the ShowHouse

Pot Filler now comes in a warm Oil Rubbed Bronze finish and can extend up to two feet to deliver hot or cold water directly into your pots and pans. When it's not in use, the pot filler folds neatly against the wall for an understated, yet upscale, look.

See Double

To create the ultimate luxury kitchen, two appliances are better than one. And now the double oven, long a staple in gourmet kitchens, has gone high-tech. Program your oven to cook your dinner: a refrigeration function keeps the food chilled until it's time to heat up. Better yet, new turbo ovens are available that use forced air and microwave technology for quicker cooking. Imagine roasting a 12-pound turkey in 42 minutes or baking a pie in less than 15.

Double appliances work twice as well for your own private parties. If you love to entertain, your refrigerator is probably bursting at the seams every weekend. Add a second refrigerator to keep party food fresh and drinks chilled. If you

don't have the space for something full-sized, incorporate a beverage center, complete with a small wine-chilling refrigerator and ice maker.

And seeing double also means double-duty convenience. Install a drawer dishwasher in your island prep station for quick clean-up, while your main dishwasher does the heavy-duty work. Add warming or refrigeration drawers to aid in the food preparation process and added convenience will be just an arm's length away.

Glamorous Entertainment Options

Don't forget entertainment while entertaining. Access the family's collective music library from a computer touch screen and listen to music wired through speakers hidden behind your cabinets. Flat panel television screens that look like mirrors or artwork when not in use, are a high-tech, high-end addition as well.

Wine Not?

The ideal temperature for wine storage is 10 to 13 degrees Celsius, with moderately damp and dark conditions. Since most kitchens are designed to be welcoming and cheery, you may want to consider adding your own wine cellar. As a stand-alone room that can hold up to 500 bottles, or a smaller refrigerated unit that preserves 10, there are a host of options to keep your wine collection easily accessible and perfectly stored.

Finishing Touch

Don't overlook finishes when creating your kitchen masterpiece. Culinary fixtures and appliances have recently undergone a style makeover to accommodate consumer preference for Old World finishes, such as oil rubbed bronze, pewter and brushed bronze. Look for new products in these great finishes to complement your decor.

New options, new products and new luxurious products ensure that the sky is the limit when designing the gourmet kitchen of your dreams. ARA

Prevent Hard Water Spots from Staining Your Shower and Exterior Glass

If someone were to ask you what the hardest room in the house to clean is, you'd likely say the bathroom. Sure a little bleach and cleanser will keep the mirror and countertops looking nice, and toilet cleaner works well in the bowl, but what about your glass shower doors?

You've likely noticed they are not as clear as they once were anymore. It's a problem that's more common than you may think.

Shower doors get cloudy when soap scum and dissolved minerals from the water supply cling to microscopic crevices in the surface of untreated glass. So what can you do about it? Some hard water stains will yield to scrubbing with white vinegar and a non-scratch pad. Before trying this solution, protect your hands with latex gloves and be prepared to use some elbow grease. The vinegar odor can be quite strong so you might want to test your reaction to breathing the fumes before using vinegar in an

enclosed area.

If you find that vinegar is ineffective, then you may be dealing with stains that have actually bonded to the surface of the glass. Some people report success with using a paint-scraper or razor blade to remove bonded stains. Should you choose to try this method, be extremely careful not to scratch or etch the glass. Using a blade also carries the risk of injury and infection. Another possible solution would be to resort to using harsh chemicals like Lime-away or CLR.

Vinegar and scrapers didn't work for Vicki Lewis of Cottonwood, Calif., and she didn't want to use harsh chemicals. When it got to the point where it would have been easier but too expensive to replace the shower glass than to clean it, she finally concluded that the only way to obtain a safe and simple product that would easily remove hard water stains was to develop one herself.

Lewis consulted professional cleaners

and chemists and found the explanation for why the stains were so difficult to remove. "To successfully remove the stain you must break the molecular binding between the mineral and the microscopic crevices in the glass," says Lewis. "My initial research centered on how the minerals bonded to the pits in the glass and how to break the bonds. Even more research showed how to prevent the minerals from binding to the glass in the first place."

Twelve years after she started her testing, Lewis introduced Bring-It-ON Cleaner for removing hard water stains on both interior and exterior glass surfaces, without caustic chemicals, harsh odors, or hard scrubbing. Environmentally-safe Bring-It-ON is a combination of powerful detergents, mild jewelers-grade abrasive and oxygen bleach, which has the added bonus of helping to eliminate most odor causing bacteria in the bathroom and kitchen. In testing, tough organic stains like coffee, berries, mold and mildew yielded to the formula, as

did stains caused by alkali, rust, oil and grease.

Regardless of whether you use a home remedy or a commercial product to remove your hard water spots and stains, apply the solution to a damp sponge or non-abrasive pad and rub gently in a circular motion until the stain is gone, then rinse. Most products are safe for use on porcelain, ceramic tile, stainless steel, fiberglass and Formica, but you should always test it on an inconspicuous surface before use.

Once the glass is clean, you can prevent stains from coming back by treating the surface with a sealant. Lemon or orange oil will provide a temporary coating and a pleasant aroma. For a longer-term seal you can use an automotive or furniture paste wax, or try out Lewis' homegrown solution -- Pro-Tect Shield, a product designed to provide a long-lasting seal which prevents the minerals in hard water from attaching to glass and other surfaces in the first place.

Whichever solution you choose, spray it onto your glass or tile surface and buff it off with a soft terry-cloth towel. This coating fills the microscopic pits in the surface to which minerals cling and prevents the stains from setting in. This process requires just a few minutes of time. Repeat frequently to ensure that the coating remains intact. To extend the effectiveness of the sealant, squeegee the glass after each use. Installing a water softener to reduce mineral content in the water will also help.

Water spot problems are not limited to shower doors. These solutions should work for water and mineral stains on bathroom and kitchen ceramic tile, Formica, Corian, porcelain and fiberglass. Outside the home, they should also be effective on windows, automotive glass, pool tile and outside furniture. Do not use on automobile paint, marble, Plexiglas or soft plastic. ARA

Inside Or Outside, Hot Tubs Are A Great Home Addition

Modern hot tubs come in many different shapes, sizes, materials and with a huge range of options. By evaluating your own wants and needs before buying, you can ensure your hot tub will deliver the years of enjoyment you expect from it.

A hot tub is a great addition to either the inside or the outside of a home. A tub located on an outdoor patio will allow bathers to enjoy the fresh air, while an indoor tub will protect them from the elements. By deciding which location works best for you and your lifestyle, you reduce options to a more manageable level, cutting down on shopping time.

Depending on local climate, predicted usage in the winter months and personal preference, homeowners may consider housing their outdoor tub in an

enclosed gazebo or choosing an indoor option. While soaking in an outdoor tub on a starry winter night is an exhilarating experience, exiting the tub into sub zero temperatures can be a bit chilling for some.

Most hot tubs sold in Canada today are designed for year-round use. They are fully insulated to retain heat and most maintain high levels of energy efficiency. When paired with a quality cover, outdoor tubs are kept warm and ready to use within minutes of turning them on, even in the winter. N/C

