

Give your home broad appeal by reducing focus on big 'n' bold features (aka eyesores) that can dominate. It doesn't get more obvious than an old fireplace and outdated carpet (see right).



get ready to
SELL!

Try these tricks to add value before you put house on the market

The Aussie property market is a hot topic right now – as always! If you're tempted to sell your place and cash in, don't let a poor impression undermine its potential worth. Here are smart fixes and tips to help you sell for the best price. Freshen your interiors – decorate, clean, spruce and style. Then head outdoors – trim, mow, fix, sweep and revamp. Finally, choose your agent wisely. Your 'for sale' sign will be stickered in a flash!



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Internal arches can put off buyers. Create modern lines – square off arches, reclad walls and paint away.



Greet buyers with a well-presented exterior. If your front door has old-fashioned glass panels, you can cover them up rather than shelling out for a new door.



steps



Fab front of house

The front door of your home sets the scene for what's inside, so it should be top priority for your makeover. It doesn't have to be expensive either. Here, the outdated Federation-style glass panels make an exit with this cheeky cover up!

FRONT DOOR

Gather your supplies

- 3mm MDF sheet
- Acrylic gap filler
- Acrylic undercoat
- Enamel topcoat

You'll also need

Glue; caulking gun (for acrylic gap filler); damp cloth; painting equipment

Here's how

STEP 1 Cut MDF to size of glass panels in door. Make them a tight fit so there's less filling to do.

STEP 2 Spread glue over 1 side of cut MDF pieces and press onto glass panels.

STEP 3 Run a bead of gap filler around panel. While still wet, run a damp cloth over filler to remove excess and give a smooth finish. Leave to dry.

STEP 4 Paint undercoat on MDF panels and let dry. Then paint with enamel topcoat.

Finish the fresh look of polished floorboards with a couple of white cane chairs and small table that will invite househunters to sit.



Fantastic floors

In older houses, beautiful timber floorboards are often lurking under what is usually dated or worn-out carpets. With the right equipment and following a few simple steps, you can totally transform the look and feel of the whole house, catching the eye of keen househunters.

FLOOR SANDING

Gather your supplies

- Wood putty (to match colour of boards)
- Floor sander (hired)
- Floor edge sander (hired)
- Floor polisher (hired)
- Floor sealer (we used Feast Watson Proofseal)
- Clear floor finish (we used Feast Watson Floorclear)

You'll also need

Utility knife; pry bar; hammer; vacuum cleaner; nail punch; scraper; safety equipment (dust mask gloves and ear muffs) 40-, 80- and 120-grit sandpaper for sander and edger; detail sander; paint brush; short nap roller or lambswool applicator

Here's how

STEP 1 Remove carpet. If you're cutting it into strips to remove, don't go too deep with utility knife as you don't want to score flooring underneath.

STEP 2 Remove nail strips around edges of floor using pry bar. Pull out any staples used to hold down underlay. Vacuum floor to remove any loose staples and dust. Use a nail punch to push nails a few millimetres below surface of boards.

steps



STEP 1



STEP 2

steps

STEP 3 Fill nail holes with wood putty. Hold a ball of putty in 1 hand and push it into holes with thumb of other hand. Use scraper to make it flush with boards.

STEP 4 Using floor sander fitted with 40-grit sandpaper, start sanding diagonally across boards. Never stop or start the machine while in contact with boards or it will sand a depression in the floor. Move it slowly and steadily. Do a pass in 1 direction then turn to go on other diagonal.

STEP 5 Switch to 80-grit sandpaper. Start sanding along boards with grain of the timber.

STEP 6 Sand edges of room using edge sander. Start with 40-grit sandpaper and then go over with 80-grit sandpaper in the same way as done in Step 4.

STEP 7 Give floor and edges a final sand with 120-grit sandpaper fitted to both machines. To get right into corners, use detail sander. Wipe down walls and vacuum floor to remove all dust from room. Apply a coat of floor sealer. It will prevent tannin in the timber discolouring further coats.

STEP 8 Apply first coat of clear floor finish. Use a brush to coat edges and short nap roller or lambswool applicator to coat boards. Work with the grain when coating

boards and keep a wet edge so you can blend 1 pass with the next. Leave to dry for 12 hours.

