



UPDATE YOUR DECORATING !

Get a new outlook on living! Update your surroundings with new colors, new arrangements, a few new accessories and perhaps even a new piece of furniture. These changes will help you to maintain your investment in your home and will also increase the amount of enjoyment you'll have as you're going about your daily activities or entertaining friends on special occasions.

Think again if you want a new look but feel that \$\$\$ and time are standing in your way. Many choices make an impact without crashing your budget or demanding large amounts of time.

Trying to keep up with the current trends is an awesome job unless you like spending a great deal of time and money doing so. Solution? Keep furniture and expensive items basic and upgrade with paint, pillows, plants and accessories to keep your interior current and upbeat. A new coat of paint or a decorative paint finish can give your home a new glow and appeal. Your present furniture may be preferable to cheap compromises or new junk. Good design results from a choice, not a price tag. Both poor and good designs come in all price ranges.

Start At the Beginning...

It's no secret that your environment affects the way you feel, think and behave. Many environments at work or in our community are not within our direct control. However, our homes are within our control. Reshape your living space to fit the way you live. This will also affect how much happiness you have from the place where you spend at least half your time.

All home interiors have certain basic ingredients: Floor plan, lighting, bath and kitchen fixtures, surface finishes, colors and furnishings. These elements combine to form various messages and become a form of positive or negative advertising to yourself and others. While we don't design our homes specifically to impress others, it's a plus if we can please ourselves and also project a positive image about our largest investment--our home.

Hidden features in a home, such as a sturdy roof truss, sound proofing or a large water heater, seldom make the same first impression that a well designed home can make. The most appealing living environment has a good traffic flow, adequate light and ventilation, planned storage, aesthetic/functional combination of materials and finishes and is uncluttered and cheerful. In updating your home take a close look at every space and item in your home and evaluate how it looks and feels. Color makes the biggest impact for the least cost of all decorating options. Knowing how colors appear and react with other colors affects how you choose a color scheme that appeals to you, helps to set the mood you want yet also minimizes flaws.

Color Makes An Impact!

Select colors that you like. It's fun to know what this year's popular decorating colors are, but don't limit yourself to them. Instead, study the color combinations and the overall feeling created in current room settings. Are the color combinations quiet and subdued or are they lively and contrasting? Are the colors bright or grayed, pastel or deep darks? Consider these overall trends in color use and characteristics.

Remember that all colors used in a room need to go together. If selecting a wall color, think about the new area rug that you also wish to get. It's usually best to select rugs, fabrics and wallpaper first. Then paint colors can be selected and mixed to go with these colors.

Watch For These Problems

Successful use of color in decorating depends on planning a total scheme in which all parts are viewed and planned together as a whole. Collect, arrange and look at all swatches or samples in proportion to the amounts in which they are to be used in a room. Observe the colors under similar lighting conditions. Here are some common problems that often cause disappointments:

- **No overall color plan.** Random, casual color decisions often means a room that looks uncoordinated.
- **Too many or too varied colors.** A color scheme using many or all hues is difficult to plan and often appears confused and disorganized.
- **Too intense color used in large areas.** This may work in spaces where people spend smaller amounts of time. However, it tends to become tiring over a period of time.
- **Too much contrast in large color areas.** Nearly equal amounts of contrasting colors create tension in a room. It's best if one color is dominant in intensity or in the amount used. Brighter colors can then be used in smaller areas for balance.

Updating With A Budget In Mind

Decorating within a budget involves planning, a bit of creativity, do-it-yourself skills and a sense of adventure. Use these guidelines for planning an attractively furnished home at minimum cost.

- Develop a sense of creativity and an imagination by becoming more aware of your surroundings. Watch for creative ways to use ordinary, everyday things.
- Collect ideas. Write down ideas as you think of them. Clip pictures from magazines. Really watch television (they use current colors and styles)! Don't try to carbon copy ideas. That's rarely successful. Instead adapt ideas others have used or add a new twist.
- Express your own taste and interests. Have your home reflect your personality and the way you like to live.
- Visualize. Try to imagine how the design or treatment will look. Put up large samples of colors and fabrics in the area where they will be used and look at them under both natural daylight and artificial lighting.
- Be bold! Break away from tradition and try something new! Some of the most imaginative decorating ideas were formed out of a need to save money.

- Develop do-it-yourself skills. The more you can do yourself the less expensive your decorating will be. Many projects do not require special talents.
- Watch for bargains. Be on the look-out for sale items and plan ahead so you won't buy more than you need.
- Explore options. Look through catalogs, browse in home supply stores, venture into second hand and antique stores, investigate flea markets and salvage shops.
- Make the useful decorative and the decorative useful. By combining function and aesthetics, fewer items are necessary.
- Use colors you like. Replace accessories and less expensive items with more trendy colors to give your home a "current" appearance.
- Streamline. Unclutter. Take everything out and put 50 percent of it back, one thing at a time. Then store, sell, give away or find new places to use items no longer needed.
- Individual pieces gain importance when streamlining. Carefully look at quality and design of furnishings and accessories. What are the lines? Does form follow function? Is it interesting? Does it add to your interior? Does it tell something about you and your interests or history? Is it beautiful? Is it a conversation piece that you enjoy? Does it fulfill a need...either decorative or functional? Does it fit into your overall household and furnishings budget? Are there alternatives? If so, have you evaluated these alternatives?
- Redo window treatments. Use blinds topped with a valance, swag and jabot or cornice. Consider simple draped valances, mini-blinds, Roman shades or coach shades. Look for straightcurtain panels hung on decorative rods. Install with large rings or fabric loops and open and close panels by hand. Update pleated panels with goblet, gathered or other decorative pleats instead of pinch pleats.
- Dream a bit. Is there one piece of furniture that you've always wished for, such as a beautiful writing desk, a down-filled or leather sofa or a brass four-poster bed? Or perhaps you've secretly wished for an original contemporary painting. It's sometimes worth it to splurge on one great-looking piece because it will give a focus point for the entire room. Economize by cutting back on other furnishings.

Update With a Timeless Look...

Work toward a richness in your decorating ideas. Think of these qualities as you plan:

- **Timeless...**a feeling of roots, heritage, stability
- **Comfortable, classic...**ease and smoothness whether in conversation groupings or dining, pleasure in living space
- **Exclusive...**a look that is unique, costly, selective
- **Quality...**a sense of fine material and fine workmanship
- **Witty...**a touch of the unexpected, original
- **Appropriate...**fits surroundings, good scale and balance, harmony

Ideas and items that are too trendy or clumsy or are of poor design are soon dated. Recognize the difference between flash and flair. Remember that comfort is the ultimate luxury! Classic, comfortable decorating has a rich feeling and is a good long-term investment.

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