



# Four Tips

## for Making Our Homes More Beautiful and Functional

By Nisha MacNeil, Design Manager - Kerr Construction & Design

In a matter of weeks, COVID-19 has dramatically altered our lives, especially the way we work and live. Even as the shelter-in-place orders lift, we will take a closer look at our homes, how they function, and how they can transform them into a sanctuary in these uncertain times. We need to surround ourselves at home with things that promote internal peace, in an age where mental and physical well-being are being tested.

Here are a few trends that I see emerging in this new and uncharted time.

### 1 A shift to home offices

The importance of adaptability has become increasingly evident. Creating home offices, better suited for working remotely, flexible design is essential. We need to be able to carve out a workstation in our homes

that is not only functional but aesthetically pleasing and adaptable. Guest rooms are great for this as you can have a murphy bed in the room as well as a desk space, so the space becomes multifunctional. When performing work meeting video calls, we want our surroundings to be clean, clear and be a true reflection of ourselves. Find a place with great natural light – this will make you look better on camera as well as make you feel more connected to nature.

### 2 More time spent in our backyards

People are seeking a closer connection between their living spaces and the natural world. Folding glass doors are the key in this trend, allowing homeowners to enjoy a flow between spaces. Consider how many panels you want in your glass door, the more panels you have the less expensive the door will be, but it this will create more 'break-lines' to distract you visually. An oversized 3-panel,

sliding glass door for a 10' wide opening is a beautiful option (vs the more standard 4 panels). One less vertical bar, breaking up your line of sight.

### 3 Smart kitchen design – including pantries

With people scared about grocery inventory and the health and safety of their families by limiting grocery store visits, we are putting a strain on our pantries. The best pantry designs are accessible and have a place for everything. If you have a separate room, then adjustable shelves are key. For the best organization, get containers that you can label for functionality and an uncluttered look. At a minimum a pantry unit should pull out, pulling the whole door and pantry shelves together. This is far superior to a hinged/swing door that opens to drawers behind...you will forever be banging the drawers and doors together in this clunky design.

### 4 Mental health – surroundings

The connection to our homes, both physical and mental, have never been greater. The importance of interior design has become more prevalent as we become aware of how our spaces affect our moods, ability to work and physical comfort. Designers will need to consider how we can assist in good mental health through interior environments, using lighting, materials, sound, and acoustics.

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