

Fighting Fridge Odours

Fridge odours often linger because the foods inside are constantly emitting and mixing their aromatic chemistry. While many of us were taught that an open box of baking soda would absorb or eliminate such smelly encounters, you may have since learned that one box simply doesn't work well enough. The natural properties of baking soda are rather localized in their effectiveness, so to eliminate all of the odours you would need surface exposure on multiple shelves.

Activated charcoal filtering is an alternative that is known to work much better. It is often used in modern refrigerators equipped with a deodorizing system. Of course, it eventually needs to be replaced and that can be expensive, but pet shop and aquarium stores may sell it at bulk prices. You might also consider a battery-operated refrigerator air-filter equipped with a small fan. However, you need to be aware that some such products claim to emit



ozone (O-3) gas to eliminate odours. They should be avoided as ozone is considered toxic.



3D Wall Textures

While adding new colour is considered one of the easiest and least expensive ways to change the appearance of a room, adding a textured wall can have a significantly more dramatic effect. As a rewarding do-it-yourself project, you can finish an existing wall with a 3D texture using one of many approaches. For example, the number of available wallpaper options might surprise you, with so many preprinted and embossed surfaces to choose from. Alternatively, paint additives can create a stucco or glazed texture that can be applied with a trowelled or stipple effect. If you're willing to experiment, the internet offers an enormous range of D-I-Y treatments.

For those less confident in their flare for applying an attractive finishing touch, pre-molded manufactured wall panels may be the best way to go. Available with dramatic art motifs or in faux profiles from brick to wood to leather, they offer reliable outcomes because large sheets provide a fuller impression of results in advance. In addition, some patterned sheets are interlocking, so you needn't worry about blending seams between panels, although they might require the removal of baseboards or other trim.

Concerning Indoor Air Quality

Amongst the things we learned over the past year is to not take the air we breathe for granted. While we can't control what's out there, many homeowners have been paying more attention to their indoor air quality, or IAQ. As a result, there have been many questions about residential air filters, and how effective they might be. Among the most reliable types are those that are defined as meeting the standard for "high-efficiency particulate air", also known as HEPA. However, filtering is only half the challenge. Your HVAC system needs to send a certain volume of air through a HEPA filter to meet a clean air delivery rate, or CADR.

The bigger your home, the greater the fan capacity required to adequately circulate indoor air through your filters. Furthermore, many homeowners choose additional and/or more focused air cleaning by installing "air purifiers" in specific rooms. Although they don't really "purify", they do clean the air to a particular standard, as long as they are designed to serve the room size with an effective CADR. The bottom line is, you need to know which unit(s) will do the job, in terms of filtering out allergens like dust and dander, as well as bacteria and other contaminants.



Plan and Paint Like a Pro

When you're refreshing a room with a new coat of paint, there are many things to consider if you want the results to look professional. Interior decorators, colour experts and painting pros often suggest some tried-and-true pre-painting tips in order to avoid disappointment. After all, an unsatisfactory outcome can be a hassle and quite costly. So for starters, don't obsess over the latest colour trends, and be mindful of guidelines – not rules – such as "lighter hues can make rooms look bigger".

Do some research using reputable décor and paint websites – including technical planning apps to help you achieve the best results. Ask your local professional paint dealer about ideal primers and other tips. Make sure to budget for multiple coats. Also, look into using quality brushes and tools. Although personal taste is paramount, you can avoid a disaster by testing your choices in advance. Preview large swatch samples or painted patches on the surface in question, and observe them under all lighting conditions.



Organized Car-Sharing

If you live in or near an urban district, you're probably aware of one or more companies providing "car-share" arrangements that offer members access to a network of personal-use vehicles on a temporary pay-as-you-go basis. Though annual fees are often required, they can provide eligible members with insurance coverage, and may even pay for fuel. Beyond the bigger national or international brand-name companies, there are also local co-op car-sharing organizations and independent consumer groups that are growing in popularity. With smart technology, tracking and maintenance can be monitored easily and accurately, and user-payment can be made conveniently.

It's a rational market response to the rising cost of car ownership, and a practical approach to addressing the obvious waste of road-ready automobiles that are depreciating while parked unused most of the time. Shared ownership programs can have further significant longer-term effects. For example, if such a trend continues, the density of newly-built neighbourhoods can be affected, as fewer families require multi-vehicle garages. This can also affect older homes and high-rises, as existing homeowners and condo corporations find more creative uses for unused parking spaces.

Quick Cleaning Counts

Not every day can be devoted to housework and cleaning chores, so it's worth finding a routine that saves you time and helps you stay ahead of grime. To be time-efficient, determine whether your best approach is sticking to one task throughout the home (e.g. change bedding) or using the "rotation" technique of cleaning one room at a time, from top-to-bottom. Develop a plan but be sure to recognize that different tasks require different time investments. Identify the most opportune time to deal with each task. Start with mini-jobs, such as removing countertop clutter before committing to larger tasks like disinfecting cooking and prep surfaces or washing floors.

Here are a few time-saving tricks you may not know:

- **Ceiling Fans:** Cover one blade at a time with an old pillowcase or shirtsleeve, then wipe back carefully to capture dust.
- **Venetian Blinds:** Wrap kitchen tong tips with a micro-fibre cloth and swipe each slat, top and bottom at once.
- **Stovetops and Rangehoods:** Surprisingly, cooking oil may be the best way to wipe down caked on greasy surfaces.
- **Toilet Bowls:** Dissolving denture tablets can do wonders when trying to clean porcelain and they won't cause any damage.

