

Home Improvement Corner

One of the ways to measure a home's efficiency is by the age of the vacuum tracks.

Bigger is not always better. When a home starts to feel like its not functioning the way it is supposed to, the natural tendency is to add more space. But more square footage does not necessarily mean a more spacious or efficient house. Instead, consider transforming existing rooms into spaces with dual purpose.

Historically, homes have been built with specific-purpose rooms: dining room, living room, family room, etc. So, what if these rooms were designed for multiple purposes? Would our homes then need to be as large to accommodate the same functions and number of people?

A recent case study is of a family of 5, who wanted a media room added on to the back of the garage, adjacent to the living room. Thorough consultation revealed that the family room, inside the front door to the right, was only used for holiday gatherings. This made for inefficient unused space that was a net loss in cost value of heating and furnishing the room. "Everyone comes in the front door and turns left toward the kitchen and living room" reported the homeowner. As a result, an 8-foot diagonal motorized screen retracts into the ceiling of new custom library cabinetry surrounding the fireplace in the old family room. And with the click of 2 buttons and a dimmable light switch, the \$40,000 furnished library converts to a home theatre. "The family has been using the room a lot more" the owner later reported, happily adding that the efficiency of the home was improved without spending \$100,000 for the addition.

Remodeling is a Green process. Existing homes have an established footprint, reducing environmental impact.

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