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## WHAT'S INSIDE:

- Money Saving Heating & Cooling Ideas
- Small Bathroom Design
- Advice & Tips
- Discounts & Coupons
- Quartz Countertops
- Pex Pipe - A Smart Plumbing Alternative
- News & Announcements
- Customer Loyalty Program

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## HOW ABOUT QUARTZ FOR YOUR NEW COUNTERTOP?

**Q**uartz counters are some of the most popular and sought after countertops on the market today for good reason. They have all the best qualities of the other stone countertops, but with added strength, durability, cleanliness and design possibilities. And they're maintenance free to boot! Considering all this, it's easy to see why quartz counters are sweeping the nation.

### Near Indestructible

One of the most popular aspects of quartz is their durability. This has long been a draw of all stone countertops, quartz is a step above the others. This mostly has to do with the fact that quartz is the strongest commercial grade stone on the planet. And when you consider all the blows a countertop takes from pots, pans, knives and other kitchen utensils, it's clear that tougher is clearly better when it comes to counters.

### Low Maintenance

Besides being tough as nails, quartz countertops are also virtually maintenance free. Since they are made from fine quartz crystals, they are almost completely non porous (something else that sets them apart from other stone) meaning that once they're polished and installed. You'll never have to mind them again. They won't absorb stains and spills like other stone and won't need the regular resealing that other products require! All you have to do is wipe them down with a wet dishtowel now and again, and you're good to go.

### Clean As a Whistle

The other big benefit of quartz being a non-porous stone is that it's much cleaner than other stone countertops. Quartz counters won't absorb moisture, food particles or other kitchen contaminants that make prime breeding ground for harmful bacteria. That means they're more sanitary than other countertops since they are virtually bacteria free if cleaned regularly.

### Unrivaled Appearance

While all this might make choosing quartz counters seem like a no-brainer, the main reason most homeowners choose quartz is their appearance. There are two types of quartz counters: 1.) solid slab and 2.) Quartz counters are made of 95% ground quartz crystal held together by polymer resins. Both are equally tough but the ground quartz models offer the added advantage of a huge range of available colors and looks. In fact, quartz counters can be purchased to fit just about any color scheme or design imaginable.

### Don't Stop With Counters

The final draw of quartz countertops is that they can be installed just about anywhere the structure of your home can support them. This makes them ideal for backsplashes and even showers. If you're considering quartz countertops why not go with an entire quartz kitchen? Your new quartz kitchen will provide you with stunning looks and functionality for years to come!

### Talk to a professional

If you do decide that quartz countertops are for you, talk to an experienced contractor, stone company, or countertop installer about putting them in. Like any stone, quartz is heavy and cumbersome to work with, so it's best to leave the grunt work to somebody who is used to the heavy lifting that comes with any stone countertop installation. Furthermore, you'll want to hire somebody who can evaluate the structural aspects of your kitchen or bath in order to be sure your home can handle the added weight of quartz. Skipping these steps could lead to disastrous results if your home just wasn't built to support such a heavy building material.

In short, if you're looking for a superior countertop, choose quartz. It's very attractive, tougher, cleaner and virtually maintenance free, making it hands down the best countertop material available on the market.



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From our family  
to yours,

*Tim McHale*

*Matt Goering, formerly a carpenter and house painter, is a freelance writer for the home improvement industry who has published over 600 articles.*

# MONEY SAVING HEATING AND COOLING IDEAS

Between 50-70% of a home's energy is used on heating and cooling. While a good portion of this effort goes toward heating water for dishes, clothes, and showers, regulating a home's temperature eats up much of the energy bill. This article offers solutions in the form of products, practice, and maintenance.

## SMART HVAC PRODUCTS

### Programmable Thermostats

Programmable thermostats have the quickest return on invest, sometimes as fast as two months. These particular devices allow you to set the thermostat to raise or lower the temperature when you leave the house, then make it nice again, just before you walk back through the door. This product will keep you from heating or cooling your home too much while you're not there or asleep, which can save a bundle depending on how much you are currently wasting.

### Energy Star HVAC Units

The energy star rating ensures that the product will perform above a certain efficiency standard, thus guaranteeing an energy savings. Energy Star HVAC units will save 20% on energy cost over the next brand. They are sure money savers and a great investment in a home that needs constant heat or air.



### Money Saving HVAC Ideas

If you don't have an Energy Star or efficient heating and cooling system, there are a few things- you can do to your home to help keep the heating and cooling costs down.

