

Home Improvements Promote Healthy Lifestyles

Many homeowners dream of having their own beautiful, calming sanctuary to escape from the outside world. Creating such a retreat can be easier than you think. The first step is to take time to really look at how the home improvement project will enhance your family's lifestyle. Upgrades that incorporate elements of exercise, social interaction and stress relief add value to the home and go a long way toward improving the lives of the people who live there.



New portable hot tubs have entertainment features such as stereos with a docking station for iPod portable music players

According to a national survey conducted by Harris Interactive for Sundance Spas, most Americans know they should relax after a stressful day. In fact, nine in 10 adults (94 percent) say it is at least "somewhat important" that they relax after a stressful day, and more than half (54 percent) say it is "very important" for them to do so.

So, what are some simple ways Americans can relax? Practical home improvement tips aimed at stress-free living include:

- Get out in the garden

Planting a tree, picking fresh vegetables or creating a decorative flower bed is an easy way for the average 165 pound person to burn about 300 calories per hour. Not only does this improve the aesthetics of a home, but it's a relaxing, down-to-earth exercise too!

- Set up a sports spot

Add an area where family, friends and neighbors can play an impromptu game of basketball, volleyball or racquet sports. Backyard putting greens are also becoming popular for recreational golfers with yards of any size. Invest in a central spot where physical activity can flourish for young and old alike.

- Huddle up in a hot tub

Survey results showed more than half of American adults (59 percent) find relief in a warm water soak. Easy to install and maintain, self-contained hot tubs are a home improvement staple that provides a great place to relax and rejuvenate the mind, body and soul. You can slip into the bubbling water any season.

"Studies have found hydrotherapy can play a major role in stress relief," said Dr. David Swanson, a Los Angeles-based psychologist specializing in treatment for those needing help with stress reduction and management. "Hydrotherapy is one of the oldest forms of medical treatment dating back to Hippocrates. Just 15 minutes of soaking a day can bring about relief. And, the best part is that you can enjoy a hot tub alone or with your spouse and friends."

Hot new portable hot tubs have advanced, easy-maintenance features, like the luxury J-480 from Jacuzzi Hot Tubs or the Cameo™ model from Sundance Spas (a Consumer's Digest magazine Best Buy). Entertainment and therapeutic extras on these models make the hot tub experience even more enjoyable, such as stereos with a docking station for iPod portable music players, ergonomic seating and aromatherapy options.

Soothing music combined with relaxing scents have been proven to help with relaxation. And, hot tubs provide significant therapeutic benefits through hydrotherapy—the combination of warm water, buoyancy and the massaging action of powerful jets. In addition to reducing stress, relaxing tired and sore muscles and relieving minor aches and pains from exercise, hydrotherapy can help ease arthritis pain and induce a restful sleep.

How do people eliminate stress? "Some stress is necessary, but when we take on too much of it, stress can interfere with the body's immune system and leave you feeling drained," adds Swanson. "The key to staying healthy is to be proactive."

For more information on home improvements that aid in stress relief, go to www.sundancespas.com or www.jacuzzi.com.

Courtesy: Home Improvement News and Information Center

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