

Tackle lighting, safety, and clean-up issues when you're on a budget

By Megan Arpin
CTW Features

The key to updating your house without overhauling your wallet is to take it bit-by-bit, troubleshooting small problems along the way so you can focus on making an overall better home for your family.

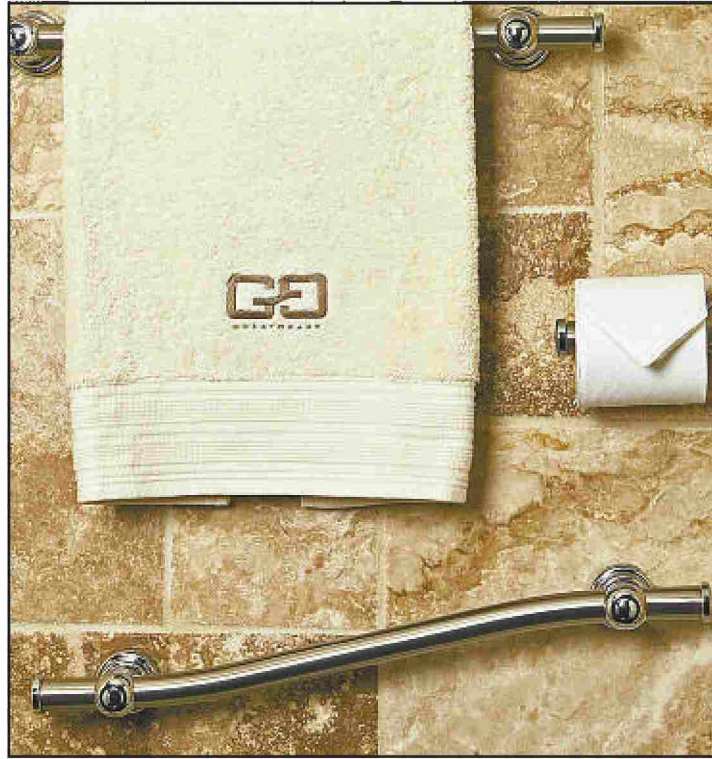
First things first, though — take a peek at the most lived-in rooms of a home, the kitchen and bathroom, and get started.

Take it easy

For a quick bathroom remodel project that won't break the bank, Seattle-based interior designer Faith Sheridan recommends wedi, a flexible, foam-base, waterproof building board system for tiling bathrooms and showers, with some customizable designs that include sloped, floor-level entries. In addition, Great Grabz - decorative grab bars for the bathroom that allow for safety and independence without compromising design - are easy and quick to install. For added luxury? "Heated floors modernize a space, and aren't as expensive to add as you might think," Sheridan adds.

Clean it up

Want a kid-friendly kitchen that's easy to clean? Rounded corners on countertops and kitchen islands make for a safe space that simple to keep nice,



says Shannon Seip, co-author of "Bean Appétit: Hip and Healthy Ways to Have Fun with Food," (Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2010). Seip suggests keeping in mind what's going to make clean up easy. "Smooth surfaces, like granite and Corian, and sinks with edges flush to counters make it easy to wipe down messes," she says.

Go for the green

Last, but not least: "Going green is no longer a fad, it's a movement," says Sheridan. Add LED lights and light dimmers to your home for an easy update that bears the environment in mind. "Installing lights that last longer and are more energy-efficient makes everyone in the family more conscious, and more willing, to take part in creating an environmentally sound - and livable - space."

