



ODDS & ENDS



57 STOREYS BUILT IN 19 DAYS

Broad Sustainable Building, a Chinese construction company, is claiming to be the world's fastest builder after erecting a 57-storey skyscraper in 19 working days in central China.

Although they have a typically strange name for such companies, their methods are less than typical. Being a prefabricated construction firm, they put up the rectangular, glass and steel Mini Sky City in the Hunan provincial capital of Changsha, assembling three floors a day using a modular method, the vice-president, Xiao Changgeng, said.

They spent four and a half months fabricating the building's 2,736 modules before construction began. The company now has ambitions to assemble the world's tallest skyscraper, at 220 floors, in only three months.

BRASS KNOBS KILL GERMS

Copper-containing metals like brass have antibacterial properties—a selling point for brass doorknobs, sink handles, and other fixtures in hospitals and schools. This is due to the oligodynamic effect (Greek: oligos = few, Greek: dynamis = force). It was discovered in 1893 by the Swiss Karl Wilhelm von Nägeli as a toxic effect of metal ions on viruses and living cells e.g. algae, moulds, spores, fungi, prokaryotic and eukaryotic microorganisms, even in relatively low concentrations. This antimicrobial effect is shown by ions of mercury, silver, copper, iron, lead, zinc, bismuth, gold, aluminium, and other metals.

But now, British scientists have found that handling those fixtures can actually disable their germ-killing powers. According to University of Leicester forensic scientist John Bond, human sweat forms a corrosive layer on the metal surface. That blocks an exchange of charged particles that would otherwise kill harmful bacteria. And the fixtures that are handled the most would be the most affected.



HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF TINY SPACES

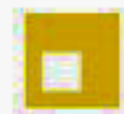
You've just moved in to your new apartment. And even if it isn't the apartment you deserve, it's the apartment you can afford. You start unpacking when it finally hits you – there's barely enough space for the decades of junk you smugly accumulated back at your parents' ultra-luxurious 3000 square feet mini-mansion. Step up your home décor game with these 5 tricks that will make even the most petite rooms feel spacious.



TRASH IT

Face it: we are hoarders. We probably got it from our mothers who insisted on collecting everything from candy-tins to mini shampoo bottles to coffee jars.

The first step to reorganizing your place is learning to let go of your stuff. Ask yourself if you really need it and if you find yourself hesitating, trash it. Get a large plastic bin bag and go crazy. Donate old clothes and sell old papers and bottles to the local hawker. With all the useless stuff out of the way, you'll have a cleaner looking apartment as well as storage space you never knew existed.

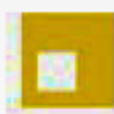


CUSTOM FIT

Sometimes a little DIY spirit is all you need to maximize space. When you take control of your furniture, you can control the size of what you're making and also customize for the things you'll need to display or store.

And if you're not up for it, luckily it's really easy to get hold of a carpenter in Bangladesh. Take some measurements, check out a home décor magazine,

and make a sketch of what you'd like.



THINK VERTICAL

Take a look at your walls. Use unutilized wall space by installing wall shelves and shelf brackets. If you don't want to make a commitment, get tall standalones instead. Take your bookcases and cabinets all the way up.

If you don't want to invest in large furniture, you can always opt for stackable units. These can be cheaply custom-made and are perfect for the entry-way or the bedroom. Nobody likes a messy overflow of shoes near the front door and shoeboxes take up more space than you'd think.

A wall mirror instead of a stocky dresser or an almirah can also free up space. Hang up hooks or a pegboard for your stray purses and bags. A pegboard is also ideal in the kitchen for all your pots and pans.



DOUBLE DUTY SOLUTIONS

When you're living in a small apartment, you can't afford to be messy. Nothing makes a space seem smaller than being able to see everything. The solution? Double-duty furnishings. Find a table that can function as both a desk and a dining table. Or a lidded box that can double as a coffee table in the living room. If you can't accommodate guests, get a trundle bed or a sofa that can fold out into a bed.

Final words of advice: Even though you've been advised to make the most of your living space, don't clutter rooms with many small pieces of furniture. Don't be afraid to take up space, but always outfit a small space with a few large meaningful furnishings. More furniture also absorbs more light, making your room look small, dark and dingy. Think smart and happy decorating!

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