



25 TIPS TO SMALL HOME SUCCESS

IF YOU'RE THINKING OF BUILDING YOUR OWN LOG HOME CABIN OR COTTAGE, YOU'LL NEED TO BE SMART ABOUT YOUR HOME'S FINAL DESIGN.

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MAIN LIVING AREAS

1 Forgo the Formal Entry. The entry in a smaller house should be part of the larger space – it does not need to be formal and certainly shouldn't interfere with the traffic flow of the home. To accomplish this, the space should be just large enough to greet guests and provide ample storage, such as a coat rack and bench for removing shoes.

2 Create a Flexible Design. Combining the living, dining and kitchen spaces in a smaller home is a smart idea. These areas do not need to be overly large to work well, and when part of an open plan they'll "borrow" the illusion of space from the adjoining rooms.

To take it a step further, forgo a formal dining area, opting for a casual dinette off the kitchen instead. Remember that a small dining area can expand into the great room on holidays then retreat to its daily size for everyday use.

3 Add Personal Spaces. Including a desk in a laundry room or kitchen verses a separate den or office, or a reading niche that is adjacent to a larger room, can squeeze in a functional or special space without adding an entirely separate room. To create a sense of privacy, he suggests tucking a small seat into your frame with a small window for a personal view to the outside.

4 Size Down Your Hearth. Rather than make room for a soaring hearth in your main living area, opt for a gas or wood-burning stove instead. These types of models can be used as a back-up cooktop, while conserving space and being more energy efficient than most fireplaces.



Eliminate foyers to maximize space in a smaller cabin.



Wood stoves save space & costs over traditional fireplaces.

PRIVATE SPACES

5 Eliminate Bathrooms. Many potential homeowners start the home-building process looking for three-bedroom designs where each bedroom has its own bath, plus an additional powder room, but that can be difficult to fit into a 2,500-square-foot or less home. A smart alternative: incorporate a “family bath” for each floor. The need for privacy and heavier traffic times can be mitigated by partitioning the more private functions like shower or toilet behind a pocket door, and having a powder room available elsewhere.

6 Or Rethink Bathrooms Altogether. Rather than putting in multiple bathrooms, you can always take a page out of the hotel industry’s playbook and put the toilet and shower in a separate compartment and put a sink or vanity in each bedroom. You could also do without vanities altogether, instead using a pedestal sink and create a full-length storage cabinet in the stud cavity next to the sink.

7 Downsize Bedrooms – Not Storage. Bedrooms have grown smaller over the years as more people realize that the greater return on their square foot invest-

ment might be in other areas, like the living room and kitchen. If you’re working with smaller bedrooms with sloped ceilings or unique shapes, remember that those design “challenges” can actually present possibilities in the form of added closets or storage areas in those unused spaces.

8 Incorporate a Bunk Room. Don’t underestimate the power of a well-designed sleeping loft or bunkroom filled with multiple beds. These spaces are easy to close off when they’re not in use, and they allow for fewer separate guest bedrooms while still providing plenty of sleeping space in a fun bonus room.



Smaller kitchens can be cozy and efficient.



Bunk beds are always a child pleaser.



A nook off the great room provides a quaint dining space.