STEP 9 Give floor a light sand using floor polisher with 120-grit sandpaper disc attached. This will remove any grain that has lifted. Remove dust. Apply 2 more coats of clear floor finish, allowing to dry after each coat.

Move the sander slowly and steadily to get an even finish

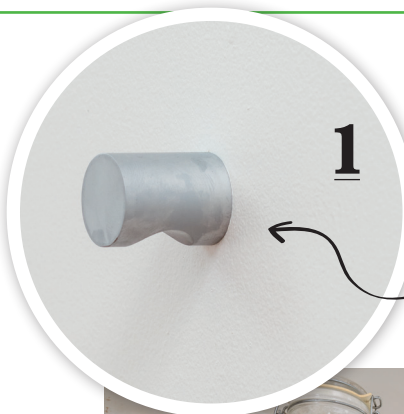


Rip up old carpet to reveal forgotten floorboards. A little TLC and they revamp a room!

Tips in the kitchen

Get a grip

1. If your kitchen cupboards are still in good shape, to add a modern touch all you need to do is replace old handles. Just make sure to use handles that will fit into the screw holes left by the old ones.



Choose handles that come in bulk packs – it's much cheaper than buying them individually

Storage in style

2, 3. You can never have too much kitchen storage and installing extra cabinets isn't the only way to go about it. A set of open shelves gives you loads of extra space and an opportunity to fill a bare wall. To make shelves, screw together 285 x 19mm dressed and painted pine. Space out each shelf 300mm apart. Glue 9mm MDF to back of shelves onto wall, then screw through into wall studs. Paint undercoat, then finish with topcoat of enamel paint that matches cabinets.



Splash of colour

4, 5. While white and bright is more attractive to buyers, don't go too far and make it bland and boring. A sprinkling of accessories in a variety of colours, textures and shapes adds interest and a touch of freshness to your kitchen makeover.





Buyers will love the appeal of a level entertaining area – here, running directly from the back door of the house.

A big deal deck

While major renovations aren't worth it when it comes to selling, adding a simple deck area can add serious value. You can then add an inexpensive outdoor setting to create an enticing all-purpose backyard zone. A bit of colour outdoors will brighten sitting areas. Cheerful cushions and well-placed pot plants do the trick!



BUILD A DECK

Gather your supplies

- Wall plate – 2300 x 190 x 45mm H3 treated pine
- Posts – 1400 x 90 x 90mm H4 treated pine (12)
- Bearers – 5300 x 190 x 45mm H3 treated pine (3)
- Long joists – 4180 x 90 x 45mm H3 treated pine (6)
- Short joists – 2945 x 90 x 45mm H3 treated pine (7)
- Edging vertical supports – 650 x 90 x 45mm H3 treated pine (16)
- Landing battens – 1200 x 50 x 45mm H3 treated pine (5)
- Landing edge battens – 185 x 35 x 45mm H3 treated pine (13)
- Long decking – 5400 x 90 x 22mm treated pine decking (31)
- Short decking – 2300 x 90 x 22mm treated pine decking (13)
- Front deck edging – 5344 x 90 x 22mm treated pine decking (6)
- Long-side deck edging – 4180 x 90 x 22mm treated pine decking (6)
- Short-side deck edging – 2945 x 90 x 22mm treated pine decking (6)
- Landing decking – 2020 x 90 x 22mm treated pine decking (13)
- Long landing edging – 2064 x 90 x 22mm treated pine decking (2)
- Short landing edging – 1257 x 90 x 22mm treated pine decking (4)

You'll also need

Drill; 10mm and 7mm drill bits; spirit level; 6 and 10mm masonry drill bits; 10 x 100mm galvanised masonry screws (10); measuring tape; hammer; wooden stakes (6); stringline; post-hole digger; 14mm blue metal aggregate (1 bag); 16mm dia. x 8000mm clear plastic tube; power saw; hand saw; clamps; 120mm galvanised cuphead bolts and nuts (24); concrete mix (1-2 bags per hole); wheelbarrow; shovel; Handi Block precast foundation blocks (8); chalk line; 85mm galvanised batten screws; plastic packers; red wall plug (1 roll); 100mm galvanised screws; nail gun; ring shank decking nails; decking stain (we used Cabot's Deck and Exterior Stain in Hunter Grey); stain applicator

Here's how

STEP 1 Determine deck size. Here, it's 5.3m long, 4.18m wide so can use standard-sized 5.4m and 4.2m timber lengths with little wastage. Determine deck height. Here, it's 185mm below door threshold. There's a slight slope, meaning end of deck would be over 1m above ground (which would require a balustrade). Instead, a large landing will be built directly outside door, leading to deck.

