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FEBRUARY: Tackle the bathroom



PARIS L. GRAY/Courier-Post

The bathroom of Janet Keane's home in Voorhees recently underwent a redesign.

With South Jersey in the throes of winter, it's time to batten down the hatches and get going on a bathroom makeover. You don't need to go to plumbing school to make big changes, said Sandra Cook, the Voorhees interior designer. While installing new floor tiles requires some experience (as well as a wet saw), cabinets, light fixtures, mirrors and rugs can be easily updated.

"Stick to the basics," she said. "That could start by painting a bathroom." Old wallpaper should be scraped and the wall prepared before painting, Cook said. Almost any colors work well in bathrooms, which are usually either long and narrow or small and square.

"Don't be afraid of color," she said, adding that chocolates and shades of green are popular. And paint is not just for walls. It can also be used on cabinets. "Painting can change a lot of things, she said. If you don't want to paint the old cabinets, home improvement centers stock a wide range of ready-to-install cabinets and counter tops and molded sinks. Measure twice and pick out something new.

Fixtures like towel racks can also be easily changed, she said. Remember that metal is a color, so don't mix chrome and gold. "If you have silver towel racks, you don't want to go with brass fixtures," she said.

On the floor, try patterned rugs instead of the traditional shaggy ovals and squares. A shower curtain does not have to be traditional, either. Keep the plastic or cloth liner but get a set of window curtains with tiebacks.