

Ten-Minute Tricks to Freshen Your Space

The calendar still reads "winter." But your mind can't help but flood with images of blooming tulips and daisies, gleaming sunshine and a home bursting with spring flavor.

You've already got the fever, my friend, the fever for a change in décor. Weary of the dark, drabness of the winter months, you're itching for the light, energetic mood of the spring season. But who has the bandwidth or the bucks?

Three interior design pros – Lauri Ward, Lisa Turner and Candace C. Peters – whipped up dozens of quick, easy and dollar-conscious ways to freshen up your living space before the flowers start to bud. Here's what you can do in no time:

Rotate art.

Are your walls all cluttered with stagnant artwork? Then it's time for a change. "Some people hang everything they own on every wall," says Ward, the pioneer of "one-day decorating" and author of "Home Therapy: Fast, Easy, Affordable Makeovers" (Penguin Group, \$34.95). "Look at it all the time, and you start taking it for granted." Try this: Separate art into summer and winter piles. Hang the lighter, pastel colors for spring and summer, and put the deep, oil paintings in storage. Every six months, rotate your pieces. "This way, you enjoy your art with a new vigor, and it's something you can do in minutes." Ward also suggests art collectors leave one blank wall in each room. It gives visitors a place to rest the eyes.

Soothe the senses.

Spring is not only a colorful season, but a fragrant one, too. Bring the aroma indoors. "Scents have a profound effect on mood," Peters says. "Infusing scent into your décor with diffusers, candles, fresh cut plants/flowers, or incense can change the overall feeling of a space." Ward offers this quick, floral tip: Purchase an inexpensive bouquet of flowers. Split flowers up by color, and place each bunch in small vases around your home.

Beautify your boudoir.

Bright, new bedding can do wonders for your personal space. Tuck away the heavy, winter flannel comforter and pull out crisp linens with coverlets for color, Turner says. Bring in the spring with floral-designed spreads or colorful solids. Don't forget accent pillows for added style and comfort.

Buy new bulbs.

You're thinking flower bulbs, right? Not a bad idea, but we're talking about light bulbs. Ward says many of us aren't using our lights properly. "In the winter, you need more light," Ward says. But in the spring you can get away with less. Swap your 60-watt bulb with a 3-way bulb to allow you to soften light in a room, she says. "It really makes a difference to have the flexibility." Look into energy-efficient bulbs, which may cost more than a standard bulb, but last longer and can cut down electric bills.

Let the sunshine in.

In the winter, dull, dusty windows can go unnoticed. Shorter, darker days give us an excuse. But on the first day of spring, take advantage of the sunny season by giving the windows a wash.

"People tend to let the windows go, and they don't get as much light," Ward says. "You can have a gorgeous room, but if the windows are dirty, it won't look as beautiful or as bright." For an added tip, Turner suggests pulling back dark window treatments and adding a shade or valance for a touch of color. Or, you can also replace window treatments with ecru or white sheers for an elegant look.

Update accessories.

Just as you'd add a scarf or necklace to enhance an outfit, do the same with your home. "Dress your home like you would yourself," Turner says. "Look for great accent pillows in bright colors. Put away the winter throws and drape light, bright throws on your sofa. Pick out spring-hued vases or candles to boost a cocktail or dining room table.

Show off your collection.

Everyone knows you love elephants. You've got an assortment of statues in every room! Experts say to centralize your collection in one spot so your space looks organized and your visitors can truly enjoy it. "It gives a more dramatic effect," Ward says. "If it's a small collection, anchor it on a tray. Then people will notice."

Lose the magnets.

In just minutes, you can tidy up a kitchen by getting rid of the scraps of paper, business cards and take-out menus stuck to the fridge. If you have odds and ends everywhere, it looks messy," Ward says. "If you clear it, your kitchen looks neat."

Keep out things you use on a daily basis, the expert says. Invest in a pretty bulletin board to take care of important items.

*Have a Happy Spring,
Your Friends at Spiller Furniture*