STORAGE

9 Design for Double Duty.

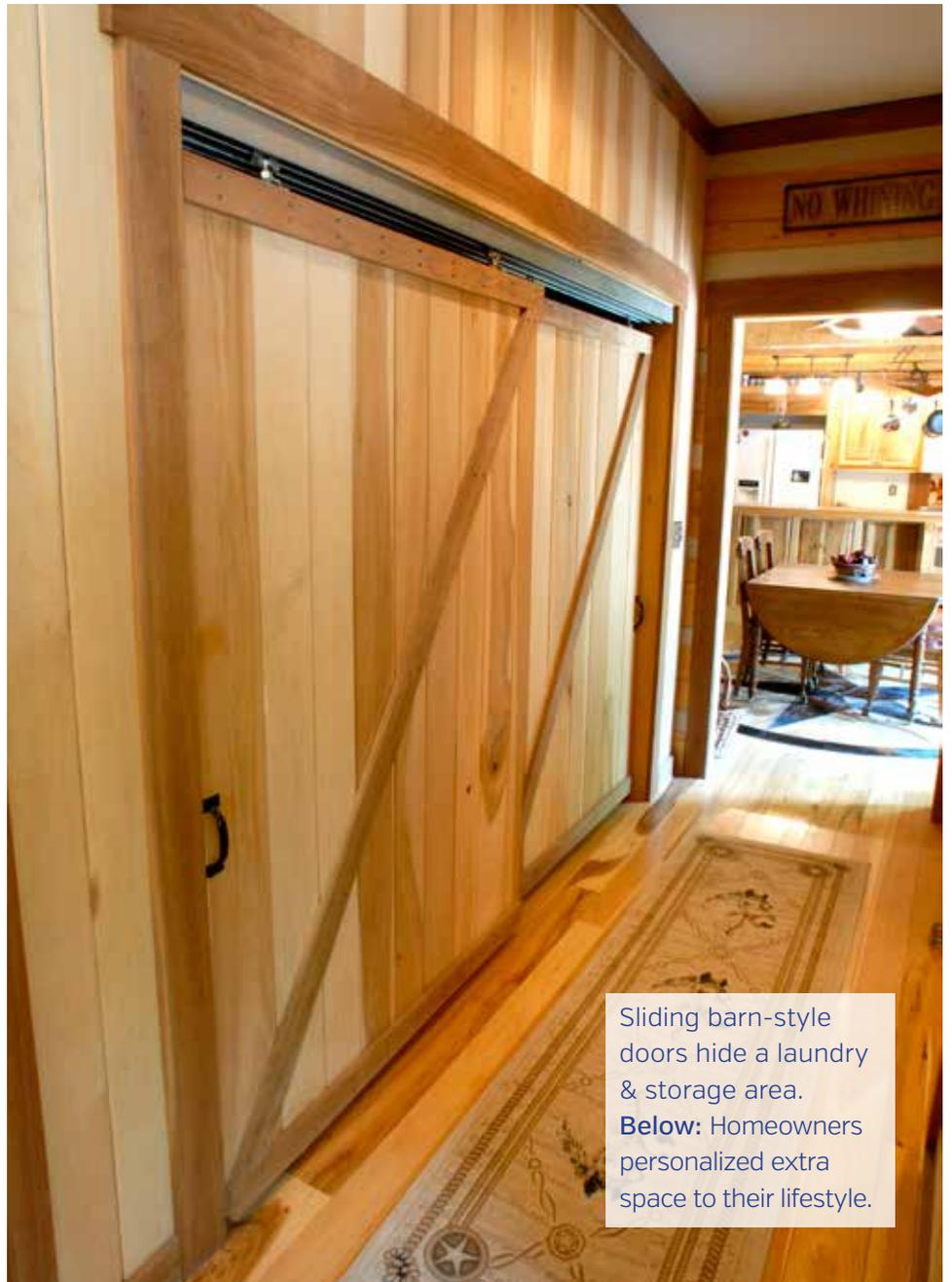
In a smaller home, you'll want every space to be as functional as possible, so think about spaces like a wider hall that could become a home office or mud-room. A bigger stair landing can transform into that cozy nook you always dreamed of, and the guest closet can include an open bench with hooks and a mirror for added storage. Rooms can also pull double duty. Do you really need a guest room and an office? With some creative solutions, these two easily can become one.

10 Make the Most of Your Closet.

Walk-in closets are not only popular, but smart. They can perfectly match the clothing needs with the user with varying height hanging racks, shoe cubbies and built-in drawers. This also allows the now smaller master bedroom to stay clear of dressers, for a cleaner, calmer feel. Remember: You also can include a stacked washer and dryer in a walk-in closet to eliminate the need for a full laundry room.

11 Be Efficient in the Kitchen.

As the most used space in the home, it's especially important to make the kitchen work efficiently regardless of its size. A walk in pantry, even a small one, can concentrate much of the food and auxiliary kitchen needs into an easily accessible and relatively inexpensive space, allowing the kitchen to be a bit smaller and more open to the common area shared by living, dining and cooking activities.



Sliding barn-style doors hide a laundry & storage area.
Below: Homeowners personalized extra space to their lifestyle.





Outdoor living space adds square footage to your home.

WHOLE-HOUSE IDEAS

12 Be Honest About Your Needs. Consider what you need. It seems like a no-brainer, but taking an honest look at how your family really lives will help you eliminate wasted space. After all, there's no sense in having a formal dining room if you're just going to end up gathering around the kitchen island for meals. Stick with the spaces you'll use every day, and eliminate the rest.

13 Eliminate Hallways. When planning, try to eliminate interior hallways whenever possible – circulating along the outside walls and eliminating corners makes a

space feel much bigger. If you need hallway space for displaying objects, design the house to dedicate one wall in each room for art and pictures, bookshelves, etc., and leave the rest as empty as possible to eliminate visual clutter.

