

# TIPTOP TIPS



Go grand and think big with accessories so not to clutter a beautiful room with small, distracting nick-nacks. Hang a complimentary piece of artwork, even a befitting tapestry, and tie a room together with a knock-out area rug. Photo courtesy Masland Carpets & Rugs

## Accessories

When formulating a budget for your remodeling project, put enough aside for accessories. Beautiful accessories are just as important as furniture and window treatments and bring together a look that is uniquely yours. Before starting, choose your colors first and bring your paint and fabric swatches with you when shopping to avoid mistakes and return trips.

— Jane Ross  
**Something Special**  
 12703-A Cutten South  
 832.249.8607

Design with confidence using classic accessories. The mantra “less is more”

rules. A common mistake is to fill up walls and tabletops with itty-bitty accessories. Go bold. Live large. Create a focal point using a grand piece of art. Adorn your wall with a rich tapestry draped from a fluted pole with exquisite finials.

Tickle your toes with a fabulous area rug for your great room. It’s a key design element often overlooked. I recommend a rug that highlights at least two colors found in the rest of your home.

Do the unexpected. Mix different shapes, such as hexagonal and rectangular, to get a custom look.

— Beth LaPenna, ASID  
**Interior Reflections**  
 281.580.7775  
[www.interiorreflections.com](http://www.interiorreflections.com)

## LOCAL SOURCES SHARE THEIR REMODELING EXPERTISE WITH INVALUABLE TO-DO AND NOT-TO-DO ADVICE

### Backsplashes

When replacing an old backsplash with a new one, consider relocating the unsightly electrical outlets that destroy the look of the beautiful new backsplash. The electrical outlets can be relocated under the cabinets with the undercounter lighting.

— Carolyn Blum  
**JC Decor, LLC**  
 5512 FM 1960 West  
 281.880.9260

Ask yourself which type of sink, faucet, cook top or backsplash will be used. With many options to choose from, coordinating colors and materials first will help the decision process go as smooth as possible. As with any recipe, you don't start cooking until you have all your ingredients.

— Danny Valdez  
**Traditional Designs Ltd.**  
 3602 W. 12 St., 713.463.5800  
[www.traditionaldesigns.com](http://www.traditionaldesigns.com)



PHOTO COURTESY KOHLER

New homebuyers or people remodeling their bathrooms should select their framed bath mirrors before the electrician puts any electrical connections into the wall. Too often,

people can't use the mirror size they want because the electrical outlets are already installed and the mirror would cover them. Also, the size and positioning of any bath light fixture should be chosen after the mirror selection.

— Don Waheed  
**Warehouse Frames 'n Gallery**  
 3815 Fondren Road  
 713.974.6000  
[www.warehouseframesn-gallery.com](http://www.warehouseframesn-gallery.com)

When remodeling a bathroom or kitchen, make sure you order the items you like before you start to demo it. Depending on the style and finish, some items can take up to six weeks to get in. That way, when the items are needed for installation, you have it ready and work is not stopped.

— Zeeshan Sultanali  
**Baths of America**  
 4230 Richmond Ave.  
 713.572.2284  
[www.bathsofamerica.com](http://www.bathsofamerica.com)

### Bathrooms

Select your bathtub before you finalize your plans: Sit in the tub before you buy. This keeps you from buying a tub that is too small or too large. Also be sure to specify the correct drain location so you know whether it will be an end drain or a side drain.

— Betty Krolczyk  
**Marathon Spa & Bath**  
 1549 Highway 36 North  
 Rosenberg, 281.342.8775  
[www.marathonspaandbath.com](http://www.marathonspaandbath.com)

## TIPTOP TIPS



Consider cabinets, even in the kitchen, as "furniture," as well as take the extra steps to have that lovely new backsplash installed properly. Choose countertops with good looks, durability and sanitary properties for safe food preparation. Photo courtesy Wood-Mode Inc.

## Cabinets

Want to update a kitchen in an older home with 8-foot ceilings? Remove the furdowns, replace the upper cabinets and extend them all the way to the ceiling. This will create the illusion of higher ceilings and give an updated look.

Do not replace the cabinets over your kitchen island; leave the space open. The kitchen will appear much larger and more spacious.

