

# Design Tips for Building a New Home

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## EXTERIORS AND OUTDOOR SPACES:

Consider how the design of your home's exterior is a reflection of your sense of style as well as how it plays an important role in shaping the way your family lives outdoors.

Depending on the type of community and its covenants and restrictions, you may be limited in the exterior color selections of your home to make sure your house doesn't look exactly like your neighbors'.

*Grand entrance:* A brick front with a stoop presents a stately, formal look.

*Gathering place:* Friends and family will be more likely to sit and relax on a wide front porch, which can double as an outdoor room for informal gatherings.

*Color contrast:* Experiment with colors for your shutters that will contrast against your choice of brick or siding. Just like shoes and handbags, the shutters and the front door don't have to match! A brighter, contrasting color can make your front door more inviting.



## NOTES:

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## KITCHEN CABINETS:

Since the kitchen is one of the most frequently used rooms in the house and one of the most expensive to renovate, décor choices are crucial. When you're ready to move, the kitchen can make or break a sale, so choose wisely.

*Everyday use:* When designing your kitchen cabinets, incorporate practical features that you will use frequently. Consider adding drawer stacks, roll-out shelves for pots and pans, trash can pull-outs and glass corner cabinets for displaying your favorite pieces.

*Personal style:* If your taste is more contemporary, choose a flat panel option for cabinet doors. If you lean toward the traditional, choose raised panel cabinets and heavy crown molding.

*Contrasting countertops:* Consider contrasting rich, dark cabinets against light countertops or light cabinets with darker countertops.



## NOTES:

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## COUNTERTOPS:

Countertops are one of the first features that get noticed and, like cabinets, they can play a big role in selling your home when the time comes. In addition to complimenting your cabinetry, countertops should suit your cooking style.

*Laminate* is the most affordable choice for countertops, but that doesn't mean you have to compromise on style. Laminate products have come a long way and are available in a wide variety of colors and patterns; some upgraded lines of laminate even resemble the look and feel of granite. While they are easy to maintain, laminate countertops tend to show scratches over time, especially on darker colors, and can show burn marks from hot pots and pans.

*Solid surface* products are an affordable option and are easy to maintain, durable and some can even be refinished. Solid surface countertops can be finished to include an integrated sink, eliminating the hard-to-clean seam between the sink and countertop. Solid surface products are also non-



porous—they won't promote the growth of bacteria, mold, or mildew.

Two of the most popular products on the market are Solaris™, a polyester-based product, and Corian™, which is acrylic-based. Polyester creates a harder, more brittle surface and is more heat resistant than acrylic. Because acrylic is a softer material, burns and scratches can be buffed. Both materials are available in a wide variety of colors and patterns.

*Granite* is a very hard, natural stone that is usually one of the most expensive countertop options. Granite is highly desirable for its polished, upscale look as well as its ability to withstand stains, heat and scratches. Although granite is available in a wide range of colors and patterns, consistency in grain and pattern can be an issue because it is a natural product.

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## FLOORING:

When choosing flooring, consider the type of foot traffic you will have in that particular area of your home.

*Hardwood* flooring adds elegance and character. In addition to being easy to maintain, hardwood flooring is ideal for allergy sufferers because the surface does not trap dust and dirt. Most hardwood flooring is available in two applications:

Nail-down hardwood (*solid hardwood*) is used in homes built on crawl spaces and is typically available in 2 ¼-inch and 3 ¼-inch widths.

Glue-down hardwood (*engineered hardwood*) is used in homes built on a concrete slab and is typically available in 3-inch and 5-inch widths.

*Carpet* adds comfort and warmth to your home. Carpet can reduce the need for area rugs, but it may need to be replaced after years of wear and tear. There are a wide variety of carpet styles available, including standard cut pile, Frieze, and Berber. No matter what style you choose, there are three key terms to look for when choosing carpet:

**Density:** *Higher density means better performance and comfort.*

**Twist:** *High twist levels mean the carpet is more resistant to crushing and matting.*

**Face weight:** *Choose a carpet with the greatest number of ounces per square yard, which indicates a higher-quality carpet.*

*Carpet padding* is made from high-density foam and is measured in pounds per cubic foot. To



increase the longevity of any carpet, increase the density of the carpet pad.

*Vinyl* is ideal for high-traffic yet casual areas. Vinyl is the least expensive flooring option and is often used in kitchens, baths and laundry rooms where easy clean-up is key. Vinyl is available in a wide variety of patterns and textures, some of which look almost exactly like tile.

*Ceramic tile* is an elegant yet durable option. Ceramic tile is usually one of the more expensive options.

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## PLUMBING AND LIGHTING FIXTURES:

When purchasing a production home, plumbing and lighting fixtures are often packaged to create a consistent look throughout each room. Although costs will vary, your choices of finishes will be mostly a matter of personal taste; for example, brushed nickel or chrome would compliment modern furnishings while bronze finishes typically coordinate with more traditional decor. Cleaning and durability usually aren't a problem with any type of finish.



## STRUCTURED WIRING:

With the introduction of home networking and energy management technology, structured wiring is a critical piece of any new home purchase. Make sure your structured wiring plan includes the flexibility to expand as technology changes. Ensure your wiring panel is easily accessible and has the infrastructure in place to run additional cable lines.



## INTERIOR CUSTOM PAINT:

Most homebuilders will offer a few shades of white or light neutrals that come standard with your home. However, at extra cost, you can choose to have some rooms custom painted. When choosing colors and rooms to paint, consider:

- *the main color scheme of your home.*
- *existing furniture or draperies that you want to keep.*
- *the size of the room.*
- *the amount of natural light in the room.*

Develop a color palette that works together as you walk from room to room. Smaller spaces such as bathrooms may be best suited for light to medium colors to avoid making a small room feel even smaller. Darker colors are best suited for larger rooms with ample natural light. Keep in mind that paint samples are generally darker on the swatch than they will be on your wall.

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