

# open season

Kate turns a pokey space into an open-plan entertaining area

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Photographer: **Greg McBean**

Diagrams: **Stephen Pollitt**



before

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# my first home project 6

"I took a sledge hammer to walls of the upstairs bedroom, stairwell and kitchen to create this new living space."



**K**nocking out walls to create an open living area has always been a renovation dream for us. The upstairs, consisting of a bedroom, kitchen and dining table, was a squishy area that barely had space for a TV, let alone furniture. It was time to bring out the sledge hammer. Smashing down the walls was fun, but once the mess was made, fixing it up was a big job.

### Kate's open-plan to-do list

- Remove walls
- Relocate staircase
- Repair plasterboard
- Paint new walls
- Revamp old cypress floorboards
- Move back in

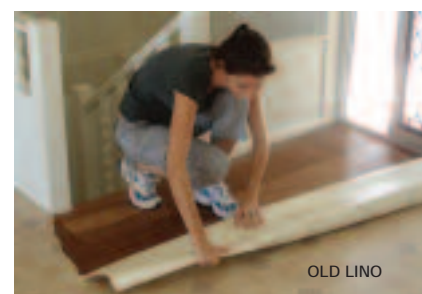
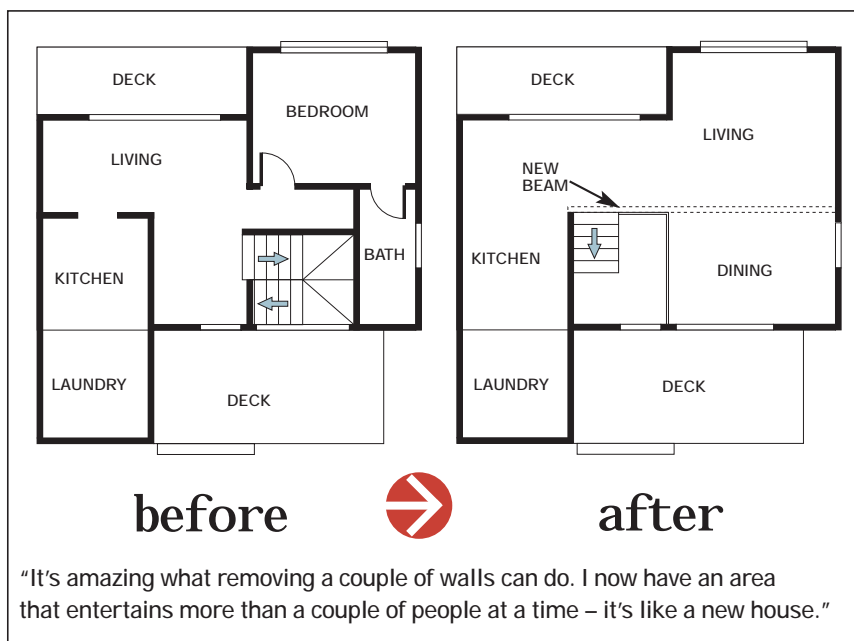


With the stairs relocated, recycled cypress boards patch up the old stairwell.

