



Quiet time: Adding nooks and bends and varying ceiling and floor levels will deflect sound. For example, if the television is around a corner from the kitchen work center, the noises from those areas will not interfere with each other as easily.

# Reduce noise in open areas

Open floor plans are popular because they give the feeling of spaciousness and bring family activities together. They also bring together the roar of the exhaust fan, the roar of the television and the clang of the dishwasher.

Building Ideas magazine says that the noise level in these open areas can be reduced with careful planning and wise selection of appliances, flooring and furniture. Following are some suggestions:

- Modify the floor plan. The more turns sound makes and the further it travels, the quieter it becomes. Adding nooks and bends and varying ceiling and floor levels will deflect the sound. For instance, if the television is around a corner from the kitchen work center, the noises from those areas will not interfere with each other as easily.
- Also, installing a special wallboard (such as Homasote's Sound-A-Sote or Georgia Pacific's Sound Deadening Board) behind drywall absorbs sound. These wallboards can also be used in the ceilings and floors.
- Silencing appliances. Appliances are notorious noise-makers. When shopping for appliances, look for models with sound control. For example, dishwashers that offer operation feature extra insulation, sound barriers in the doors and quiet motor design. Some food-waste disposers are wrapped with insulation for quieter operation.

# Guide for choosing exterior colors

If you pick the right colors, a fresh coat of paint will do more than just protect your house. It can make your home a more attractive and inviting place.

Here are some guidelines:

- Start with the colors you can't easily change — the roof, brick facing, a flagstone walk, a stone foundation or chimney. Look for paint shades that match or harmonize with these colors.
- Consider the architectural style of the house. A Mediterranean-style stucco almost demands pastel colors, while a Cape Cod can take deeper, richer colors.
- Pay attention to the landscaping. If your house is heavily shaded by trees, dark colors, which absorb light, will make it disappear. If the house dominates its site and gets plenty of sunshine, dark colors can be warm and dramatic.
- The basic components of a house color scheme are body color, trim color and accent color.
- Body color is the dominant color for exterior walls and can most effectively look of a house. A light-body color makes a small house appear larger. A dark body color can bring a large, rambling house into proportion. Painting an off-shaped addition or an awkward feature the same color as the body of the house will visually integrate it.
- Pick the body color first. It should either contrast with the roof color or be a variation of it. A light to medium shade is the safest. Dark colors always look darker on the house than in a paint sample.
- Sunlight can affect how a color looks.

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