

RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS

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Senior Account Executive
ZACH SHOUB
zach@auroran.com

Senior Account Executive
DOUG SHERRITT
doug@lpcmedia.ca

Senior Account Executive
DIANE BUCHANAN
diane@auroran.com

Art Director
SARAH DIDYCYZ

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What's the deal with ROI?



By **Julien Laurion**
The Big Tuna of Real Estate

The summer housing market is crazy once again.

SUPPLY IS BEYOND LOW, which has jacked up average home prices now. A semi-detached home's average price is over 1 million, and a detached average price is a cool 1.4 million. The cost of housing now has put a lot of people out of the market, first-time buyers and upgraders. Therefore, the number of owners who have decided to renovate rather than buy/sell has increased quite a bit.

Every budget is different, but for all levels, there are always some affordable options for home

improvements to ensure you maximize your Return on Investment (ROI). A warning with improvements: these are not foolproof as they are subjective. A classic example is installing a backyard pool, typically this is a lifestyle decision for the family and not the next buyer. However, as a result of the pandemic, pools are back in fashion with a lot of city buyers. However; there are some areas that you can focus on that do improve both the enjoyment and resale of your home.

A great place to start would be with a minor bathroom renovation. What is minor? Well, it can be as simple as changing the bathroom fixtures, painting, upgrading the lighting, changing the vanity and in some really dated homes remove the carpeting! Minor projects are those that do not require a lot of work and can be done on a weekend. This type of upgrade can often provide over 100% ROI versus doing a major renovation. Major projects such as; removing walls, making the room larger, changing the location of the shower, will yield about a 93% ROI upon resale of your home. The difference in return is due to increased costs in construction.

Two other big ROI improvements areas to consider are landscaping and outdoor entertainment spaces. Upgrading or improving the landscaping of your home typically will provide you with a 100% ROI. Adding or improving a deck or patio space will give you an average of 90% ROI. These are popular options

as they do not interfere with your indoor living space.

A word of caution, the ROI data is based on the "average" finishes I discussed. No matter what room or area you decide to spend your money on, remember this golden rule: Do not spend more than necessary to get your investment back! It is a balance.

If you are concerned with ROI rather than your enjoyment factor and if you're not working with a Realtor; who can help advise you - call Big Tuna! - you can always go online and review previous sales that are comparable to your home and in your neighbourhood. I always tell my clients to consider the next buyer when preparing a home for resale. Unique and extravagant is not always the best option!

Julien Laurion AKA Big Tuna is a local Real Estate Sale Representative with Royal LePage Your Community Realty in Aurora. I am a real estate agent who has expertise in both Real Estate and Renovations and has been involved in this community for over 20 years. If you have a question for my monthly article or if you are considering buying, selling or leasing a home please feel free to call or email me directly at (416) 402-5530 or julien@bigtuna.ca or by alternatively visiting my website www.bigtuna.ca or Facebook page @bigtunarealty

5 factors to consider when relocating

(NC) Has the pandemic made you think about making a big move? If so, you're not alone — semi-rural and country life have become more attractive to many people craving more space.

In fact, one in three Canadians are considering relocating, according to a recent survey by insurance company Aviva Canada. If you're house hunting, here are some things to keep in mind:

1 OUTDOOR LIVING SPACE. A property with enough outdoor space is essential for many families who have spent more time enjoying nature lately. Whether you need room for entertaining, gardening or a play area for kids, make sure you take the time to consider if the yard or patio fits your vision for outdoor living.

2 AFFORDABLE LOCATION. In today's red-hot housing market, affordability is key. Though it's tempting to spend all your savings on the perfect place, make sure you can still manage the mortgage payments if interest rates rise or there's a family emergency. If you still need to go into the office occasionally, factor in higher commuting costs or the added expense of an additional vehicle.

3 INSURANCE IMPACT. As more people move away from large cities, this may come with some surprises. Not only are crickets much louder at night, but there's more to think about than just the mortgage and property taxes.

