

# Three Home Holiday Fix Up Ideas That Go a Long Way

Guests are coming over the holidays- Is your house a mess? Most homeowners often find themselves in a state of panic in December to clean up, pick up and touch up their house before it's filled with friends and family. But thank goodness, after working in the home improvement industry for years, we have a few tips of the trade for some quick projects that will leave your home in tip-top shape. Follow the guide below, and you'll be able to kick back and relax this holiday season.

## Refinishing a Fireplace

You might not be roasting chestnuts over an open fire, but the fireplace is often the focal point of every living room. Touching up the bricks surrounding a fireplace can be a simple, yet fantastic, holiday home improvement project to brighten up a living room. The current interior painting trend includes most homeowners choosing a transformation to a light gray shade. But it's important to be flexible, because part of painting bricks is that there will be some variety in color.

The first step is to be sure there is no dirt on the bricks. Wiping the surface down with a damp cloth should do the trick, but for lots of dust, homeowners can use a light bleach to prepare the surface. The time it will take all depends on how often the fireplace has been used and how much ash has been accumulated.

The first coat of paint should be a two parts white paint, one part grey and two parts water. This will result in a straight, flat gray shade. If homeowners are looking to darken the color, you can add a couple drops of tricorn black into the mixture. It's a good idea to use an oval-shaped, flat brush to apply the paint to the bricks. The rounded shape will enable you to get into cracks and crevasses. After the paint dries, apply a second coat with the same paint and brush to the area.

Next, create new color using  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups water,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups black paint and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup French Roast paint. Using this mixture, take a rag (not a brush) and apply paint to the area in different places. This will allow for some variation of light and dark stones, and the variation creates better aesthetics than a uniform color over the bricks.

Finally, apply wax to the bricks using the same type of rounded brush. Homeowners should use a chalk paint wax, which helps smooth the stone, bring out the variation and protect the paint from wearing off.

## Touch Up the Front Door

The front door is the first part of your home guests will notice as they arrive. No matter how big of a wreath you buy, it won't be big enough to cover a door full of scuffs. The good news is that touching up a door is as easy as 1-2-3-4!

First, the door's exterior must be smoothed out, and this can be done by simply using sandpaper over the surface. You may need to plan on more time for this step if you live in an area where tree sap gets on the door, as this will require you to go over those areas with sandpaper a few times.

Second, it's important to get some quality painting tape to adhere to hinges and areas surrounding the door. Don't forget to also cover the door knob, as that can easily get paint on it.

Third, if you're changing paint colors, you'll want to apply a coat or two of primer. It's a good idea to use a multi-purpose primer, and most painters will recommend using a Sherwin Williams, as they offer a quality product. The primer also helps the paint not lose its color when it gets direct sunlight. Please note, that the primer has a rather strong odor, so apply primer with the door open, and choose a day that you can leave the door open for a while.

Finally, it's time to paint. The trending paint color is currently reds and shades of burgundy for doors. Paint can simply be applied using a 1 ½ or 2 inch brush. Similarly with the primer, this should be done with the door open. It doesn't take a lot of time to apply all these steps, but it does take about a day or so for it all to dry.

As a final note, some homeowners also repaint the shutters when they paint the door, as the paint color should match. Shutters can be done with a similar step-by-step process as the front door.

## Repaint the Trim

Most homeowners don't have the time or expertise to paint all the walls, but an easy DIY project is to repaint the trim or baseboards on the wall. Over time, this area gets plenty of dings, marks and scuffs in most homes, so a brightened repaint will make a big difference.

Begin by applying tape between the shoe molding and floor to protect the area. Best of all, there is no need for primer and only a small amount of white paint is necessary. Use a small brush and paint right over the previous coat of paint. This will only take an hour or two to dry.

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