

Freshen up your home for the spring season

After a few months of chilly temperatures, come spring, many homeowners are eager to throw open their windows and doors and breathe new life into their homes. Simple changes made now — even before the weather begins to warm up — can improve interior spaces and brighten the atmosphere of a home.

- Go plant shopping. Research from NASA suggests adding at least one plant in your home per 100 square feet is efficient enough to clean air. Fresh foliage also makes a home feel warm and inviting. Watering and misting plants

introduces moisture into indoor air, which can make rooms overcome with dry air from heating systems feel comfortable. Just be sure to avoid overwatering plants, which can lead to mold growth.

- Swap out throw pillows. Accent pillows on beds and sofas are quick and inexpensive ways to add new bursts of color to rooms. You may be able to make over a room's entire color scheme with new pillows. Invest in pillows that you can switch with each season so your decor will never look tired or dull.
- Clean existing light fixtures.



Another way to brighten the mood in a home is to periodically clean light fixtures to make sure they are working effectively. Spend time dusting them and cleaning off any accumulated debris. If need be, switch out old lamp shades for newer ones that let more light shine through. If inadequate lighting is a problem no matter how many lamps you have, consult with an electrician about installing more overhead and accent lighting.

- Give rugs and floors a deep cleaning. Recirculated air may be full of dust and other microscopic particles that end up blowing throughout your home. Also, it's easy to track in dirt and other materials on your shoes that become imbedded in carpeting. At least once a year, rent or enlist the services of carpet and upholstery cleaners to give floors a thorough cleaning. You may be surprised at how clean and fresh a home looks and smells once rugs and carpets are deep-cleaned. You also can make a dry carpet cleaner using baking soda,

corn starch and desired fresh herbs for fragrance. Sprinkle and then vacuum up after a few hours.

- Color-coordinate bookshelves. Group all books with similarly colored covers together for an instant and eye-appealing look.
- Simmer some homemade home deodorizer. In a large pot, boil water and some scented herbs, such as rosemary, citrus rinds, vanilla, or lavender. The aroma will waft through the home, creating a pleasing scent.

- Invest in new window treatments. Lightweight draperies or new blinds or shades can transform the look of a room. Be sure to keep curtains and blinds open during the day to maximize the hours of sunlight. Homeowners can make some simple changes while they're stuck indoors and reap the benefits when the weather warms up again.



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