"There are insurance considerations when it comes to rural versus urban properties," explains Phil Gibson, managing director, personal insurance and data science at Aviva Canada. "The age of the home, its proximity to fire hydrants or firehalls, and flood risk are all factors. That's why it's best to discuss these things with both your insurance broker or agent and your realtor before settling on your dream home."

4 MULTIGENERATIONAL living. More Canadians are choosing to live with extended family members, whether it's to help care for aging parents or to share housing costs. If this is something you'll need now or soon, make sure any home you're looking at can potentially accommodate everyone, or factor in a big renovation budget.

5 Proximity to amenities. Don't get caught up in how beautiful a home is if it's far from places that improve your quality of life. Everyone has their priorities — whether it's being near parks, restaurants or a local library. If you're planning a move away from the city, think about how often you'll want or need to return to see how far away it's reasonable to move.

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Ask A Realtor®

Will the real estate market continue to be competitive this fall?

With only about a month's supply of homes for sale on the market to meet the current demand and sellers earning well above the asking price within about 14 days, it's unlikely the market will soften drastically by the fall of 2021.

With high demand and low inventory of homes for sale many Buyers who took action and experienced competition when offering to purchase. Often many bought homes without conditions of inspection and finance. Regardless of the challenges of lockdowns, COVID-19 safety protocols, and safety concerns, the real estate market has remained strong in 2021.

The supply of homes for sale has been strained across not only York Region and the Greater Toronto Area but has extended farther due to affordability and the new reality of many professionals now working remotely.

Take time to research what's for sale and the pricing strategy being used before negotiations begin to manage that feeling of Buyer's remorse. Pre-approval from lenders is crucial before commencing the search for a home to purchase and finding the best area that will meet the budget requirements. Typically when there's less competition Buyer's make offers with more cau-

tion. There are usually more inspection conditions, financing conditions or conditions that they sell their home in a given period of time first.

Buyers not only want to love the style of the home but will take the time when supply is high to investigate the location thoroughly as it will relate to their lifestyle. The home's location itself can open up considerations like transportation concerns, proximity to major highways, public transportation via bus and GO Train. Buyers may need to be in a specific school zone for their families. Recreation is a huge consideration for many wanting to live near parks, trails, sports facilities, library and shopping, restaurants and entertainment areas. Is the home for sale near places of worship, is the area safe, clean and what about noise pollution?

The competition will always be a factor for some homes that may hit all of the wants of Buyers for location, style and price. Book a face-to-face discussion with a REALTOR® to plan your next move.

– Written by Connie Power

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Real Estate Market Update – Aurora



Incredible demand to buy homes continues across York Region, and typically homes are selling within 14 days for 105 percent of the asking price in Aurora. The median price of all types of homes across Aurora remained the same in June and July at \$1,170,000 which is an 18 percent increase from this time last year. There were 125 homes placed for sale in July 35 percent fewer than last July and by August 1st only 98 remained available across Aurora's 10 neighbourhoods which were 53 percent fewer than in July 2020; at the current supply and demand, there's just over a month of homes for sale to purchase to meet the need.

In July, 113 Buyers were successful purchasers as demand continues to favour Sellers in this hot market which is a decrease of 7 percent year over year. The average value of a detached home was \$1,535,884. Linked homes \$1,143,000 Condo apartments average price was \$589,889, semi-detached homes sold for an average of \$870,200, townhouses cost on average \$993,895.

With so many buyers wanting into this market with such low availability of homes for sale, competition continues

in many cases especially if pricing is under market value. It's crucial to understand the area market values of comparable homes prior to making an offer on a home; while the market may be continually increasing what needs to be uncovered is whether the home has been priced below market value, at market value or above market value as a pricing strategy to understand whether the home being considered is within the budget available. Contact a REALTOR® to discuss the area market trends and create a customized action plan together.

– Written by Connie Power

Connie Power is the Manager, Real Estate Sales Representative CNE® SRS® ABR® SRES®, for RE/MAX Hallmark York Group Realty Ltd., Brokerage serving York region and beyond in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Empowering you in Real Estate. Call Connie today to make an appointment to discuss your next move at (905) 726-0856.