- Install door sweeps on all entry and exit doors. This will significantly reduce-if not stop altogether-free air flow under the bottoms of doors.
- Caulk around the windows during the spring or fall. Summer and winter are poor times to caulk because the temperature is so extreme that once the temperature heads in another direction, the caulking will either expand out of its intended cavity or contract so much that it can't do its job. Caulking is a smart, energy saver that can cost next to nothing.

- Upgrading you insulation is a great return on investment, especially if there are areas in your home that have no insulation at all, such as in the basement and the attic.

### Money Saving HVAC Practices

Closing off areas of you house that you don't use regularly is a wise way to control energy usage. Close the vents and doors to exercise rooms, laundry rooms, and guest bedrooms. There is no sense heating or cooling a portion of the home that you don't use. Be careful not to run the dishwasher or dryer during the hottest parts of the day, as your air conditioning unit will have to work overtime to bring the temperature back down to level. This can be a likewise savvy idea during the winter to help heat the home.

Turn the heat down to 60 when you leave the house during the day. The few minutes of cold that you will have to bear when you return home are worth the 8+ hour savings in your daily heating bill. In the summer, pick the same temperature or even turn the A/C completely off when you leave, as there are no problems that will arise from having it off. However, never turn your heat off during the winter. That's how pipes freeze and break.

*Matt Myers is a freelance writer for the home maintenance and remodeling industry. Formerly a contractor specializing in deck building and casework, Matt has written over 500 articles for both homeowners and contractors.*

## PEX PIPE: A SMART PLUMBING ALTERNATIVE

One of the most widely used and cost effective new plumbing solutions to hit the market in decades is pex plumbing. Pex tubing is plastic plumbing pipe that is perfect for residential use. It's easy to install, cheaper than traditional copper plumbing, and has a great track record when it comes to performance. It is presently one of the most commonly used plumbing materials in new home building, making it the perfect choice if you're looking for a functional, cost effective, solution to replacing or installing plumbing in your home.

### Pex Tubing is the Best Buy on the Market

Perhaps the greatest draw to using pex pipe for your plumbing needs is cost. From materials right on down to installation, it is hands down the most cost effective plumbing a homeowner can buy. It's cheaper from the get go from a materials standpoint, and because it can be installed in longer, flexible lines using less fittings, you'll also save on the extra fixtures and fittings that copper plumbing requires. And when it comes to installation, there is no comparison. The flexibility, light weight, and easy fitting of pex tubing drastically cuts down on the time it takes to re-plumb a house, or install it in a new home build, translating into big savings on labor

costs. Top to bottom, pex plumbing is one of the best buys on the market.

### Pex Tubing and Performance

From a performance standpoint, pex pipe also seems to beat out traditional materials. You don't need to worry about using it as a potable water delivery system, since it's proven to be even more resistant to common chemicals found in water systems than traditional plumbing materials. Its smooth interior resists the buildup of corrosive materials and minerals that can accumulate and clog copper pipe over time, and because it's flexible plastic tubing, it resists freeze damage better than metal pipe.

### Don't Use Pex Outdoors

Unfortunately, pex tubing is not suitable for outdoor applications. While it resists freeze damage indoors, it won't hold up under hard freezing and thawing conditions. And it should never be exposed to UV light, which can break down the material and cause it to fail. As such, pex plumbing should only be used for indoor plumbing applications.

### Save on Maintenance, Too

Another reason to choose pex pipe for your plumbing is directly related to how easy it is to work with and install. That convenience translates into the



maintenance side of things, too. If you do suffer a plumbing problem, pex is much easier for your plumber to fix and replace than traditional materials, speeding up repairs and saving you on the most costly part of calling in a plumber: *the labor.*

### Debunking the Rumors

If you're interested in pex pipe for your home, and begin to look into having it installed, you might encounter doubters who cite problems with plastic plumbing that was commonly installed back in the eighties. It's true, plastic plumbing got a bad name for a while, largely due to a tendency to spring pin prick leaks in the pipe over time.

If you're interested in pex tubing, talk to a plumber about what it will take to replace the old plumbing in your home with pex or to use it in a new home build. You'll be amazed by the cost difference over copper, and can rest easy knowing you're getting an excellent product to boot.

