

Don't move...improve

Moving home can be a costly affair, and instead it can often make more sense to improve the space you already have.

Maximise the potential of your property without breaking the bank, with the help of a few home improvements, from a lick of paint to a loft conversion.



12 ways to get more from your home

- 1 Kerb appeal** ➔ **First impressions count**, so if you want your spirits lifted each time you pull up outside your home, why not give the front door a new lick of paint? Make sure that windows, doors, fences and gates are all in good condition, and add more colour with some pots or hanging baskets...so long as you're prepared to water them and keep them looking lush and healthy!
- 2 Bathroom update** ➔ **Plumbing can be expensive**, so rather than rip out your old bathroom suite, why not invest in some shiny new taps? If the grout between your tiles is starting to look tatty, a grout pen only costs a few pounds and will re-colour the grout to make it look almost as good as new.
- 3 Kitchen revamp** ➔ **You don't need to replace** the whole kitchen to give it a fresh new look. If your cupboard doors are looking tired, then why not repaint them and add some new handles?
- 4 De-clutter** ➔ **If you're craving space**, getting rid of junk and things you no longer use can really open up a room. You can then turn all your unwanted goods into cash by selling them at a car boot sale or via an online auction site like ebay.
- 5 Be energy efficient** ➔ **Installing good draft proofing and the right level of loft and cavity wall insulation** will immediately save you money on your utility bills as well as adding value to your property. For advice on making your home more energy efficient visit www.energysavingtrust.org.uk
- 6 Let there be light** ➔ **Well-thought-out lighting** can dramatically change the look and feel of your home. If you want to make a room look bigger, put an uplighter in the corner. It will pool light on the ceiling and increase the feeling of space. Mirrors can also help make the most of light and space in a room.

7

Add parking

- **If parking is difficult** in your area why not consider building a garage or even sacrificing part of your front garden for a driveway – but remember to check whether you need planning permission.

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Loft conversion

- **This is the most cost-effective** way to gain extra living space. Creating a double bedroom with an en-suite bathroom is a popular option. But take professional advice before you start, because the conversion must meet building and fire regulations.

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Inside out

- **How about turning your garden** into an extra room for the summer? Invest in some garden furniture to create an outdoor eating space, and jazz it up with some pretty fairy lights or candles.

10

Be creative

- **Who says you have** to have your lounge downstairs and your bedrooms on the top floor? Perhaps you have particularly great views from the top floor that you'd like to make more of – there's no reason why you can't rearrange your space and move the sofa upstairs!

11

Go green

- **Wood burning and dual fuel stoves** are becoming increasingly popular, as well as solar-panel heating. Many of these ecological improvements won't just add appeal to your home, they can also save you money on energy bills.

12

Extend

- **Adding an extension** could add to a property's value as well as giving you extra living space. So why not build a new Conservatory or extend your lounge for more room for the family to relax in. But remember to check if you need planning permission, and that any work must also comply with building regulations.

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