

# Change of Season, Change of Linens

We tend to shut our homes up during the winter months and perform our own version of hibernating. And while we enjoy the cozy feeling this hibernation provides, it also can induce poor circulation of air and accumulation of dust and germs. Washing and changing out your linens is a necessary stage of spring cleaning. Go through every room thoroughly, and be sure to wash any winter items before storing. By the end, your home will be a brighter, cleaner version of itself.

## Bedrooms

Say goodbye to all those heavy comforters, and welcome in light summer quilts. Changing out your bedding for lighter fabrics in an attractive print will go a long way toward freshening your bedroom. Since spring can still be cool, keep a cozy but light throw at the foot of your bed. Not only does it make for an easy grab in the middle of the night, but will soften the look of your spring bedding.

## Living Areas

Think throws, pillows and draperies. Not only is it good to change out these items for their lighter counterparts, but it also is smart to begin storing excess. Spring requires fewer layers, so start putting away what you know you won't use. Give your draperies a good wash and inspect your blinds. Keeping a space clean and bright is the trick to a quick "freshen up."

## Kitchen Towels and Door Mats

These often are forgotten items that can have a major impact on the freshness and cleanliness of your home. Winter weather can be hard on door mats — both indoor and outdoor. Replacing these with fresh mats will not only help keep the effects of spring showers out of your house but gives you the opportunity to introduce a spring design. And don't forget those kitchen towels. After all those holiday meals, they've most likely been more than pulling their weight. If you don't want to purchase new kitchen cloths, run your current ones through the wash with a good dose of bleach, and dry them with a few drops of your favorite essential oils.

# Living a "green" life



Protecting the planet is a goal for millions of people across the globe. And that's a good thing, as the planet is increasingly in need of help.

Behaviors few people may give a second thought to can dramatically impact the planet in a negative way. For example, according to Worldwatch Institute, 100 billion plastic bags are thrown away each year, less than 1 percent find their way into recycling bins. The end result of that waste is the deaths of around 1 billion birds and mammals each year due to the ingestion of plastic.

If that information elicits deep emotions, perhaps this is the year to embrace a more eco-friendly lifestyle. Recycling and reusing is a good place to start, but there are other ways to embrace green-living practices in everyday life.

- Plan a spring garden. Explore the possibilities of a vegetable garden and planting some

fruit trees. Growing your own food can reduce reliance on commercially imported food products. Plus, the plants and other greenery will contribute to the environment in a positive way, by providing animal habitats and filtering the air.

- Rely on fresh air and natural light. To cool or even warm up a home, use outdoor air rather than turning on the HVAC system the moment you feel uncomfortable. Natural sunlight coming through windows can warm up a space and illuminate it adequately.
- Reduce reliance on motor vehicles. The organization TreeHugger says currently there are around 700 million cars on the road, producing 900 million tons of carbon dioxide each year. Bicycling or walking to the store or school, and carpooling to work can help reduce these emissions.
- Use natural cleaning ingredients. Vinegar, baking soda and citrus oils can be used to clean and deodorize, reducing reliance on harmful cleaning chemicals.
- Opt for paperless whenever possible. Reduce paper waste by signing up for paperless billing and receipts. Try paying bills electronically, which will cut down on the number of paper bills and envelopes that end up in the trash.
- Conduct a home energy audit. Find out if your home is hemorrhaging energy and money by conducting a home energy audit. A professional energy audit will check for water and air leaks, HVAC system efficiency, insulation levels, window quality, and much more.

# THINK GREEN



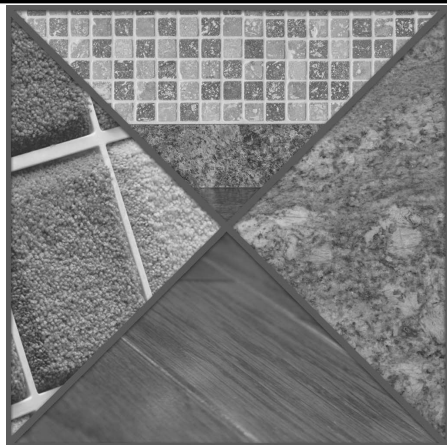
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