*The statistics provided herein were obtained from the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board; Summary of Existing Home Transactions for all home types for June, July, 2020, 2021 and the Regional Housing Market Tables for York region, Aurora June, July, 2020, 2021 as well as from the Statistics and Counts for all of Aurora for June, July 2021 for both Freehold and condominium Sales of all types of homes.

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BACKYARD LIVING: Mosquito free



(NC) Thanks to ever-changing lockdown restrictions preventing us from enjoying time indoors with friends and family, many of us have moved activities to our backyards, transforming them into kitchens, classrooms and living areas.

And this trend isn't stopping. According to a new study, one in two Canadians plan on investing more in their outdoor living spaces because of limited

public activities available. But when it comes to redesigning your yard or patio, it's important to safeguard it against pests, including mosquitoes.

CREATING A PEST-FREE OUTDOOR SPACE

Here are some tips to help you and your family stay safe from hungry mosquitoes:

PLAN NOW, ENJOY LATER Don't wait to see mosquitoes appear. Treat the leadup to warmer weather as an indicator that it is time to start preparing for these pests before they become a problem.

ELIMINATE STANDING WATER Areas of untreated standing water are havens for mosquitoes because they use them as breeding grounds to lay their eggs.

This includes kiddie pools, lingering storm puddles and dripping hoses left unchecked.

PUT YOUR GREEN THUMB TO WORK Some plants, like marigolds, have been shown to repel mosquitoes with their scent — and look beautiful in a home garden.

SET UP A SHIELD OF DEFENSE Mosquito repellents have improved greatly from the days of DEET-laden aerosol sprays. For example, Thermacell Repellents work to emit an effective, DEET-free wall of protection around a stationary device that can sit on your patio table or garden. With a sleek design, the repellents can discreetly fit into any contemporary outdoor space or even be hung on tents and chairs when camping.

Stylish outdoor living ideas

(NC) The pandemic really showed what a difference outdoor space can make for your own well-being, whether it's a backyard, balcony, patio or porch. Now that we're able to entertain a little more, here are a few tips to transform outside space into your favourite spot in the home.

THINK COMFORT Make sure to consider your outdoor furniture carefully. So much has improved in recent years that you can easily find pieces as stylish and comfy as what you use in your living room that are also built to last through the elements.

THINK LIGHTING Don't forget modern and stylish lighting for your outdoor hideaway. Make use of the space into the evening even as the days get shorter by using a mixture of solar-powered lanterns and torches, plus flickering candles for a warm glow. For an effortless way to light, you can try BIC's new EZ Reach Lighter, which has an extended wand that makes it easier to light candles or your barbecue from any angle.

THINK GREEN From local native plants in your garden to cushions made from recyclable materials, there are many easy ways to get more environmentally friendly outside. Try a timed sprinkler that won't turn on in the rain for a set-it-and-forget-it eco-friendly setting.

THINK TEMPERATURE Even as restrictions lessen, there's no reason to stop enjoying the outdoor space that's become so essential to your home during the pandemic. Add an outdoor fan to give movement to hot, humid air in the summer, and invest in a heat lamp, fireplace or cozy blankets early so you can enjoy your space into the fall.

THINK CONVENIENCE Any major upgrades should make your life easier and fit with how you use the space. Whether that means an outdoor kitchen setup complete with fridge, sink and grill, or an entertainment zone with Wi-Fi and a projector, go with what makes your everyday life better.

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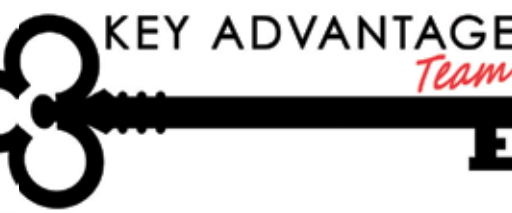


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From buying a house to retiring — planning for life's milestones

(NC) As we emerge from the pandemic, many of us are planning on how to get our lives back on track to achieve our goals in life, whether it's buying a house, setting aside money for our kids' education or retiring comfortably.

