

# Little house, big perks

By Tresa Erickson

You've always lived in a small home and loved it. With far less house and yard to care for, you've had more time to devote to other interests. Now that you're adding to your family, however, you're not sure if you can continue to enjoy the perks of small home living. Relax. Unless your family is growing substantially larger, you can remain where you are and make a few changes to maximize your home's potential.

Storage can be a problem in any size of home. If your small home lacks storage space, consider creating some built-ins. Built-in bookshelves, cabinets and seating make wonderful additions to any home. You just need to place them in the best area possible and be careful not to take up too much floor space.

In a home lacking in square footage, multipurpose is the name of the game. Make sure your rooms serve more than one purpose. Tuck a desk in the corner of your dining room and use the space to eat and work in. Slide your upright piano into your entryway and use the space as a foyer and a music room. Add a bench to your second floor landing and use the space for reading.

The same principle applies to your furniture choices. Don't bring a piece into your home unless it can serve more than one purpose. Consider a sleeper sofa for your living room. You can sit on it during the day and use it for guests at night. Select a comfortable chair for your desk. You can sit in it and work at

your desk and slide it into the living room when needed for extra seating. Switch out your coffee table for an ottoman. You can use it as a footrest when watching TV and as extra seating when company comes over.

Select smaller equipment and accessories. Trade out your bulky TV and computer monitor for flat-screen models. Use hanging bedside lamps rather than large tableside lamps. Choose smaller appliances for your kitchen. You will be amazed at how much more room you have just by using smaller items.

Light up the rooms in your home and make them appear larger. Use a variety of lighting sources at various heights around each room. Throw open the drapes during the day and let the natural light in. Bring in some mirrors to reflect light around each room.

Keep your color palette light. Dark colors tend to close in the space, while lighter colors keep it bright and airy. Reserve darker, bolder colors for accents to add drama and depth.

Add to your square footage with an outdoor space. Power-wash that old patio, add some new furniture and plants, and presto, you have extended your living area outdoors. Throw open the French doors during parties and give guests plenty of room to mingle.

If you long to stay where you are, don't let the thought of a larger family prevent you from doing so. Make adjustments as needed and make your home work for you. ✂

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