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New Year's Resolutions for Your Home

No matter where you live, a new year offers you the opportunity to better your home. With a can-do attitude and a little courage, you can transform your home into a more charming, efficient, and tidier place.

1) Declutter your home

Rome wasn't built in a day. Decluttering is a process that takes time:

- Take it step-by-step, one room at a time. Starting small with little victories will motivate you to continue organizing the rest of your home.
- In each room, go through drawers, closets, bookshelves, and under furniture. Make a pile of things you don't need or use anymore. Make an "unsure" pile for items you're not ready to throw away but shouldn't necessarily keep either —and come back to those later.
- Play upbeat music while you work. Invite your friends or family to help and order a pizza when you're all done.

2) Cut back on energy

Simple modifications to your everyday routine could save you a large amount on your next electric bill.

- Switch off the lights when leaving a room. 20% of your electric bill goes toward lighting your home and costs the

average homeowner \$200 per year.

- When leaving your home, turn off the air conditioner. Consider purchasing a smart thermostat to control your home's temperature straight from your smartphone.
- Unplug your electronics when you're not using them. According to Energy.Gov, leaving a computer or laptop on all day can cost you 21 cents per day or \$75 per year.

3) DIY projects that pay off

Paint. Zillow's 2017 Paint Color Analysis examined photos of homes that sold across the country and found that rooms painted light blue and pale gray increased the home's value by an average of \$5,440.

Carpet. If you're staring at stained or worn out carpet every day, it may be time to replace it. New carpet and hardwood floors can add several thousand dollars to your home's value.

Curb appeal. Transforming your home's exterior adds a great deal of value and can be done on any budget. Simple improvements such as planting flowers, placing light fixtures along your walkway, or painting your front door and shutters can revamp any yard.

January Calendar

1/1: New Year's Day

1/15: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

National Radon Action Month

Happy New Year!



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January is National Radon Action Month

Radon is a colorless, odorless radioactive gas that forms from decayed radioactive elements like uranium. It's found in soil and can enter a home through cracks in the foundation and walls.

When radon breaks down into solid radioactive elements, it's possible to inhale. According to the EPA, radon is the leading cause of lung cancer deaths among nonsmokers.

No home is exempt from radon — from mid-century to new construction; homes of all types should be tested.

How do you test for radon? Hire a professional who specializes in radon testing. They will use a device to monitor your home's radon levels. Correcting radon levels is easy and relatively inexpensive.

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BBQ Beef-Stuffed Potatoes

Ingredients

1/4 cup dark brown sugar
3 tablespoons unsalted tomato paste
2 tablespoons reduced-sodium Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon chili powder
1 1/4 teaspoons kosher salt, divided
1 1/4 teaspoons black pepper, divided
1 1/2 pounds boneless chuck roast, trimmed
1 1/2 cups vertically sliced red onion
Cooking spray
6 (4-oz.) russet potatoes

2 teaspoons olive oil
3 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, shredded (about 3/4 cup)
6 tablespoons light sour cream
1/4 cup sliced green onions

Instructions

Step 1: Combine brown sugar, tomato paste, Worcestershire sauce, chili powder, 1 teaspoon salt, and 3/4 teaspoon pepper in a small bowl; rub generously over roast.

Step 2: Place red onion slices in bottom of a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker coated with cooking spray; top with roast.

Step 3: Rub potatoes with oil, remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Wrap each potato in parchment paper; arrange on top of roast. Cover and cook on LOW 8 hours or until tender.

Step 4: Unwrap potatoes; split lengthwise, cutting to but not through the other side. Shred roast with 2 forks, and stir to combine with onion mixture.

Step 5: Top each potato with 1/2 cup beef mixture, 2 tablespoons cheese, 1 tablespoon sour cream, 2 teaspoons green onions, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper.

<http://www.cookinglight.com/recipes/bbq-beef-stuffed-potatoes>