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Homefront

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Do It Yourself: KITCHEN CABINETS

BY SHANE GOGGANS

Turn the kitchen into a hot spot even with the oven turned off.

If your cabinets are looking dim, dingy, depressed or even dead, resurrect them with one of these DIY tricks.

Hardware

One of the quickest ways to give old cabinets new life is to change out old hardware. If your keeping the same type of hardware, then all you need is a screwdriver to remove and replace. If you decide to replace the hinges, be sure to mark the cabinet doors so you'll be able to hang them back in the same place. You may be surprised to find out that doors of the same size will not line up well in different locations. If you're looking for more of a dramatic change, then keep reading...

Painting

Painting is probably the most dramatic change, but before you do anything you need to note the finish on your cabinets. Paint or stain? If they are painted, determine if it is oil or latex. This can be checked by rubbing a dab of rubbing alcohol on an inconspicuous area. If it is latex paint it will start to gum up and come off on the rag.

The next step would be to clean and sand the cabinets. To clean, use a product like TSP, a heavy duty cleaner that will remove smoke, grease, or other dirt and grime, and then allow 1 to 2 days dry time. Once the cabinets are dry, sand them with medium grit sandpaper or sanding block. The sanding will remove anything that was missed when cleaning as well as scuff the finish so that your paint or primer will acquire a tight bond. Remove all the dust after sanding. For a large amount of dust use a vacuum, but for the final dusting consider an inexpensive China bristle brush (in past experience the China bristle does better job of removing the fine dust particles) paying close attention to inside corners.

If the original paint was latex then you are ready to begin painting. Use a good quality paint for a nice hard finish with excellent durability. If your cabinets were stained or had oil based paint (didn't come off with the rubbing alcohol) then the next step would be to prime with an oil based primer. After priming, allow 1 to 2 days to dry and then lightly sand and dust again. Now you are ready

for the finish.

Trim Detail

Another upgrade is adding trim to your cabinets. If the existing cabinet doors allow room, you can add a crown molding. If the cabinets go to the ceiling then you can install crown molding just around the cabinets or continue around the room. If your cabinets do not go all the way to the ceiling you can still add the crown to the top portion of the cabinets. If you have flush doors (flat) then you can add trim to the doors themselves. A variety of molding can be added to the doors to create a multidimensional look. A few samples would be: screen bead, picture molding, stop material, and scribe molding, but your choices are not limited to these. Visit your local lumber yard for additional types of molding.

Once you choose your molding it is time to install. The first thing is to determine how far from the edges of the doors to put the trim; usually 2 1/2 to 3 inches from the edge of the door to the outer edge of the molding. Second, install all of the molding the same on every door. If one door is taller or wider you still want to keep the same distance from the edges of the door. When installing the trim, use a strong adhesive, between the door and molding before nailing. You do not want nails to protrude through the back of the door, so double check the size of nails before you begin nailing. Once trim is installed; caulk with a good quality acrylic caulk. Now you are ready to paint.

Other small touches

Add a bead board backsplash and paint it, but be sure to caulk it to the counter top to prevent leaks. Change out the faucet, sink or reverse the panel cover on the dishwasher to improve the overall appearance. You can also remove a couple of cabinet doors, paint the inside, and display colorful pieces, cookbooks or china. I hope this gives you some idea of the potential your existing cabinets have. Be sure to check out next month's topic: Countertops - The Kitchen Backbone

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Keep Up Regular Maintenance & Repairs:

Walk around your home and make a list of all the small things that need to be repaired. Small repairs may not seem important by themselves, but little things can add up to create the impression that your home has been neglected. One important repair could be gutters, downspouts or splash blocks. They collect rainwater from a roof and send it away from the structure. Gutters are the valleys located on the edge of the roof. The downspouts connect to the gutters to carry the water to the ground. Splash blocks are located at the end of the downspouts to divert water away from the building.

Damaged or leaking gutters can cause water to stain walls, pool against the foundation or seep into the walls, damaging the structure. With fall just around the corner, your gutters are susceptible to clogs from falling leaves. A

few actions on your part can help prevent these problems and route water away from your home:

- Remove debris from gutters as often as needed to prevent dams and overflow. Gutters may need to be cleaned twice a year or weekly.
- Visually inspect gutters and downspouts for apparent damage from tree limbs or storms.
- Check that all downspouts are directed away from the home's foundation and splash blocks are in place.
- Check fasteners on downspouts and gutters to insure proper connections are in place.

Don't feel comfortable tackling repairs yourself? **GOGGANS LLC** can help make your "to-do" list disappear. Staying on top of maintenance today eliminates problems down the road should you decide to sell.

Update Your Bathroom & Add Lots of Value:

The two rooms that gain the most value from small renovation are the kitchen and bathroom. You can do a minor bathroom upgrade for around \$750. Just one inexpressive change will guarantee a lot of bang for your buck. Replacing an outdated vanity, old plumbing or lighting fixtures or adding a new tile floor will give your bath an updated, modern look.