

QUICK WAYS TO SPRUCE UP YOUR HOME

Sometimes, all it takes is a few simple fix-ups to improve the look of your home and make it more marketable. Even if you don't plan to sell in the near future, a change of face can make your home more comfortable and appealing.

If your kitchen, bathroom and other rooms in your home look weary and tired but you can't afford to tear everything out and start over again, here are a few cost-effective solutions to consider:

Re-surface cabinets and counter tops

This is the way to go if you're happy with the layout of your kitchen, for example, and want to avoid a major renovation. Re-surfacing counters and cabinets will give you a whole new look for a lot less money.

Visit home improvement showrooms and see what products and styles are available. You can also ask a design consultant to come to your home and recommend different options. Sometimes, just painting the cabinets and changing the hardware can transform the look of a kitchen or bathroom overnight.

Update your floors

With today's many flooring options, there's no need to put up with worn carpets and tile floors. You can choose from install-it-yourself linoleum sheet and tiles to trickier hardwood applications. In addition to visual appeal, consider comfort, life span, cost and maintenance when considering re-doing your floors.

Sometimes, something as simple as adding a throw rug under a table or beneath chairs will add the warmth and colour you're looking for. Just ensure they are easy to clean and don't require a lot of upkeep.

Use light to brighten, set mood

Lighting creates atmosphere and mood in a room. Adding or changing existing ceiling fixtures, wall washers and pot lights can change the function of almost any room. For maximum flexibility, nothing works better than a floor or table lamp.

There are a huge number of options available when it comes to choosing the right lighting for any room. Is your kitchen really drab, or just too dark? Maybe all it needs is new track lighting that puts the spotlight where you want it. Under-cabinet task lighting makes work easier and safer and brightens those dark counter areas.

Whether used to highlight decor, set a mood, light work areas, or provide safety and security, new lighting is an easy and inexpensive way to make your home come alive.

Re-upholster your furnishings

Sometimes it takes more than a paint job and new floors or carpets to spruce up a room, especially if the fabric on your furniture looks tired and worn. If you are happy with the design of your furniture but crave new fabric colours and textures, re-upholstering can be less expensive than buying, for example, a whole new living or dining room set. Re-upholstering takes skill. Before attempting to re-upholster a furniture piece yourself, consider hiring a person who specializes in this craft.

While re-upholstering allows you to extend the life of an existing furniture piece, it isn't cheap. So, first determine exactly which furniture pieces you want to keep. You may just want to re-upholster a favourite chair or you may want to change the colouring of all the furniture in your living

room. Be sure to carefully match the colour, texture and design of the new fabrics with your carpet or wall colours.

Change your window treatment

When you are considering changing window coverings, there is no shortage of selection. Blinds, shutters, sheers, shades, valances and just plain naked windows are only a few of your options.

The window treatment is often the most eye-catching aspect of a room. That's because windows serve as a visual link with the outside world. They are also the primary source of natural light in your home. Begin by deciding how important privacy is to you and whether you want your windows to admit air and light into the home.

If your windows reveal a pleasant view and privacy is not an issue, you may want to use minimal coverings that can be easily pulled back. Also, consider location. If your windows face north, you should aim to let in as much light as possible. If they face south or west, you may want to cut back on the amount of light.

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