

Home renovations a challenge for many

For many new homeowners, remodeling their home's interior is near the top of their priority list. While a complete overhaul might not be on their minds, a room or two here and there is probably something they intend to do sooner or later. But, as veteran homeowners can attest, such remodeling jobs usually don't come cheap, and oftentimes unforeseen problems (a leaky roof, the kids need braces, etc.) have a way of taking precedence.

While remodeling a room might not be in

your immediate future, you can make some minor adjustments that can make a room more appealing and maybe even save you some money. Take, for example, the bathroom. The following do-it-yourself bathroom tips might not give the room an entirely new look, but they can change how you feel about the room and they won't break the bank.

- Replace the bathroom fan. Many people feel their bathrooms attract mildew. While all bathrooms are susceptible to mildew, an inef-

fective bathroom fan can make your mildew problem even worse. If you find yourself with an overwhelming mildew problem, your bathroom fan is probably too small. Jot down your bathroom's square footage and then head to a hardware store for a new fan that will suit your needs. Fans aren't expensive, and installation is often easy, especially if you purchase an upgrade kit as well.

- Fix the toilet. Many people cannot understand why their water bill is so high each month.

It might be thanks to a defective flapper on your toilet. The flapper is the rubber device that seals the drain at the base of your toilet's tank. A new flapper is only a couple of dollars and will only take a minute or so to install.

- Install new sink fixtures. Older sink fixtures can make a bathroom appear dingy and antiquated. Replace your old handles and faucets with new ones to give your bathroom a more modern look.

Keeping weight off more difficult than losing it

Arguably the most difficult thing about losing weight isn't losing the weight itself, but keeping it off once it's been lost.

Those who have struggled with their weight often admit their weight fluctuates regularly, illustrating the struggle that maintaining a healthy weight can present.

While every person is different, there are ways to keep weight off, and many of them are relatively minor.

What these methods all have in common is the commitment level they require.

Making a long-term commitment to each of the following changes can not only help lose

weight, but keep that weight off as well.

- Closely monitor fat and sugar intake. Reduce consumption of foods high in fat and sugar, or substitute with reduced-calorie and reduced-fat foods and beverages.

The fat in your diet should be limited to 30 percent or less of total calories each day.

- Get daily exercise. Exercise comes in many forms, and it's best to determine what type of physical activity best suits each individual and each lifestyle.

Initially, you should work your way up to regular aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking, jogging or swimming, since it is a key factor in

achieving permanent weight loss and improving health.

For maximum benefits, most health experts recommend exercising 30 minutes or more on most, and preferably all, days of the week.

- Be aware of your eating habits. Negative eating habits can include overindulging, eating when bored or looking to food for comfort. Many times people don't even realize they are routinely treating food in these ways.

Keeping a food diary, in which you write down when you eat, what you're eating and why you're eating is a good means to discovering just what your eating habits are and determining

if they are healthy or not.

- Remember the value of balance when planning a diet. Mom, Dad and no doubt school teachers extolled the virtues of a balanced diet, and for good reason.

Don't forget the five good groups (milk, meat, fruit, vegetable, bread) when planning a diet.

If you have a specialty diet, due to an existing condition (i.e., diabetes) or lifestyle (i.e., vegetarian), consult with a physician as to how to best balance your diet, as there will no doubt be certain foods that are off limits.

Thanking all of our Wonderful WORKING WOMEN!

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NORTON COUNTY HOSPITAL
102 E. Holme, Norton, Kansas - 785-877-3351

DOCTORS CLINIC

711 N. Norton, Norton, Kansas - 785-877-3305

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NORTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

801 N. Norton, Norton, Kansas

Phone: 785-877-5745