



7 Easy Ways To Liven Up Your Living Space

By MaryAnn Shanks

Thinking of redecorating the ol' home or office? Before you begin, take note of these basics for livening up your space:

1. First And Foremost, Do Your Research

Load yourself up with design magazines, photo books and home improvement websites. The more you expose yourself to different tastes and styles – studying pictures of rooms that hold appeal for you – the better your space will be. Take photos of favorite rooms apart, piece by piece, to decide which elements will best translate to your space.

2. Carefully Reflect On The Position Of Your Mirrors

When hanging a new mirror, take into consideration the locations or furniture it is going to reflect. Mirrors that visually echo a chandelier, painting, or garden window add depth and interest to a room. Reflections you'll want to avoid: hallways, doorways, kitchens or blank walls.

3. Put Some Pop In Your Shelving

Add some personality to your display case or shelving unit by painting the back panel (or, if it's open in the back, the wall behind it) with a vibrant accent color. For an even more creative feel, affix a favorite printed fabric or interesting textured material, like grass cloth.

4. Air Out A Small Space By Anchoring Furniture

To make a small room look visually larger, arrange the furniture against the walls. It will expand the walking / living space if you float as few pieces as possible.

5. At A Loss With Your Long, Dark Hallway?

Long, dark hallways are tricky spaces – don't let their functionality put you in a funk. Add interest by painting the walls of your hallway a dark, intense color. Then, install track lighting and run photos or art work up to the ceiling. This creative technique transforms an otherwise boring space into a dramatic gallery.

6. Make Window Views Work Harder For You

Take advantage of the view outside your windows – it's an easy, inexpensive way to liven up your living space. For example, if you have a large window that looks out onto an unappealing brick wall, plant a flowering vine on a trellis for camouflage and charm. Better yet, install a fountain and run vines up the wall around it.

7. Save The Personality For Accent Pieces

For example, keep large, expensive sitting pieces – such as sofas and loveseats – upholstered in relatively neutral colors, using fabrics with an interesting weave or tone on tone. Then, jazz it up with contrasting pillows or throws in prints, geometrics or with interesting trims. Invest in custom pillows and trims for a unique feel, and change out these accents with the seasons or as your tastes evolve.

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