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By [Sheree Curry](#)

5 Easy Improvements to Transform Your Home

Tired of that same look your home has had for years? Why not give the interior a low-cost face lift. Simple tips to revitalize your home include minimizing furniture, removing clutter, adding updated window treatments, new door knobs, under cabinet lighting, cleaning the carpets and adding a fresh coat of paint, says Michele Wallin, a Minneapolis-based locations scout for Edelman Productions, which produces several shows for HGTV and the DIY Network, including Sweat Equity.

But if you're willing to get a little dirtier and more hands on, here are five small remodeling projects that home experts say can truly transform your abode.

Add baseboard and crown molding for an expensive, finished look. "Installing baseboard or crown molding is inexpensive and easy to accomplish with a short learning curve," says Eric Stromer, author of Do It Yourself Family and host of HGTV's Over Your Head, in which he helps homeowners finish projects that have become overwhelming.



Base and crown molding can run anywhere from sixty cents to \$5 a linear foot. Measure the perimeter of your room to quickly determine the materials cost. You'll also have to rent a compound miter saw and a nail gun with a compressor.

"Simply measure corner to corner on all four walls, cut your pieces to length and nail into place," says Stromer. "Patch your holes, prime and paint or stain your pieces, and congratulations you have just installed your first crown or baseboard at \$800 to \$1,200."

Swap out an old light fixture for a new one. If you want to shed new light on a room, consider replacing the light source. A different fixture can create an entirely new mood and ambiance. Accent lighting such as track lighting, recessed lighting, or wall-mounted sconces adds a dramatic effect to your rooms, says Sara Shragal, a home specialist at DirectBuy.com.

New overhead lights and chandeliers can also transform an informal dining room into one of elegance. Or soften your kitchen's sterile look by replacing fluorescent lights with hanging lamps. "To change out a fixture, make sure you turn off the power to the room you're working on from the panel. Then, with a buddy take out the old fixture by unscrewing the ceiling plate to expose all the wires," says Stromer. "Take a picture of the wires with your cell phone so you can see how it was wired previously. Follow the manufacturers directions to install and your good to go."

Paint the kitchen or bathroom cabinets instead of replacing them. Add flair to your kitchen or bathroom by painting the cabinets. "Even better, add crown molding to the top for a custom cabinet look," says professional stager Adrienne van Dooren, who is an expert in fixing up homes to sell fast and is author of The House that Faux Built. Popular colors for cabinet painting include cream with an antique glaze, black, sage [green](#), sienna and yellow, she says.

Outside of a little labor for taping off edges, the [savings](#) compared to replacing cabinets is huge. You'll spend about \$100 for primer, paint and rollers and another \$200-\$250 with the molding, says van Dooren.

Use plaster to add faux stone finishes. Plaster can add a rich look to any room. It can

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transform Formica countertops to look like cement or stone, and even update cracked tile. "You don't have to rip out the tile, you can faux right over it," says van Dooren.

If you're not handy enough to trowel plaster yourself, and you don't have the funds to hire a handyman, simply grouting the tub and around the sink can make a space feel new and clean.

Rip out carpet to expose hardwood floors. Pull back a corner of your carpet and check for hardwood. "If you happen to be one of the lucky golden ticket winners who have real hardwood floors beneath old carpet, then get to pulling," suggests Stromer.

Remove the carpet and padding and thoroughly sweep. Next, rent a floor sander, edger, and sanding disks. Use the floor sander first to sand off the old finish. Sand around the rest of the room and get off what you couldn't with the edge sander. Then fill in any holes with wood filler. Do one final sanding with a higher grit sand screen. Apply stain and follow with a few clear coats.

If you're still unsure about how to approach do-it-yourself home improvement, visit monkeysee.com, a how-to [video site](#) that features experts sharing advice and instruction on a wide array of projects.

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