Whatever stage you're at in life, proper planning can help you successfully navigate life's milestones. Get the ball rolling by following these helpful tips and tricks:

YOUR FIRST HOME While about 68 per cent of Canadians are homeowners, real estate prices been running hot in the country's major markets for the last couple of years, making it more difficult for first-time buyers to find a home.

Before you start shopping for real estate, it's a good idea to take a step back and carefully plan your purchase. The first step when saving for a down payment is to get your finances in order and seriously think about what you can afford.

While saving for a down payment should be your priority, also put aside some money to cover closing costs. Make sure you look into first-time homebuyer incentives, as these opportunities may make purchasing a house more affordable than you think.

YOUR KIDS' EDUCATION Hundreds of thousands of young people are about to head off fresh-faced to post-secondary institutions this fall, armed with dorm room posters, stacks of textbooks and... a realistic budget? If the student in your life doesn't have one, it's not too late to plan.

Include all the costs of student life when making a budget; you can find a template online. Think about tuition fees, student fees, health insurance, books and other course materials, and living expenses, then try to make room for some fun in there too.

YOUR RETIREMENT If your retirement plans got derailed by the pandemic or you've had to dip into your savings, there's still at least one source of income you can count on. The Canada Pension Plan is the foundation for your overall strategy, which could also include a workplace-related pension, personal savings and investments.

Independent studies have confirmed that the CPP will be there when you retire, even for those just heading off to university or entering the workforce straight out of high school. In fact, CPP Investments, the professional investment management organization that manages the fund, recently reported a record return of 20.4 per cent for its 2021 fiscal year, growing the fund by more than \$87 billion to a total of \$497.2 billion.

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NEW MORTGAGE STRESS TEST RULES make home ownership tougher

(NC) If you're in the market for a new home or follow real estate news, you're likely aware of Canada's new mortgage stress test rules that came into effect in June. While the new rules are designed to help cool the country's overheated housing market, they also lower a buyer's purchasing power.

If you're buying a home, the mortgage stress test requires a bank to confirm that you can still make your mortgage payment at an interest rate that is higher than what you actually pay each month. That qualifying rate has increased from 4.79 to 5.25 per cent.

This means that under the old rate, a couple in the market for a home with a combined annual income of \$100,000 and no debts would qualify for a mortgage amount of \$535,000. With the new qualifying rate, this couple now qualifies for a mortgage amount of \$510,000.

If you're currently house hunting and are worried that you may not be able to afford a home with these new rules, consider land lease. This option is increasing in popularity because it allows families to purchase their own home without buying the land, making homeownership more affordable.

Plus, homes in many land lease communities offer several other untraditional benefits. For example,

Parkbridge, an owner-operator of land lease communities, offers community management, which includes maintaining shared spaces like roads and sidewalks. Many Parkbridge communities also come with shared amenities including pools, golf courses, lawn bowling, fitness centres and more, which are also managed and maintained by onsite teams.

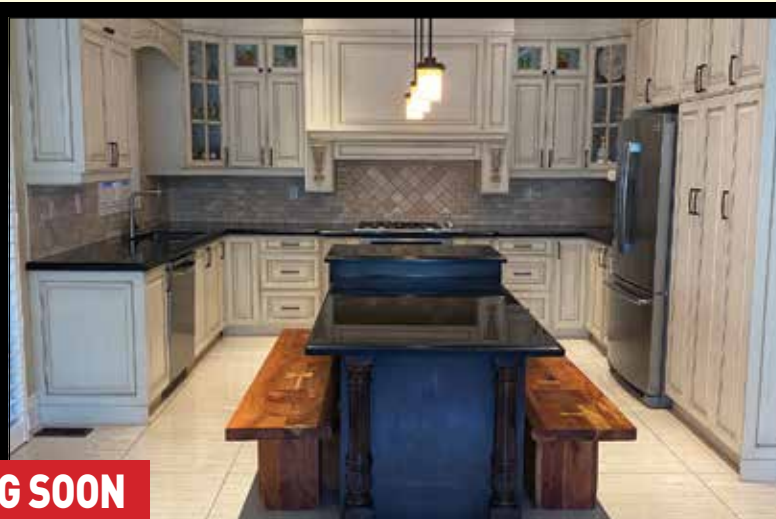
As for getting a mortgage, the process for buying a land lease home is quite similar to buying a freehold home, though you may have to shop around for a mortgage specialist who is familiar with land lease. With a lower purchase price for the same amount of square footage than a freehold home, land lease is becoming a more popular way for first-time buyers to break into the current housing market.