STEP 2 Drill 10mm holes through wall plate every 600mm or so. To mark-out where top of wall plate should sit, mark wall 112mm below deck level to allow for thickness of decking and height of joist. Hold wall plate on wall to meet marks and make level. Use a drill fitted with 10mm masonry drill bit to drill through holes in wall plate into bricks. Secure wall plate with masonry screws. Here, wall plate is only attached on wall of house. An intermediate bearer supports the part of deck butting up to concrete steps and landing.

STEP 3 Set out deck posts and bearers. Measure point on ground 200mm past 1 side of deck and 4.18m from house, and hammer wooden stake into ground. Repeat for other side of deck. Stretch stringline between stakes and make taut.

STEP 4 From end of wall plate, run another stringline out from house to mark out the side of deck. Use the 345 rule to ensure it's square to house wall.

STEP 5 To set out post positions for end bearer, measure from side stringline along end stringline. As joists will overhang end bearer, set back posts 200mm from end stringline. As bearer will overhang corner posts by 200mm, make centre of these posts 245mm in from sides of deck. Set out other posts evenly between corner posts along length of deck, not exceeding 1600mm apart. Here, centre of posts are 245, 1848, 3451 and 5055mm from side stringline. Use a post-hole digger to dig a 250mm dia. hole, 800mm deep at each post position.

STEP 6 Fill bottom 100mm of post holes with blue metal. Put over-length post in hole and make plumb. To create water level, fill plastic tube with water, ensuring there are no air bubbles. With a helper, hold 1 end of tube vertically at wall plate and other end on post. Slowly move tube up and down at wall plate end until water level steadies at top of plate. Mark water level on post. As water finds its own level, the water at each end of tube will be the same height.

STEP 7 Remove post from hole and cut at level marked in Step 6. At 1 end of post, cut 190 x 45mm notch and put back in hole, notch-side up.



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 5



STEP 7



STEP 8 Repeat Steps 6 and 7 to make post for each hole.

STEP 9 Put bearer on posts so 1 end is in line with side stringline. Make post plumb and clamp. Drill 10mm holes through bearer and post, then insert cuphead bolts and tighten. Use 2 bolts per post. Repeat for remaining posts.

STEP 10 Mix concrete in wheelbarrow and shovel into holes. Check that posts remain plumb and bearer is same distance from house all the way along.

STEP 11 Determine centreline of intermediate bearers. They should be evenly spaced between wall plate and end bearer, not exceeding 1200mm apart. If building around a set of steps, as here, make sure a bearer is adjacent to steps to support deck frame at that point. Insert an extra bearer if required. To support intermediate posts, use Handi Block precast foundations. Along line of bearers, mark position of posts to match those already installed. Remove grass at these points and excavate as required to make firm, level base for foundation blocks.

STEP 12 Set up stringlines to align foundation blocks. To ensure stringlines are in line with back face of posts, deduct 67mm from distance between

house and centreline of each bearer. Set up stringlines at these points. Align 1 side of square socket on top of each block with stringlines.

STEP 13 Sit over-length posts in blocks and make plumb. Stretch stringline from top of end bearer to top of wall plate so it meets side of each post. Mark post where stringline meets it. Remove post and cut at this line. Cut 190 x 45mm notch at 1 end of post.

STEP 14 Put posts back in blocks and sit intermediate bearers in notches on posts. Ensure that end of bearer is in line with side stringline. Bolt bearers to posts and attach, as done in Step 9.

STEP 15 Mark top of wall plate and end bearer for long joists. Make first joist sit at end of plate and bearer, then space following joists at 450mm centres. Ensure you have a joist to support deck adjacent to landing. Stretch chalk line between marks on end bearer and wall plate, and flick to mark joist position on intermediate bearers. Mark with an X. Repeat to mark out bearer running along landing and end bearer for installation of short joists. Put all joists on marks and skew nail on both sides of joist into bearers and wall plate.



