

# ASK THE experts

Our team of experts answer your home-improvement questions



the winter? *Clair Collinson, Preston*

**A Leah Aspinall, Head of Creative at Blinds 2go says...** If you have patio doors or large windows, thermal pleated blinds are the perfect choice to keep your home insulated and the cold away. The aluminium-lined, honeycomb pockets trap the air and work hard to create a thermal barrier between the room and

**Q** What kind of window dressings do I need to ensure my home is insulated during

the window. These innovative blinds are designed to protect your home from the winter chills, while helping to reduce your energy bills. Layering blinds and curtains is also a great way to create a snug space. A combination of wooden Venetian blinds and curtains or Roman blinds and curtains make stylish and practical options for winter. Choosing thermal lining on curtains, Roman blinds or roller blinds will add insulation, helping to reduce heat loss and bring a cosy feel to a room in an instant. Plus, they allow you to experiment with colour, pattern and texture and show your individual style, while keeping the chill away.



**William Morris Acanthus Velvet Forest curtains**, from £52.45; **Smoke Whisper faux wood 50mm slat blind**, from £17.55, both Blinds 2go



**Q** How should I approach decorating my dark, basement room? *Kristy Spears, Winchester*

**A Xander Shreenan, Interior Designer at Dowsing & Reynolds, says...** There are two

directions you could go: light or dark. Introduce plenty of light by painting the walls and ceiling in a light shade, though avoid a stark white as this can make the room feel clinical. A paint with a sheen finish will help bounce light around, too. Combine different sources of light – ceiling lights, wall lights or sconces, floor lamps and table lamps, to create various pools of light that will let your eyes travel around the room. Install dimmer switches with your lighting to control the ambience and give the room multiple functions.

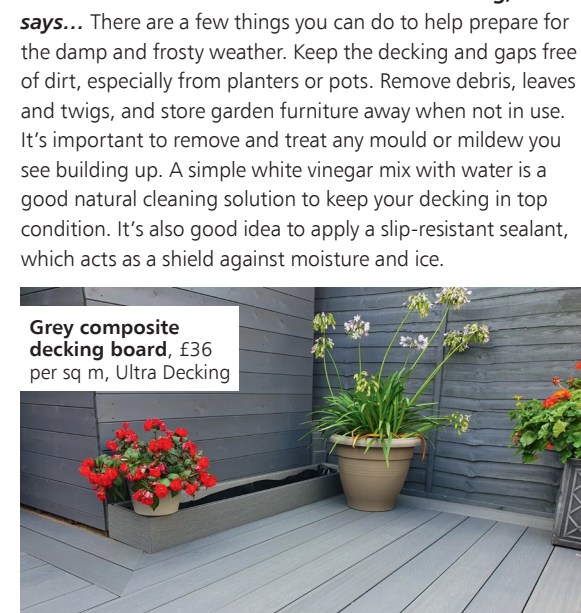
Or, embrace the darkness of the space. Paint the walls and ceiling in the same colour and opt for a dark brown or deep green for depth. Bring in layers of lighting and add accents of brass, such as switches and handles to add warmth and glints of light. In a darker space, there's a risk that it can feel flat and unwelcoming. Combining textures is a quick way to add dimension and depth and create a cocooning feel.

**Gold and black double dimmer switch**, £54.99; **Grosvenor wall light in Forgotten Silver with bulb**, £159.98; **In Deep Water paint**, £49.99 per 2.5L; **Just A Perfect Grey paint**, £49.99 per 2.5L, all Dowsing & Reynolds



**Q** How should I care for my decking over the winter months to ensure it remains in good condition? *Marie Somerfield, Bath*

**A Allan Jeffrey, Managing Director at Ultra Decking, says...** There are a few things you can do to help prepare for the damp and frosty weather. Keep the decking and gaps free of dirt, especially from planters or pots. Remove debris, leaves and twigs, and store garden furniture away when not in use. It's important to remove and treat any mould or mildew you see building up. A simple white vinegar mix with water is a good natural cleaning solution to keep your decking in top condition. It's also good idea to apply a slip-resistant sealant, which acts as a shield against moisture and ice.



**Grey composite decking board**, £36 per sq m, Ultra Decking



**Q** How do I keep my home office nice and warm (yet workable!) during the winter months? *Matthew Goldbrook, Birmingham*

**A Nick Duggan, Managing Director at The Radiator Centre says...** In order

to work from home effectively, ensure that you have your room heated to a comfortable temperature. Being too hot or cold can be distracting when you're trying to concentrate. The latest radiators come with all the benefits of efficient technology and smart-connected heating, meaning you can set the perfect temperature without wasting energy. Key functions that allow this are seven-day programming and the ability to turn the heating on and off instantly. Unexpected colder nights can be acted upon if the homeowner is out, without having to alter settings on their boiler or room thermostat at their house. Likewise, you can control the heating if there's a change in your regular work or lifestyle pattern. Used correctly, smart heating apps are easy to use and

provide a great way to 'connect' your home. The improved functionality offered by connected home systems and smart heating apps should

be considered part of a range of energy-saving initiatives, as you won't be heating an empty house unnecessarily.



**Campa Naturay Select radiator**, £1,500, The Radiator Centre



**Q** How do I make my bathroom look modern and on-trend without breaking the budget? *Colleen Dunn, Colchester*

**A Nicholas Cunild, Managing Director at Matki, says...** Wet rooms are often associated with high-end hotels and luxury apartments, but it's possible to achieve this spacious look without breaking the bank. Keep your renovation costs down by choosing a wet room panel and installing it with a shower tray. This will enable you to avoid the expense of installing a properly tanked wet room. The Matki-ONE wet room panel with wall brace bar, for example, can be installed with either a



**Matki-ONE wet room panel with wall brace bar**, from £466.80, Matki



**Matki-ONE wet room panel with ceiling brace bar**, from £588, Matki

shower tray or shower floor for a real wet-room look. To make your bathroom stand out, the attractive wall brace bar with disc insert and minimal wall mount is customisable in a range of contemporary colour and metallic finishes, including silver, white, black and architectural bronze. As well as reducing costs, this wet room panel is easier to clean as it comes with a completely frameless base.

## WE NEED YOUR QUESTIONS!

If you have a DIY or maintenance question, write to Ask the Experts, Your Home, Immediate Media, Eagle House, Bristol, BS1 4ST or email [asktheexperts@yhmag.co.uk](mailto:asktheexperts@yhmag.co.uk)