Find more information at parkbridge.com.

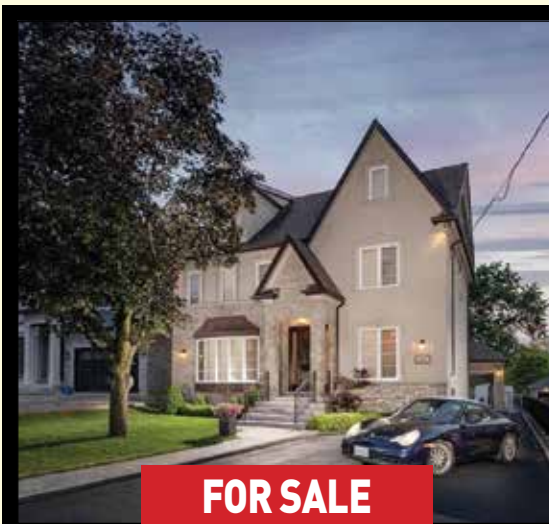
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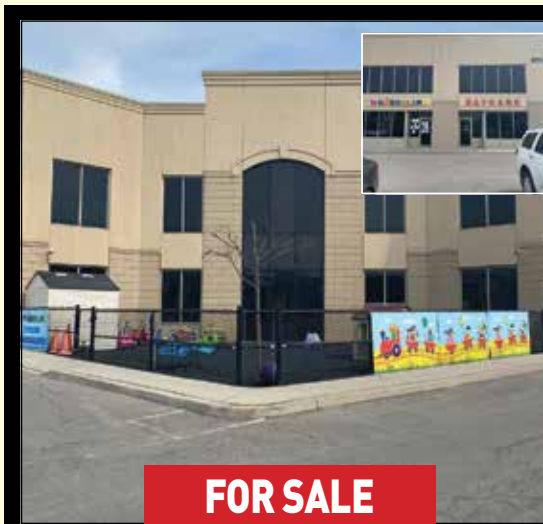
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How the pandemic will have lasting impacts on home design

(NC) The last year and a half has not only transformed how we live — it's altered where we live, too. With many of us moving to a totally different location or undertaking a major reno, new design trends have emerged, which are going to have a lasting impact far beyond COVID. Here are the top trends to keep in mind if you're house hunting or planning a makeover.

MULTIGENERATIONAL HOMES With property prices skyrocketing and parents needing more help with the kids at home, more families are trying multigenerational living on for size. In fact, according to a recent report from insurance company Aviva Canada, this is now a reality for 16 per cent of Canadians.

This means houses are being adapted to accommodate multiple families under one roof, whether it's with an addition or an in-law suite in the basement. Homes that offer this flexibility are in demand, and your property value could increase if you decide to adapt your home for multifamily living.

CREATIVE CUSTOM ADAPTATIONS While many people moved because of the pandemic, others preferred to avoid the added stress and have modified their current home so it works better. A fully independent home office, luxury entertainment space and decked out kids' playrooms are some of the most popular renovations. However, keep in mind that any changes you make may impact your insurance.

"With people spending so much time at home last year, it's no surprise Canadians are changing their spaces to fit their current needs. These renova-



tions may change the home's rebuild value. It's always good practice to check in with your insurance broker or agent when considering renovations so you are adequately covered," recommends Phil Gibson, managing director, personal insurance and data science at Aviva Canada.

OUTDOORS BECOMES ESSENTIAL The outdoors has provided a much-needed escape and an opportunity to interact safely with friends and

family. So, it's no surprise that much more time and money are being invested in upgrading our patios, balconies and backyards.