— Carolyn Blum  
**JC Decor, LLC**

5512 FM 1960 West  
281.880.9260

The latest trend is cabinetry designed like furniture. Beautifully designed cabinets should be finished like fine furniture.

Catalyzed sealers and oven-baked varnish topcoats provide maximum resistance to scuffing, dents, moisture, UV fading and many household chemicals, providing lifetime durability. Invest in the best factory finish that your budget allows.

— Mary Calvin  
**Cabinet Innovations**

5120 Woodway Drive  
Suite 219, 713.461.6424  
[www.cabinetinnovations.biz](http://www.cabinetinnovations.biz)

## Chandeliers



PHOTO COURTESY SCHÖNBEK

When selecting a crystal chandelier, look for several things, with color, cut and type of the crystal of utmost importance. Crystal chandeliers come in generally four types of crystal: hand-cut, gem-cut, Swarovski crystal and strass. Remember, size does matter. Most people tend to select smaller than usual chandeliers in certain areas. Bigger is better. Your fixture should be in scale with your table, room and ceiling height.

— Ann Morgan  
**The Lighting Gallery**

6265 FM 1960 West  
281.444.9299

## Countertops

When remodeling your kitchen, choose a countertop that works with your lifestyle. If you like to cook or entertain often, its best to choose a countertop with little to no maintenance, such as one that has a 15-year stain warranty.

— Tony Bolfig  
**Bolfig Brothers Marble Inc.**

18407 Telge Road, Cypress  
281.351.7195  
[www.bolfigbrothers.com](http://www.bolfigbrothers.com)

When choosing countertops, consider not only looks and durability, but also sanitary qualities. A "Cleaner/Safer Countertop," is porous-free, integrated with Microban and certified by Greenguard and the National Sanitation Foundation.

Microban is the built-in protection that safely fights the growth of microbes such as odor-causing bacteria, mold and mildew 24/7 for the life of the product.

The Greenguard Indoor Air Quality Certifies the countertop as having low-to-no emissions (off-gassing) of toxic chemicals into the indoor environment. The National Sanitation Foundation's NSF51 certification ensures the countertop as a safe material for use in food preparation areas, including commercial kitchens.

— Jeff Bednarz  
**Silestone of Houston**

3700 S. Sam Houston Tollway West  
1.866.COUNTERTOP  
[www.silestoneusa.com](http://www.silestoneusa.com)

For granite countertops, choose your granite first, if possible, before you choose flooring, backsplash and paint. There are more choices of tile and paint than stone. View the actual slab(s) to be used for your project. This decision is too important to be based only on a sample or a photo.

— Dollie Martinez  
**ICM Marble & Granite**

281.242.9009  
[www.icmmarble.com](http://www.icmmarble.com)

## Doors

Upgrading a home's front entranceway can boost its perceived value by up to \$24,000 simply by changing your front door, sidelights or transom. When replacing an exterior door and jamb, assure that the bottom 6 inches (or more) of the jamb is made of an inorganic material — not wood. These doorjamb are typically called "frame-saver" jambs. This eliminates the wicking of water that causes the jambs and doors to rot in Houston's hot, wet climate. When replacing exterior doors, seal the top and bottom of the door with at least two good coats of paint. This minimizes rotting, splitting and warping that usually begins at these locations.

— Warren Clark  
**BMC West Building Materials**

281.440.9090

If you decide to use antique door hardware on your new doors, be sure to tell your contractor or the building materials dealer not to pre-drill the doors.

— Adkins  
**Architectural Antiques**

3515 Fannin, 713.522.6547  
[www.adkinsantiques.com](http://www.adkinsantiques.com)

## TIPTOP TIPS



*Fiberglass doors deliver superior energy efficiency, durability and low maintenance. As well, an attractive new front door instantly provides that magic "curb appeal."*  
Photo courtesy Jeld-Wen Windows & Doors

Out-of-style doors detract from the other improvements you've made to an interior space. Replacing interior doors with new, designer raised-panel doors complements other improvements and is a quick and simple way to update your home.