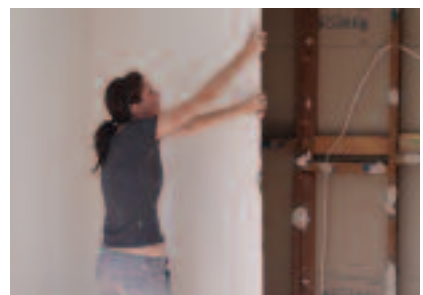
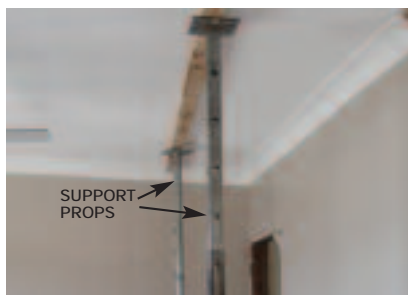
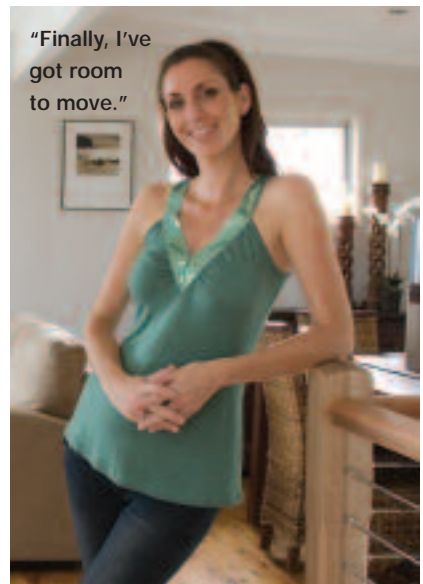
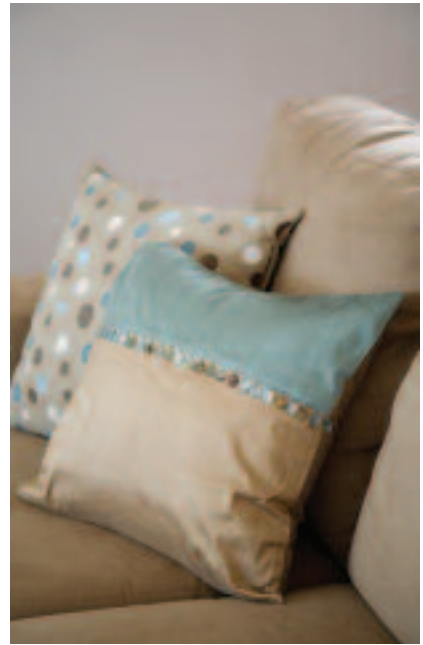
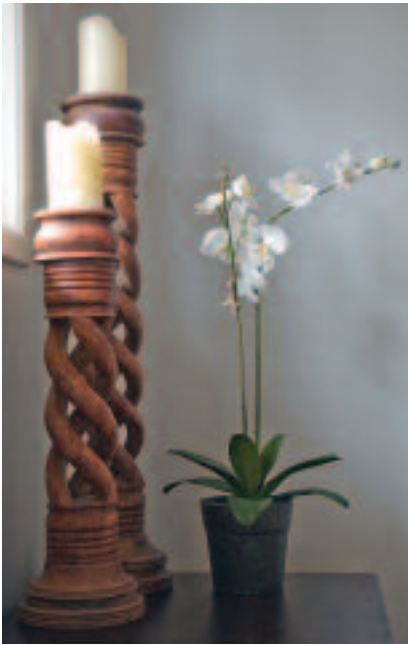


Once you've created an open space, use dramatic colour and paint to define areas.

## The demolition



**1 Remove the lino**  
Check for timber floorboards under the floor covering. Old lino can be pulled up by hand. Masonite underlay may require a hammer and chisel to help free it from the staples.  
**TIP** Keep looking. There were two layers of lino and masonite on top of the original floor in this house.

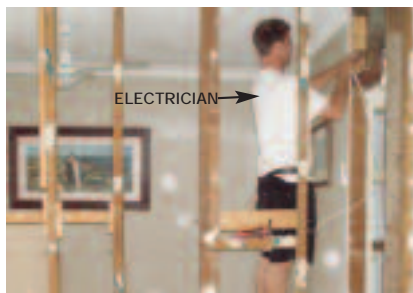


**2 Pull out the staples**  
Go over the entire floor methodically and prise out staples or nails before sanding. Use pincers and pliers, being careful not to dent the timber. **TIP** Slide a piece of timber over the surface to locate all the nails and staples.

**3 Plan the supports**  
Call an engineer or builder to check demolition plans and supporting walls. They should also stipulate necessary dimensions for any new beams required. **TIP** Before demolition begins, call an electrician or plumber to disconnect any utilities in the wall.