Whether it's a pool, hot tub, firepit, outdoor kitchen or even outdoor home movie theatre, people are stepping up their outdoor living game. Beautiful landscaping, flowers and vegetable gardens are part of this trend, and don't expect the focus on outdoors to go away anytime soon.

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How to adapt home spaces to fit the new normal



(NC) Did you take on a big home makeover during the pandemic?

Working from home has been the main push for major alterations to homes across the country. In fact, nearly three in 10 Canadians have adapted their space in the past year, slightly higher than those who renovated, according to a recent survey by Aviva Canada.

Some of the most popular changes are adaptations to a current living space for a workspace, a home gym and/or a space for homeschooling. The price tag for adapting spaces to better suit living situations during the pandemic is similar across the country, with the average cost coming in at \$783 according to the same survey.

But in our rush to make changes that suit our new lifestyle, many of us may have missed an important consideration — insurance. Especially if you've invested in a big makeover.

"If you've made major modifications to your home, keep in mind that finishing a basement, removing structural supports or building an addition could impact your insurance coverage," explains Phil Gibson, managing director, personal insurance and data science at Aviva Canada.

Only a quarter of those who have made at least one change in their homes in the past 12 months say they have already, or they intend to, update their content insurance. But almost two thirds haven't.

These changes could affect your home's rebuild value, so it's essential to make sure your investment is protected in case something happens.

"If you're unsure of your coverage, it's important to discuss your policy with your insurance broker or agent to ensure your policy meets the needs of your updated home," says Gibson. "They can help ensure you have the right protection."

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Since 2007, Lorraine Jordan along with her team of real estate experts **has helped over 9,000 clients** realize their dreams and escape to the good life.

Sure, many real estate companies can say the same thing, but **we are a different type of real estate team.** In an industry that sometimes gets a bad reputation, Team Jordan is working **to change the way people think** about real estate and real estate agents.

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Mould problem?

DIY TIPS FOR YOUR HOME

(NC) No matter where you live, mould can be found around you. Mould is the common word for any fungus that grows on food or damp building materials.

People living in homes with mould and damp conditions are more likely to have eye, nose and throat irritation; coughing and phlegm buildup; wheezing and shortness of breath; and worsening of asthma symptoms.

What should you do to make sure this unwanted visitor doesn't stay?

- 1** Look for damp spots and identify the problem. Check basements, closets, windowsills and around sinks, tubs and pipes. Dry any surfaces where moisture has collected.
- 2** Repair water leaks ASAP. Clean up immediately after any water leak or flooding.
- 3** Keep your home well ventilated. Always turn on your kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans when cooking, showering or bathing. Let the fan run for a few minutes after you're done. Make sure your clothes dryer, stove, kitchen and bathroom fans all vent to the outdoors.
- 4** Seal tubs and sinks. Make sure the seal is tight, so water doesn't leak into the walls.
- 5** Throw out basement clutter. Cardboard boxes and old clothes are great places for mould to grow. If you need to store items, be sure to use plastic bins with lids.
- 6** Reduce humidity. Keep humidity low, about 50 per cent in the summer and 30 per cent in colder weather. You can use a hygrometer — an inexpensive tool available at most hardware stores — to measure humidity.
- 7** If needed, use a dehumidifier or air conditioner to reduce humidity levels. Clean often. Regularly clean and disinfect anything that holds water, like humidifiers, dehumidifiers and air conditioners. Clean surfaces affected by mould with water and dish detergent. Bleach is not necessary to remove mould.

Consider hiring a professional if you have a lot of mould (greater than three square metres), it comes back after repeated cleanings or someone in your household suffers from asthma or other respiratory problems because of it.

Find more information at canada.ca by searching the keywords "mould" and "home."

www.newscanada.com



How to *design your dream* DIY reno

(NC) If you've spent the last several months daydreaming about your ideal renovation project, you're not alone. Whether it's a reno for a new kitchen, your own spa bathroom, a basement media room or a beautiful backyard oasis, there's no shortage of dreams to take on.