STEP 16 To dress sides of deck and hide framing, start by installing edging vertical supports. On joists at side of deck, notch top of vertical support so it sits flush with face of joist. Put edging vertical support at each end of joist and about every 900mm along. At end of deck, screw edging vertical supports into side of every second joist flush with end. Use galvanised batten screws, 2 screws per support.

STEP 17 To cover concrete landing, measure distance from underside of door threshold to landing. Then, deduct 22mm from measurement to allow for decking thickness. Use power saw to cut joists to suit height (here, it's 50mm) and create landing battens.

STEP 18 Drill 7mm-dia. hole through each end and in centre of landing battens. Put battens on landing in line with deck joists so nails line up. If landing is sloped, add plastic packer at end of batten to make level. Using a drill fitted with 6mm masonry bit, drill through holes in batten into concrete. Remove dust, then insert red wall plug through hole in batten into concrete. Cut off red plug flush with top of joist. Using 100mm galvanised screws, screw through red plug into concrete. Repeat for remaining battens.

STEP 19 To support decking on sides of landing, cut and fit landing edge battens that run from top of deck joist to be flush with top of landing batten. Make timber sufficient thickness so distance from house wall to face of timber is a multiple of 95mm (thickness of board plus 5mm gap). On sides of landing space edge battens every 450mm.

STEP 20 Put first decking boards on joists at end of deck so overhangs end of joist by 30mm and each side by at least 35mm. Continue laying boards using 5mm plastic packer as a spacer. If boards are bowed, tap a broad chisel into joist and use as a lever until bowed board is 5mm from adjacent board. Every 5 or so boards, check combined width of boards laid is same at each end and in centre. If distance is different, slightly adjust gap on subsequent boards to gradually bring them back in line. Also check distance yet to be laid and make sure it's a multiple of 95 (thickness of board plus 5mm gap) so you don't end up with wide gap or narrow board when you reach house wall.

STEP 21 Where decking overhangs joists at side of deck, mark a line on end of boards 30mm from outside edge of joist below. Use power saw to cut along line.

STEP 22 Cut and fit edging to edging vertical supports along end and sides of deck. Make front deck edging overlap side deck edging. Use an offcut of decking as a spacer between edging boards.

STEP 23 To lay landing decking, make side and ends of first board flush with landing edge battens. Lay boards as done on main deck in Step 20. Fix landing edging so top board is flush with landing decking. Leave a 5mm gap between boards and mitre joints at corners.

STEP 24 Apply decking stain to structure. Apply 2–3 coats, allowing to dry after each coat.

STOCKISTS

Power tools, **Bosch Australia**, 1300 307 044. 2400 x 1200 x 10mm plasterboard, \$12.70 each; external angle, \$3.01/2.4m; Base Coat 60, \$47.45/20kg; 20mm paper jointing tape, \$4.18/20m; Jointmaster finishing compound, \$36.95/20kg; stud adhesive, \$13.65/1kg; 30mm plasterboard nails, \$13.45/pk250; 190 x 45mm H3 treated pine, \$55.03/5.4m; 90 x 90 H4 treated pine, \$13.18/m; 90 x 45mm H3 treated pine, \$21.63/4.2m; 90 x 22mm treated pine decking, \$42.35/m; M10 x 100mm masonry screws, \$37/pk10; 14mm blue metal, \$8.50/20kg; M10 x 120mm cuphead bolts; concrete mix, \$6.95/20kg; Handi Block foundation blocks, \$18.95 each; 85mm galvanised batten screws, \$19/pk50; 100mm galvanised screws, \$8.10/pk50; galvanised ring shank decking nails, \$52.50/pk1800; 100 x 100mm H4 treated pine, \$20.68/2.4m; 100mm galvanised batten screws, \$20/pk100; 30mm galvanised button screws, \$10.65/pk30, **Bunnings Warehouse**, bunnings.com.au. Oil based Deck and Exterior Stain in Hunter Grey, \$75.70/4L, **Cabot's**, cabots.com.au. Rubbish removal, **DATS Skip Bins**, dats.net.au. 1 Step primer sealer undercoat, \$185/15L. Weathershield Low Sheen Acrylic (Colorbond Wallaby) \$89.85/4L, **Dulux**, dulux.com.au. Proofseal, \$76/4L. Floorclear, \$97.15/4L, **Feast Watson**, feastwatson.com.au.

