

# YOUR HOME

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TIPS AND TRENDS TO HELP MAXIMIZE HOME BUYING AND SELLING

## RAZE THE ROOF?

**F**rom painting and HVAC to organizing and yard upkeep, there's so much to think about when it comes to home care that it's easy to overlook the one thing that protects it all — until it starts to leak.

Your roof is one of the most important parts of your house, and it also happens to take the biggest beating, thanks to the elements and general wear and tear.

A new roof is a hefty investment — it can cost \$20,000 or more — so how do you know when to replace it or just repair it? Here are some tips for knowing when to patch and when to overhaul:

- As a general rule, roofs usually last 12 to 20 years, depending on the climate. If your roof is approaching the 20-year mark, shingles are more likely to be worn out, and flashing around chimneys, eaves and skylights might have decayed, leaving your roof prone to leaks.
- If there are a lot of missing or torn shingles, as opposed to just a few, then it's best to replace the roof. Shingles also curl up and crack as they age, making them unable to resist water and exposing your home to leaks and interior damage.
- Inspect the interior walls that touch the roof. If paint is missing, they are moist to the touch or there are water stains in the house, it's clear that water has seeped in, and the roof will most likely need to be replaced. But finding one or two leaks in a specific location could mean that a roof patch will be enough to stall any potential damage.
- Extreme weather can wreak havoc on your roof. If prolonged conditions such as rain, hail and direct sunlight have exposed parts of the house from the top, a minor patch will not be enough to protect the interior, and the roof will need to be replaced.

Keeping your roof clean and in good repair should prevent costly replacements for years to come. But before attempting any patch or replacement, talk to an experienced roofer.

Sources: DIYLife.com, ExtremeHowTo.com

## Safe House

**S**ummer seems to bring out the home-improvement expert in everyone. It's the perfect time to tackle those projects — large and small — that have been lingering. And whether you're bringing out the lawn mower for the first time, getting ready to clean the gutters or repairing odds and ends, consider these important safety tips:



### Mowers

- Before mowing the lawn, do a walk-through of the area and remove any large sticks or debris.
- Wear clothing that offers protection, like sturdy closed-toe shoes and safety glasses or goggles.
- Do not clean the grass exit of a mower by hand, and keep the mower on grass, not pavement, which can kick up debris.

### Ladders

- When using a ladder, place it on level ground and open it completely, making sure all locks engage.
- Always face the ladder when climbing and use slip-resistant shoes.
- Stand at or below the highest safe standing level on a ladder. For extension ladders, it's the fourth rung from the top.

### Power Tools

- Remember to keep tools away from heat, oil and sharp edges.
- Disconnect tools when they're not in use or when you're replacing a blade, bit or part.
- Keep your work areas well lighted and wear gloves and appropriate footwear when using tools.



Sources: Home Safety Council; Occupational Safety and Health Administration

## fast fact » » » » » » » »

**Jump right in:** The market for pool equipment and maintenance products is expected to top \$3.8 billion by 2011.



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## Lost in Space

**D**o you have one area in your house you just can't figure out? Maybe it's too small or oddly shaped or just not in the right location in your home. Don't let it turn into dead space. There are plenty of ways to turn unusual home spaces into comfortable, functioning living areas that appear as if they were built for a purpose.

If large enough, divide the space into individual "rooms," so that one area can be used for one purpose, leaving the rest of the area open for a different use. The possibilities are endless: a library or reading nook, an office, a crafting room, or a yoga or art studio.

If the room is particularly small, remember to use furnishings that fit the space. For example, an overstuffed couch won't do well in a room meant for two

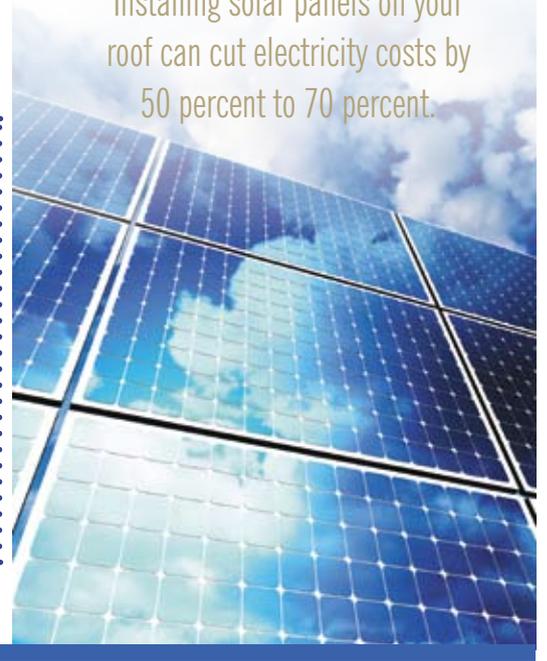
chairs. Go curvy: Round furnishings in hard corners or plants placed strategically can help. To give the illusion of space in a small area, choose glass tops or chairs. Curtains that run floor to ceiling create height and flow in a small space.

Other things to consider: Painting an "odd" wall in a different color, and using it to display art or photos will also lessen its awkward effect on the room; and an area rug in the center of the room will bring the eye to the middle of the space, rather than focusing on its unusual shape or size.

Source: HGTV

### DID YOU KNOW?

Installing solar panels on your roof can cut electricity costs by 50 percent to 70 percent.



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