Here are a few tips to make your vision a reality:

Spend time planning ahead. The more you think about your project before you begin, the better you'll understand your wants, needs and priorities.

A great place to start is thinking about why you're doing this project in the first place. Is it to create more space? Add functionality? Freshen up décor? These questions will help you make the right decisions during your project.

Know when to call in the pros. Many home reno projects might seem DIY, such as laying tiles and flooring. But for anything structural, mechanical or electrical, it's best to hire a properly licensed

professional. You don't want to cause any fires or leaks that could lead to more time-consuming and costly damage to you or your home.

Save on splurge-worthy finishing touches. Add creature comforts and finishing touches that make completing your renovation all the more rewarding. From a luxurious Nespresso espresso machine, to the perfect Cuisinart kitchen gadgets, to that coveted Napoleon barbecue, you can use Air Miles Reward Miles to save big on must-have items for your newly renovated space.

Find more information at rewards.airmiles.ca/merchandise.

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3 TIPS FOR UPGRADING YOUR VIRTUAL OFFICE

(NC) Many of us hastily switched over to working from home when the pandemic took hold. Now that we've been at it over a year and a half and lots of companies are shifting to hybrid options permanently, it's time to ensure your virtual office lets you reach your full potential.

Here are three tips to help you create a better home office:

1. GET THE GOOD CHAIR

If you bought a cheap desk chair at the start of the pandemic or have been using one from your kitchen or dining room, then it's time to pick out a better-quality seat designed for a full workday.

This is the number one upgrade to make, and one that's worth a splurge if you can afford it. A chair that's comfortable and helps you sit properly will save your back, neck, shoulders and hands from everyday aches and long-term injury.

2. ENHANCE YOUR VIDEO

Many of us have been relying on low-quality, built-in laptop cameras for video calls for months. This risks awkward angles, iffy lighting and blurry pictures, not to mention requires setting up again every time you move your laptop.

There's only so much a generic background image can do. Instead, try using a compact or mirrorless camera, such as the Sony ZV1B, for your video calls. You just download the camera's free software on your computer to set it up for calls and connect to your laptop. Then you can open your video chat and have everyone admire your crisp, clear image.

3. UPGRADE YOUR HEADPHONES

A decent pair of headphones can make a major difference to your quality of life at work, and they don't have to be expensive. There are so many types, so do your research for a pair that fit your needs. Think about comfort for long meetings, durability and how multipurpose you want them to be. Noise-cancelling headphones might be worth it if you're sharing a space, while wireless ones can let you tidy up your home as you listen to a webinar.

Find more creative tech ideas from experts at henrys.com.
www.newscanada.com



4 EASY TIPS to make working from home so much better

(NC) After a year of working from home for many of us, it's only natural to be hitting a rut.

No matter how great your at-home work setup is, you might need a refresh.

Here are few tips to make working from home so much better:

1. DECLUTTER YOUR WORKSPACE

A lot of work-related clutter can build up over time. Take a few minutes to collect any office items lying around the house, such as your video call headphones or your loose papers and sticky notes. Then recycle anything you don't need and store the rest in a dedicated location. You'll feel fresher and ready to take on what's next.

2. UPGRADE YOUR WORKWEAR

Just because you aren't going into the office doesn't mean you don't deserve to feel your best and look sharp. If you're keen on business wear, try easing into a new pair of pants or a simple summer dress to find a more relaxed summertime vibe. If you've defaulted to pyjamas and sweats every day, consider finding the happy medium with a new pair of sleek joggers, just for a change.

3. GET OUTDOORS

Take advantage of the season and head outside while you can. A quick walk in a local park is a great way to take a break or end your workday. If you have a backyard or balcony, set up a simple internet extender to move the office outside on warm days. The fresh air will lift up your spirits and do wonders for your productivity.