14 Bring in the Light. Casting light on the walls and in corners instead of in the middle of the room will make a space feel bigger. You can also add windows at ends of hallways, glass doorways or large window groupings in the great room so you are constantly looking beyond the structural limitations.

15 Think Vertically. You've probably heard it at least a dozen

times by now: Build up, not out. Why is this advice repeated so often? Because building vertically (think putting in a basement) is a whole lot cheaper than expanding your home's footprint. Plus, going the other way (adding height to ceilings) will make small rooms feel a lot larger.

16 Get outside. Outdoor spaces can be useful in extending the square footage of your home—but only if you get plenty of use out of them. Consider screening in a porch or including an outdoor hearth on your patio so you can stay outdoors more months of the year. If you have a wraparound deck, include plenty of doors so it's accessible from anywhere in the house.

9 EXTRA TIPS FOR COZY SPACES

17 Investing in furniture that serves many functions is a great way to streamline a room. An ottoman with built-in storage lets you tuck away blankets and books, and also doubles as extra seating.

18 Dark colors can add drama to a space, but they also can make rooms appear smaller. The lighter the shade is, the more open your space will feel, so stick with neutrals and creamy shades.

19 While we wouldn't recommend going overboard with mirrored surfaces, adding a little glass can open up an area and reflect light, making the space feel bigger.

20 In smaller homes, we often make the mistake of pushing the furniture against the walls to try to open up the room. But it's smarter to give your furniture breathing room, whether it's angling your bed or floating your sofa in the living room with a console table behind it.

21 Dining tables that can be made smaller or larger with removable or drop leaves let you make the most out of a combined living-dining area.

22 Rather than combine a bunch of different hues in one space, instantly expand a room by painting the walls, trim and detailing in different shades of one color, such as white, off-white or beige.

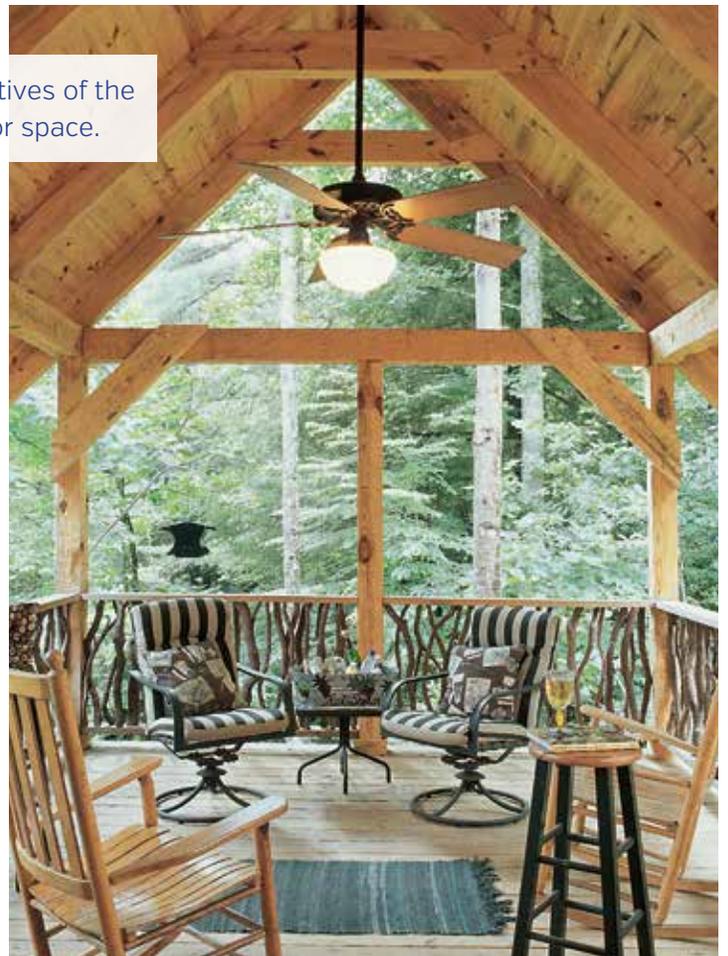
23 Bringing texture to your ceiling through colors, wood patterns and fun fixtures will draw your eye upward, creating the illusion of height in a room.

24 It's easy to assume that oversized furniture will make a small space feel cramped, but you'll actually create an airier atmosphere by displaying one prominent item – from a statement sofa to a curved armchair – rather than using multiple smaller pieces.

25 Leaving your windows uncovered (or opting for simple, streamlined window coverings) will trick your eyes into thinking that the space boasts added depth, while revealing the natural beauty of the surrounding landscape.



Two perspectives of the same outdoor space.





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