— **David W. Goza**  
**Interior Door Concepts**

9654-A Old Katy Road  
713.467.3667, [www.interior-doorconcepts.com](http://www.interior-doorconcepts.com)

## Exterior Lighting

The right outdoor lighting allows you to derive the full benefits of your costly landscaping after the sun goes down. It also provides safety and security, not to mention increasing the resale value of your property.

— **John H. Dailey**  
**Robert Huff Landscape Illuminations**

713.861.2000  
[www.roberthuff.com](http://www.roberthuff.com)

## Insulation

The most effective and often least expensive way to reduce energy usage in your home is with the proper amount of insulation. The U. S. Department of Energy recommends an R-38 - that's a 15-inch layer of blown-in fiberglass insulation over the living spaces in your attic.

— **Rick Simas**  
**Efficient Attic Systems**

866-55-ATTIC  
[www.efficientattic.com](http://www.efficientattic.com)

## Landscaping

Refresh your landscape. Bring the outdoors in or the indoors out. Stay with your home's interior theme, style, design or colors in the garden. Creative use of containers, iron décor (painted) and even colorful hanging lanterns offers ambience at night and colorful accents by day.

— **Beverly Welch**

## The Arbor Gate

15635 FM 2920, 281.351.8851  
[www.arbortgate.com](http://www.arbortgate.com)

## Organization

For a more organized and peaceful start to your day, custom closets are essential. A properly designed closet system will maximize every available inch of closet space and possibly double the storage capacity.

— **David Linda**  
**SpaceMan Home & Office**

3556 West T.C. Jester  
713.688.8808  
[www.spacemanager.com](http://www.spacemanager.com)

Wish your office could double as guest room? Install a Murphy-style wall bed. Modern-day versions are beautifully customized. This space-saving option allows you to double the functionality of your space in less than a day without the hassles or expense of a room addition.

— **Michelle Levine**  
**SpaceMan Home & Office**

3556 West T.C. Jester  
713.688.8808  
[www.spacemanager.com](http://www.spacemanager.com)

Most garages these days have turned from a place for your cars to a place for everything but your automobile. Using the most wasted space in your garage — the space above your head — can transform your garage to its original purpose: your cars.

— **Dan Tracy**  
**American Custom Products, LLC**

713.454.7084  
888.5.GARAGE

## Outdoor Furniture



PHOTO COURTESY BROWN JORDAN

To maintain the new look of your outdoor furniture during the summer, you should:

1. Wash the frames, fabrics and/or straps at least once a year with soap and water.
2. Wax the frames to protect against UV light, acid in the rain and body oil.
3. Check for missing or worn glides, feet caps, plugs and other parts. Replace to avoid chipping and scratches to the frame.

— **B. J. Mehrinfar**  
**Patio 1**

Three locations  
713.977.4455  
[www.patio1.com](http://www.patio1.com)

## Outdoor Surfaces

What finish should your exterior stone tile have to avoid being slippery? Materials for all exterior flooring, particularly pool decks, should pass the slip test (the ASTM C1028 test) to help avoid accidents and falls. Most honed (matte) materials are slippery, while many brushed surfaces are slip-resistant and even appear cleaner.

— **Nancy Magoto**  
**Marble & Tile Collection Inc.**

1285 N. Post Oak Road  
Suite 100  
713.850.9595

## Painting



PHOTO COURTESY SHERWIN-WILLIAMS

Painting is the least expensive way to bring a whole new look to a room. Here are some tips for do it yourselfers.

1. Priming is a mundane task, but it makes the job easier and more professional looking.
2. Practice techniques on poster board.
3. Be prepared and set up before starting. Have a good supply of latex type gloves, rags, throwaway brushes and a trash bag nearby.
4. Take time to prepare the room by removing light and switch plate covers, taking down window treatments and blinds and filling holes.
5. If you intend to rehang pictures, leave the nail in the wall.
6. Paint barefoot so you know if you step in dripped paint and then proceed to get it all over the house.
7. Have two high-quality brushes to use: one for latex paints and one for oil paints. Store them in their original containers to maintain their shape.
8. If you have to stop painting but intend to come back to the project within 24 hours, wrap your roller or brush in foil and store in the refrigerator.
9. Clean up is easier if you line your paint pan with foil.
10. When looking at samples for a room, it seems that the darker of the choices you look at work the best. Trust your instinct and your designer's or sales person's advice.
11. Before you purchase paint, know the measurement of your room so you get the correct amount. Take along digital pictures of the room you are painting and the furniture in it.