*Matt Goering, formerly a carpenter and house painter, is a freelance writer for the home improvement industry who has published over 600 articles.*

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# SMALL BATHROOM DESIGN: HOW TO MAKE A LOT OUT OF A LITTLE

**M**any people think of bathrooms as merely functional: it's where you bathe, wash your hands, and relieve yourself. However, we all know that there's more to the story. On the Interstate, when you decide to stop at a gas station, the first criteria to consider are the cleanliness of the restroom. When you eat at a restaurant or have a drink at a bar, you inevitably inspect, scrutinize, and grade the state of their facilities, which tends to reflect the establishment's overall quality. And the same rule applies to homeowners: guests and prospective buyers attach a lot of importance to bathrooms, so you should as well.

**Yes, Size Matters!** The biggest concern when it comes to remodeling any room is its size. When you renovate, creating more space should always be a priority. No matter how many fresh fixtures or state of the art features you install, it'll all be useless if the room feels cramped. This is especially important when it comes to small bathroom design. Even if it's a small bath, it's meant to be relaxing. And although it's great to have a cozy, private retreat, you should also feel comfortable and at ease. So when it comes to undersized restrooms, you need to find ways to utilize the space you've been given in order to make a tiny area feel like an airy sanctuary.

**Let Space Speak for Itself.** The simplest way to deal with a small bathroom design is to highlight the pre-existing space. This means you have to trick people into seeing more than what is really there. Giving the illusion of space is a very effective way to enlarge a room.

**De-clutter.** One bathroom design idea is to remove clutter. Get rid of the busy wallpaper. Take down the picture frames. Remove excess furnishings. Eliminate those ugly towel bars.

**Storage.** Now that you've ridded yourself of the clutter, where the heck are you going to put your stuff? To hang towels, install a hook on the back of the door or buy a shower rod with towel bars already attached. If you have to have furniture, make it double duty. Get a decorative chest that can also act as an additional storage unit. Or invest in a small magazine rack that can be placed out of the way. But it's best to get things off the floor by hanging tiny shelves or buying a mirrored medicine cabinet to conceal your toiletries.

**Lighting.** Now that your stuff is out of the way, you need to spotlight the space you've created. In small bathroom design, natural illumination is a great way to cast some light you have. Put in a glass-block window that lets light in from other rooms. Mount some wall sconces that take up little space yet shed lots of ambient light. Or just fire up some candles to generate a romantic mood.

**Walls.** Along with lighting, another key bathroom idea is color coordination. Letting your walls stay neutral (white or beige) generates an impression of more space. Plus, if you draw the eye upwards, the room will look taller; so add a border around the ceiling to create more vertical depth. Also, installing polished tiles and hanging mirrors lets the area reflect itself, thereby creating the feel of additional square footage.



**More Out of Less.** In any type of small bathroom design, it's the plumbing fixtures that eat up the room. But there are ways to make these cumbersome necessities fade into the background.

**Toilet.** A hung toilet has no tank attached so it slides right up against the wall.

**Sink.** Most vanities come with small, useless counter spaces and cabinetry systems. Instead, eliminate the waste by installing a wall-hung sink which frees up floor space. Or a pedestal sink installed in an out of the way corner can deliver the elegance you want with openness you need.

**Tub.** Make the particular fixture do the work for two by installing a unit that works as both a shower and tub. If you still want luxury, claw foot tubs actually free up space around the walls and can be turned into a shower or Jacuzzi depending on the model.

**Shower.** If you have a half bath, a quick bathroom idea is to simply install a single-stall shower in a corner. And to make it invisible to the naked eye, invest in a frameless door or a clear shower curtain for transparent appearance.

*Marc Dickinson has worked in both the general contracting and landscaping trades and is currently a home improvement freelance writer with over 300 articles published.*

## WINNER, WINNER, CHICKEN DINNER!

☆☆☆ WE WON!!! ☆☆☆

2009 CONTRACTORS OF THE YEAR WINNERS!

The National Association of the Remodeling Industry awarded McHales Kitchens & Baths two awards. One for Residential Bathrooms under \$30,000 and the second for Residential kitchens under \$30,000 - we look forward to future competitions.



## NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tim & Lorraine McHale announce the birth of their daughter, **Lily Ava McHale**. She was born at St. Mary's hospital in Langhorne PA on 7/21/09 & weighed 7lbs.15oz.



## KRUISE'S KORNER:



Mark Kruse is a journeyman plumber with Mc Hales for over 14 years. Mark's homeowner tip is to disconnect your outside faucet immediately after using. Hook it up to wash your car or water your plants but disconnect it ASAP. This will prevent your faucet from freezing and leaking after the first season freeze.

- Mark

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