

YOUR HOME

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TIPS AND TRENDS FOR HOMEOWNERS, BUYERS AND SELLERS

COLOR SPLASH

Let's face it, a home with four white walls can be boring. To create more visual interest, experts at Pittsburgh Paints' Voice of Color blog offer some suggestions for sprucing up your home with color.

Paint the ceiling. The ceiling is an integral part of the room, so give it some attention. If the wall color is light, paint the ceiling the same color. For dark-colored walls, choose a paint color that is one or two shades lighter than the walls. To accentuate a beautiful light fixture, paint the ceiling red, gray or chocolate brown.

Choose the right white. With so many subtle tones and hues available, finding the right white to frame fabrics and furnishings can be difficult. Warm or creamy whites can make a room more inviting while white mixed with a tint of color creates a soft, subdued echo of the room's dominate color.

Choose your paint color last. Select furnishings, window treatments and bedding first, then match your paint color to them. Hold color swatches against furnishings, not against a white wall. You'll get a clearer idea of which paint colors will work best.

Create accent walls by painting one wall a darker color. The accent wall should be the focal point of the room, such as a wall with a fireplace, a set of windows, a piece of artwork on display, or where your bed is located.

Accentuate the size of small rooms and hallways. Light colors can make small rooms seem bigger, but deep, warm colors can accentuate its coziness and give the room more personality. Hallways will appear larger too when one wall is painted a darker color.

Add color to unexpected places. Paint the staircase wall leading to the basement a sharp, contrasting color, or use different colors for the backs of shelves to help showcase items on display.



RELOCATION COSTS

Considering a move to a new city? Before packing your bags and hiring a moving company, be sure to research the potential price tag of relocating. It may cost more than you think.



Cost of living can vary greatly from town to town, so do some research before taking the plunge. *Better Homes and Gardens* recommends browsing the local newspaper for grocery promotions, ads, and other local news to track costs so you can determine the income you might need. While several cost-of-living calculators are available on the Internet, they provide only general figures and don't take into account specific housing needs.

Be sure to ask a Certified Residential Specialist in your target area about "hidden" homeownership costs, such as recreation fees, trash collection and community services. Try to obtain a one-year sampling of utility bills for the type of home you're considering. What can you expect to pay for telephone, cable TV and Internet services? Will you have your own septic tank and water pump, or will the community provide water service?

There are other expenses to consider, such as taxes and transportation. Higher taxes may mean better schools, libraries, trash collection and other community services, while lower taxes could mean higher out-of-pocket expenses for these services. Likewise, transportation and parking costs are often higher in larger cities, while a small-town commute can mean a short walk or bike ride. Also, gas prices can be more costly in some areas than in others.

Moving away from family and friends can mean more frequent phone calls and trips back home, so be sure to allow for those additional costs as well. Before making a move, it pays to know what to expect.

fast fact >> >>

Nearly 189 million roses are sold in the U.S. on Valentine's Day.

Source: *Random Facts.com*



PET-FRIENDLY MOVING TIPS



Moving day can be stressful for pets, but you can help them keep comfortable and secure during a move by following these practical tips from the experts at The Pet Realty Network and Moving.net.

If moving to a new city, find out if there are any local regulations about pets, such as weight restrictions or whether they need to be on a leash. Make sure your new building or neighborhood is pet-friendly.

Make sure your pet's vaccinations are up to date and pack up their health records. Search for a new vet ahead of time and send them copies of your pet's medical records. Keep at least one week's worth of food and medication with you during the move in case of an emergency.

On moving day, putting pets in a safe, quiet place, such as a bathroom with their favorite toys, will help keep them calm and out of the way of movers.

When traveling by car, keep pets in a well-ventilated crate or carrier. For their safety, never leave pets alone in a parked vehicle, in an open bed of a truck or the storage area of a moving van.

Once at the new home, set out all their familiar things such as food and water bowls, blanket, litter box and toys. Update their ID tags with the new address and walk around the neighborhood so they'll get used to their new surroundings. Once settled, get them back on their regular exercise and eating schedules as soon as possible.

With a little planning, your pet will feel less stressed about moving.

Say Yes to CRS

Buying a home is one of the biggest and most emotional decisions you will ever make. So it's important to work with someone who can provide sound advice and a steady, guiding hand when you need it. That's why a CRS agent is the best person for the job.

A Certified Residential Specialist (CRS) is among the top 4 percent of all agents in the country. CRS agents have achieved a high volume of transactions and advanced training in areas such as business planning, real estate investing, marketing and technology. They must also maintain membership in the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and abide by its Code of Ethics. Why work with anyone else when you can work with a CRS agent?



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DID YOU KNOW?

The human heart beats 100,000 times in one day, sending 2,000 gallons of blood throughout the body.

Source: Nova Online, PBS



Do you know someone who is thinking about buying or selling a home? Please mention my name.

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