

DIY decorating

Finding cheap ways to decorate can improve the look of a temporary home

By Breanna Scott • Freelance Reporter

After finding a place, signing the papers and are getting ready to move in, it seems like most of the hard work is done — until taking a closer look at the living arrangements and realizing the work has just begun.

The walls are bare, and the furniture is mismatched. It could be time to add some color to the room with a little cheap redecorating.

Many people run into the situation of needing or wanting to redecorate but don't have much money to accomplish their goal. Alisa Caesar, an interior decorator at Dragonfly Interior Designs, provided several suggestions on how to improve a space.

"The easiest way to make a place brighter is to paint, which adds color and freshens up the space," Caesar said. "However, sometimes painting isn't always an option to those who rent."

For those who don't have the option of painting, Caesar suggests the next level of improving the look of the furniture.

"A slipcover on a couch or chair will drastically change the look of a room," Caesar said. "Even a blanket or sheet can be used as a slipcover to change the look of the furniture."

Caesar said it is possible to add color in a variety of ways and at almost any price.

"For example, an area rug can drastically change the appearance of a room," she said.

"If the carpet is stained or ugly an area rug will cover that up, and they can be purchased at a variety of prices. A cheaper one can still look nice and can still accomplish the same look as a more expensive one."

Once a color scheme is picked, Caesar recommended adding patterns to give a space more variety.

"You can add patterned pillows or curtains to a room that pick up the other colors in the room," Caesar said. "Discount stores are good places to look for patterned things to add, although it might take longer to find something you really like."

She also said window treatments are becoming more do-it-yourself.

"All the supplies are available at various stores," she said. "You can choose the color, the fabric, the style of treatments and buy a curtain rod to hang them from. Even sheets can be used as a curtain in a pinch."

Sophomore Michelle Rose offered some suggestions about decorating on a budget.

"If you can identify your decorating inspiration, then you can find low-budget items that replicate the features that you admire," Rose said.

Sophomore Patty Miller said Ikea — the closest store is located just south of Seattle — is a good place to find items for decorating an apartment.

"It's trendy style, but cheap prices," Miller said.

Miller added that putting up posters is a cheap and easy way

to cover bare walls.

"It's cool when people do things like hang their own artwork and add color and personality that way," she said. "My aunt, for example, makes artwork out of household objects and hangs it on the walls. It ends up looking pretty cool."

"Do things like decorate new lampshades for old lamps you find at thrift stores," Miller said. "This will make them look newer and trendier."

Miller said throw pillows can add a lot of color to a room and are easy to incorporate.

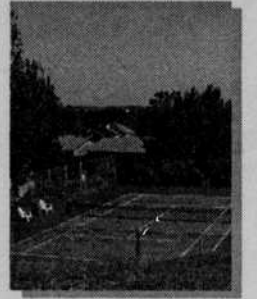
"You can even take an old pillow and cover it with fabric," she said. "They fill up space and accent the rest of the colors in the room easily."

Home decorating is becoming easier and more accessible as stores focus on do-it-yourself projects. While you may not be able to change everything in a new place on a small budget, you can make drastic improvements. Simply adding color to the walls, throwing down an area rug and putting new covers on couches and chairs can make a drab place look new.

"The range of things that people can do varies whether they rent or own and what the available budget is," Caesar said. "But home decorating has become so much more accessible to the average person and they are able to do a lot themselves."

Breanna Scott is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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