**4 Remove the wall**  
Erect support props if required. Remove plasterboard, then remove the wall studs and trimmers using a sledgehammer. You'll need professional help to fit any new beams, plus extra muscle for lifting.

# Plastering and painting



ELECTRICIAN →

**5 Check the utilities** Check that the wiring and plumbing in the walls and ceilings meets requirements. New cables for lights or power points, or pipes for new plumbing should be installed before the plasterboard is fixed in place.

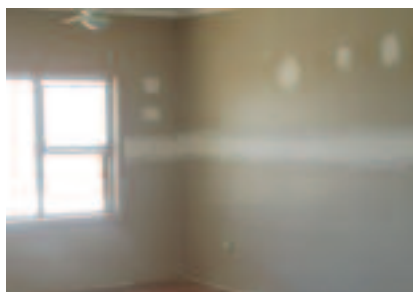


**6 Sheet the walls** Trim gaps in the remaining wall and ceiling plasterboard so the sheets finish in the centre of studs or ceiling joists. Cut new plasterboard to fill the gaps. Apply stud adhesive and nail into place with 30mm galvanised clouts.

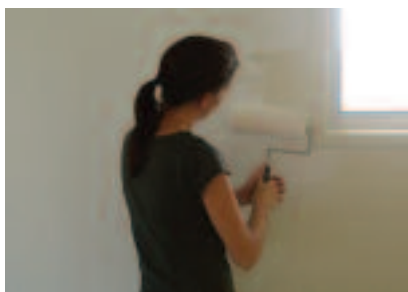


FIRST BASE COAT

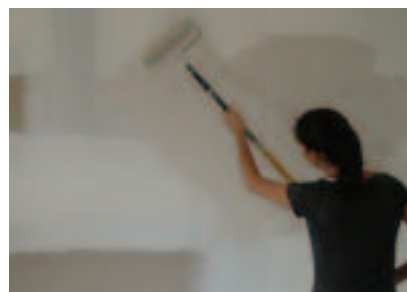
**7 Plaster the walls** This can be messy. Use plaster tape to add strength to joints. Apply plaster along joints between sheets with a broadknife. Work the area for a smooth finish and leave to dry. Sand lightly, then apply a second coat of plaster.



**8 Finish the joints** Plasterboard requires two base coats and one top coat over the tape, with a light sanding between for a smooth finish. Use a sanding block to smooth out rough spots and feather out the finish.



**9 Sealing plasterboard** Apply primer/sealer/undercoat to new plaster work only. **TIP** Use a fast-drying all-in-one sealer/undercoat so painting can start the same day.



**10 Painting** Give the cornice and ceiling two coats, then put two coats on walls. Take your time when cutting in to ensure a professional finish.

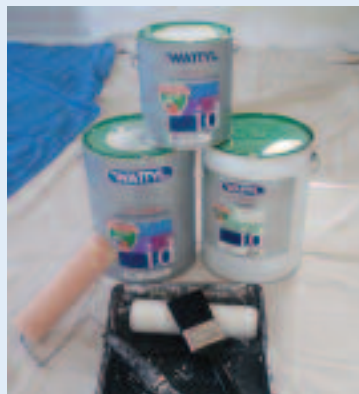
## Demolishing notes

Remove everything from the room (or house) when demolishing or sanding floors. Dust spreads so quickly! Put towels along bottom of closed doors and tape cupboards shut.

## Paint notes

Wattyl i.d Low Sheen Acrylic has almost no odour and is 99.7 per cent free of VOCs (volatile organic compounds). The rooms can be re-occupied immediately without waiting for that new paint smell to fade.

- Wattyl i.d in Ultra Premium Ceiling White was used on the ceiling and beam to help it recede visually.
- Wattyl i.d Low Sheen Acrylic (also low in VOCs) 'Sierra Snow' was used on walls, 'Donkey' is on the feature wall.