— Warren Clark  
**BMC West**  
**Building Materials**  
 281.440.9090

Do you start your redecorating with the wall color and finish or the furniture? Choose color for your walls, ceiling and trim last. The easiest things to match are the walls to your furniture, not the other way around.

Start with your favorite color, fabric or carpet. If building your design around a piece of furniture, let the furniture's fabric colors be your starting point. Look at the fabric next to carpet, flooring, tile, granite, stone and fixtures.

Assemble all elements, and then choose colors for all interior surfaces. Color for walls need not be flat paint. A sheen on walls can reflect light in dark rooms, a painted design can add drama and a textured surface can add character.

— Janie Ellis  
**Anything But Plain, School of Decorative Finishes**  
 281.444.2070  
[www.anythingbutplain.com](http://www.anythingbutplain.com)

Select paint colors so they transition from room to room. Most homeowners get stumped here, so professional guidance can ease the selection process, eliminating costly mistakes and fear of the wrong color.

Most builders paint interiors one color; for more visual impact, use contrasting or complementary colors to play up the architectural features of your home such as niches, recessed ceilings, cabinets and bookshelf backgrounds. This is especially critical in new homes that are open, where defining where a room begins and ends is more difficult for painting purposes.

— Claudia Letendre  
**The Roost**  
 5419 FM 1960 West  
 281.440.4455  
[www.theroosttx.com](http://www.theroosttx.com)

## Reupholstering

How do you know a piece of furniture is worth reupholstering? Here are three good reasons:

- a) Personal attachment. It's an emotional heirloom piece, you can't find anything else like it or you just simply can't let it go.
- b) It's a one-of-a-kind piece of furniture, whether antique, exotic or designer piece.
- c) It's a good piece of furniture that's well built, sturdy and timeless.

— Marie Dang  
**Maximum Furniture**  
 11330 Northwest Freeway  
 713.957.0003  
[www.maximumfurniture.com](http://www.maximumfurniture.com)

## Rugs

People are returning to hard-surface floors. Custom rugs are the perfect answer in rooms with hard-surface floors because they give the room a focal point. Without a rug, furniture appears to be floating in the room. The rug brings it all together. "Custom" means the carpet is designed specifically to complement the colors, fabrics and furniture in the room. If the fabrics are busy and more color would be a distraction, a design can be carved into the rug for a subtle tone-on-tone look.

— Raquel and Rubin Henderson  
**Rubin's Custom Rugs and Fine Carpet**  
 3130 Rogerdale Road  
 Suite 150, 713.784.1180

## Windows

If you want to reduce noise and lower cooling and heating costs, an easy economic solution is to insulate your windows.

— Randy Russell  
**R&A Specialties**  
 512.288.6017, 800.924.2320  
[www.magnetite.net](http://www.magnetite.net)

When replacing your windows with new energy-efficient ones, make sure you find a company you can trust. The most important point when replacing your windows is installation. Make sure you find a company that has the most experience, is insured and can be bonded.

— James Fiume  
**Gulf Coast Windows**  
 10839 Train Court  
 713.849.5454  
[www.gulfcoastwindows.com](http://www.gulfcoastwindows.com)

Tired of people looking through that window by your front door? Improve the looks and resale value of your home by adding glass blocks.

— Ken Bowman  
**Masonry & Glass Systems Inc.**  
 9365 Winkler Drive  
 713.944.9716  
[www.masonryglass.com](http://www.masonryglass.com)

## Wood Furniture

Beware! What may look like solid wood furniture may be something else. Ask questions and take a close look at materials. Aside from visual considerations, imitations can never compare to solid woods when it comes to holding nails and screws and withstanding the stresses, loads, shocks and scratches of our daily life. Solid wood furnishings always will remain genuine, natural and classic.

— Ismail Khalil  
**Queens Furniture**  
 7010 Harwin Drive  
 713.784.8482