



The coldest months are now *behind us*

BY ADENE LUCAS

THE COLDEST MONTHS ARE NOW BEHIND US, AND SPRING IS in the air. It's time to get your home ready and spring cleaning is just the beginning! Once you have packed up unused, neglected or broken items it's time to take a critical look at your home and reflect on how it can be improved. Perhaps your home is going on the market, or possibly you are just tired of the same old décor and want to bring some life back into your home. Regardless of the motivation, a season change is a great time to take stock and make some changes.

Begin by selecting just one room. It may be too overwhelming to tackle the entire house and once one room is finished you will be inspired to continue on. Evaluate the room with a critical eye or by taking pictures of the space. Pictures have a way of showing us flaws that we generally tune out. Decide what you like in the room and what just doesn't work or does not fit into the scheme. Does the furniture placement work, are the accessories impactful, or are there too many trinkets that get lost in the room? These are just a few questions to ask yourself when you are freshening up a room. It is also a good idea to basically analyze how you feel when you look at the image or walk into that space. Is the room inviting, warm,

and relaxing or do you feel anxious, down and ready to leave? Clients' often share the complaint of not liking or not using a particular room in their home. Generally, it is either sparsely furnished or full of too many pieces and lacks any personality. Be cognizant of those issues if you are unable to pin point what is not working.

Season decorating does not mean changing everything, and starting a new. Simply stow away winter items and introduce spring and summer to your home. If the basics of a room like wall color, sofa color and flooring are neutral, then the choice of an additional accent color is simple. Start by bringing in color that enhances the feel of the outdoors by introducing those tones indoors. Think of light blues, muted greens, soft yellow, even white can add a nice touch. Use the colors as an accent just like you would with a heavier color like cranberry in the winter, or burnt orange in the fall.

In cooler climates we like to be surrounded by texture, a thick warm rug, down filled pillows, and drapery in heavy fabrics like velour that can absorb the drafts. Once the temperatures begin to climb and daylight increases, it's nice

FEATURE

to shed those layers and textures and incorporate something lighter and softer. Replace the thick area rug for a softer, thinner more colorful version. It doesn't need to be expensive to have impact, try looking at stores like Home Sense, Home Depot, Ikea or any flooring store for a new area rug. Pull colors from the rug and change out the accent pillows to a variety of cotton toss cushions. Casual, light weight prints work best for the warmer months. Depending on budget constraints, you may consider adding a quirky occasional chair. Stores such as Pier 1 or Urban Barn often bring in a few inexpensive chairs in current fabrics and colors that can easily fit into most decors. The final touch is to have spring like accessories, a coffee table book on wineries for example or pictures that reflect the season.

Now that the main areas have been refreshed it's time to look at the master bedroom, also known as the most neglected room of the house! Start by changing up the bedding, also known as the most neglected room of the house! Start by changing up the bedding. Rather than the warmth of a down filled duvet, try a cover let. Also, invest in some quality sheets, no more flannel or fleece, try bamboo sheets which are super soft and wick away moisture. The same color scheme that has been incorporated into other areas of the home can also work well in the bedroom. Lighten up in fabric and color to create a softer more spring like look. If color is a stumbling block then try using all white. That is a fail safe way to create a fresh look. White is timeless, fresh and clean and creates a sense of peace within a home. Also lighten the lamp shades. No more chocolate brown or deep colors try a lighter shade and it will also update the look of an older lamp. Consider scent as part of the décor as it does add to ambience. Using an oil reed diffuser in a scent like lavender or vanilla can add to the feel of a room. Another simple, but nice touch is fresh flowers, a small vase of tulips reminds us that spring is here. You can also take a trip to your local garden centre and buy a potted arrangement with blooming flowers.

Remember to have a look at the outside of your home and see if that needs an update. Add a spring wreath to the front door, changed the welcome mat and update any urns or garden containers with curly willow or artificial greens. Most large craft stores have a



variety of natural looking foliage that can be easily updated with the seasons. There are also many local floral shops that will create lovely containers with long lasting products. Lastly, have the windows cleaned, it will make a big difference in how a room feels and is an instant room brightener. If this all seems too much to do, grab a white bowl and add a few lemons and place it on the counter. Spring is here, enjoy!



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