READY FOR THE FIRST COAT →

**SANDING SUCCESS** Never start or stop the sander while sandpaper belt is in contact with the floor. Tilt the machine on the roller before turning, starting or stopping to avoid gouging.

## Fixing the flooring



**11 Replace boards**  
Damaged boards may need to be replaced. Measure the width of the old boards before buying new ones. Measure, cut and nail into place with bullet head flooring nails, then punch the nail heads below the surface.

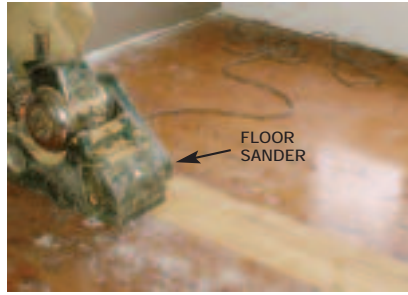


**13 Fill nail holes**  
Vacuum thoroughly to remove all dust. Fill nail holes, gaps or dents with wood putty that matches the finished floor colour.

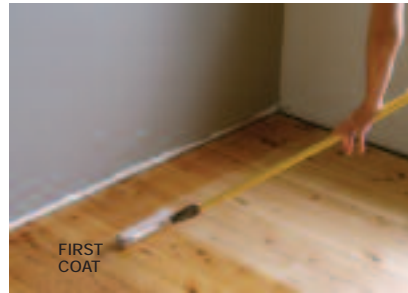
## Finishing touches



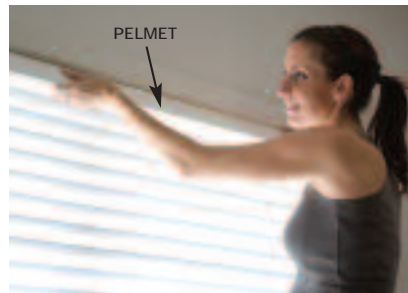
**15 Attach skirtings**  
Measure the skirting. Cut to length using a sliding compound mitre saw, then paint or stain. Attach skirtings with 50mm x 8g nails, then punch the nail heads below the surface. Fill holes with wood putty for a smooth finish, then touch up the paint.



**12 The first sand**  
Use a sander with a dust extractor. Work in long passes along the timber grain. Change the sandpaper regularly, as clogged or worn paper may leave burn marks on the floorboards.



**14 Polish the floor**  
Ensure good ventilation. Apply three coats of polish, sanding lightly between each with an orbital sander. Apply polish along the grain with a lamb's wool mop or mohair roller.



**16 Windows and lights**  
White basswood timber venetians were installed by fixing brackets to the window frame, then slotting the blinds in place. The electrician returned to fit new lights and power points.

## Floor notes

**REPLACING BOARDS** To remove a section of damaged floorboard, square lines at either end, then cut using a grinder with a 100mm diamond blade. Make two cuts down the centre of the board from end cut to end cut. Remove centre piece, then the sides. Square ends with a sharp chisel.

**FILLING HOLES** Fill nail holes, cracks and gaps with wood putty. Water-based Timbermate Wood Putty doesn't shrink or sink over time and comes in many shades.



## Suppliers

### PAINT

Wattyl 132 101 [www.wattyl.com.au](http://www.wattyl.com.au)

### FLOORING FINISH

Cabots 1800 011 006

[www.cabots.com.au](http://www.cabots.com.au)

Timbermate Woodfiller

1800 354 811

[www.timbermate.com.au](http://www.timbermate.com.au)

### VENETIAN BLINDS

Smart Home Products

(03) 8795 5300

[www.smarthp.com.au](http://www.smarthp.com.au)

### EQUIPMENT HIRE

Kennards [www.kennards.com.au](http://www.kennards.com.au)

## Materials

This project cost \$2726. Visit [www.handymanmagazine.com.au](http://www.handymanmagazine.com.au) for a price breakdown, a list of tools and materials used to revamp this living area.

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