4. BOOST ONLINE SECURITY FOR YOUR PERSONAL DEVICES

According to a recent survey, only 18 per cent of Canadians are using online identity theft protection

tools, and most of us just don't know where to start. With so much online activity taking place, including a high volume of info sharing, we've become increasingly vulnerable to cyberattacks and identity theft, so it's worthwhile to update your security measures for your personal devices as best as you can. While no one can prevent all identity theft or cybercrime, using an all-in-one solution like Telus Online Security Powered by NortonLifeLock can help protect your personal devices, online privacy and information. Made for consumers, the comprehensive coverage is available across Canada (excluding Quebec residents) and includes multiple layers of protection that can help protect your identity and provide restoration if your personal information is ever stolen. Overall, changes like these can help bring peace of mind to your work-from-home life going forward. Find more information at telus.com/onlinesecurity.

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Make fruit and veggies the star of the grill this summer

(NC) Sear marks are not just for your steak — grilled vegetables and fruits make for a delicious main, side or dessert and shine when charred just right with a delicious smoky flavour.

They are also a great source of vitamins and minerals and can be a great way to boost your fibre intake, as well as serve as a nutritious and delicious alternative to animal foods.

As the summer rolls on, there are many local produce options to choose from and you can definitely taste the difference local makes. Here, Jasmine Kwok, a registered dietitian at Loblaw's, provides tips to change it up and add more produce to your grill.

PUT A SKEWER IN IT. Think local peppers, mushrooms, tomatoes, zucchini and more, which are in stores from local farmers now. Whether marinated with a mixture of fresh citrus, garlic and herbs or tossed with a drizzle of olive oil and seasoned with a touch of salt and pepper, grilled vegetables are always a hit and can be served multiple ways. Tip — if you're using wooden skewers, make

sure you soak them in water for 30 minutes before you start making your kabobs.

SEAR YOUR SALAD. Think outside the box and try grilling your salad. Romaine hearts are a great choice for the barbecue when topped with Caesar dressing, Parmesan cheese and bacon bits. The warmth and smoky flavour of the romaine will up your classic Caesar salad to a whole new level.

FIRE UP YOUR DESSERT. Grilled fruit is like a magic trick. There are so many options available and while you likely have had grilled pineapple, why not skewer and grill strawberries this weekend? Strawberries are currently in season and are delicious on their own. You can also try them drizzled with balsamic vinegar or a touch of vanilla extract for a new taste. Serve with plain Greek yogurt and some crunchy granola or a scoop of vanilla ice cream for a real treat.

If you'd like more ideas, connect with a registered dietitian for helpful tips and recipes. Offering many ways to connect, you can try a free 15-minute initial nutrition consultation or check out a webinar on a variety of topics at loblaw.ca/dietitians.

www.newscanada.com



Take a trip around the world from your kitchen

(NC) Lately, we have all found ourselves daydreaming about our next vacation. So why not add international flavours to your favourite dishes and bring vacation vibes to your home.

A simple, flavour-rich sauce can add something a little more exciting, fun and exotic. VH sauces are proudly prepared in Boisbriand, Quebec and their delicious marinades, dips and stir-fry sauces can help add an international flair to any of your home-cooked meals.

Take your taste buds to the tropics with this delicious recipe.

www.newscanada.com



Pineapple Jerk Chicken

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 35 minutes
Serves: 4

3 lb (1.5 kg) chicken drumsticks and thighs
1 jar VH Pineapple Jerk Sauce, divided
2 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
1 cup short grain rice
4 tsp minced fresh ginger
½ cup red kidney beans, rinsed
⅓ cup diced sweet red pepper
Lime wedges
Sprigs of fresh thyme

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 In a large bowl, toss chicken with 1 cup (250 mL) sauce; refrigerate at least 1 hour or up to overnight.
- 2 Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C). Arrange chicken on parchment-paper-lined baking sheet; cook for 35 to 45 minutes or until golden brown and cooked through. Brush with remaining sauce.
- 3 Meanwhile, bring broth to boil in small saucepan; stir in rice and ginger. Reduce heat to low; cover and cook for 20 minutes or until rice is tender. Stir in beans and red pepper. Remove from heat. Cover and let stand for 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork.
- 4 Serve chicken with rice and beans. Garnish as desired.



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