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Soul-lifting home improvements that are good for your wallet, too

(BPT) - No matter how value conscious a homeowner may be, few people ever make a home improvement simply to increase their house's resale value. People also undertake home improvements to enhance their enjoyment of their home - or to fix a problem, which, in its own way, is good for the soul, too.

When it comes to deciding how to spend your renovation dollars, some home improvements can boost both your spirits and your home value. Here are some soul-lifting home improvements that also add value to your home:

Install a skylight

The health benefits of natural light are well known. Not only does sunlight stimulate the body's production of Vitamin D, it also boosts brain levels of serotonin. Lower serotonin levels have been associated with depression, decreased physical energy, increased appetite and elevated desire for sleep. A lack of sunlight has long been associated with Seasonal Affective Disorder - something your dear old grandmother might have simply called "the winter blues."

And there's another consideration with today's tightly built and heavily insulated homes - indoor air quality. According to the GREENGUARD Environmental Institute ([www.greenguard.org](http://www.greenguard.org)), most of our exposure to environmental pollution occurs by breathing the air indoors.

Adding a traditional or tubular skylight - to virtually any room in the house - brings more mood-boosting natural light into your home. It's also a smart money decision. Energy-saving, solar-powered fresh-air skylights, like those made by Velux America, can be opened to bring much-needed outside air into your home, providing passive ventilation to reduce humidity and stale air, and reduce heating, cooling and lighting costs. Energy Star-qualified solar powered fresh-air skylights and accessories like solar-powered blinds, plus the installation, are eligible for a 30 percent federal tax credit - now that's good for the soul.

You can learn more about energy-efficient skylights and calculate your tax credit for a new or replacement model at [www.veluxusa.com](http://www.veluxusa.com). For more on skylights and other home energy saving tips visit [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov).

Add a sunroom

While you're thinking about the benefits of more natural light in your home, consider adding a sunroom. One of these light-filled retreats returns more than 46 percent of the initial cost when it's time to sell your home, according to Remodeling Magazine's Cost vs. Value Report. In a 2012 survey by the National Association of Home Builders, 52 percent of builders rated sunrooms as "desirable" or "essential" - ranking them higher than other specialty rooms like workout rooms, dens or even media rooms.

Sunrooms can be a great way to make your small home feel much larger, without the expense of a bigger, costlier addition. They also speak to our natural affinity for the outdoors, allowing you to enjoy nature year-round, even when it's too cold to be outside.

Upgrade your bathroom

The trend of bathrooms as a restive oasis doesn't show any signs of disappearing. If you doubt the popularity of luxury bathroom fittings, just visit the showerhead aisle in any home improvement store. Options include everything from rainfall shower heads to multi-jet contraptions that promise a spa-like experience in your own shower stall. Add in jetted tubs, towel warmers and amenities like under-floor heating, and it's easy to understand why real estate pros continue to cite a great bathroom as a must-have for many buyers.

Even if you don't have the space or budget for a major bathroom renovation - which Remodeling Magazine says returns more than 65 percent of its value on resale - even making modest improvements can boost your mood. Replacing old fixtures with newer more luxurious models, such as a touch-free faucet or multiple shower heads, can be an easy, cost-effective way to enhance your enjoyment of your bathroom.

The National Association of Realtors predicts the housing market will continue to improve in 2013. Yet even those who are not thinking of selling any time soon are aware of the value of certain types of improvements. A 2012 survey by Coldwell Banker Real Estate indicates that people are becoming more attuned to the emotional component of home ownership, rather than just viewing their houses as investments.

" ... We're seeing a psychological shift," Dr. Robi Ludwig, a psychotherapist who partnered with Coldwell Banker on the survey, said in an announcement of the survey findings. "Instead of looking at homes through the eyes of an economist, we're realizing that a home doesn't solely equate to financial return or measure only to a mortgage amount. Instead the home is the emotional center of our lives, and it remains a critical component of who we are."

ARTICLE IMAGE(S)



Caption



Caption

Word Count:

762

Quick Read:

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