

# 4D REAL ESTATE

## Spiff some things up for spring

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Making the best use of the space in your home can be pretty easy — depending on how long you've let it go without that special gentle touch that you have.

However, keep in mind that organizing your home is a never-ending task that will need to be thought out time and again as your family grows and as your needs and interests change. Here are a few steps you can take to ensure a clutter-free existence no matter what stage you are at. There are only a few basic rules:

- Get rid of everything that you don't use.
- Organize what's left.
- Create more space within the space you already have.
- Cleanliness is next to spaciousness.

Getting rid of everything that you don't use is probably the single most painful part of organizing your home. Simply put, most of us tend to be packrats.

Most experts suggest that, "If you haven't used it for a year - get rid of it." We say two years - we are packrats of the highest order. We don't care how you get rid of it - just get rid of it. Sell it, donate it for a tax deduction, or simply give it away - but get rid of it - all of it.

None of us seems to be able to come to grips with just how much "stuff" we can collect in the way of useless space-consuming junk. We recently got rid of all of our old cassette tapes. We haven't listened to them in several years and they were occupying a large storage drawer. The drawer is now being used for our CD collection which was in a box on the floor. Our kids have the cassettes at their place and they are having a ball.

Make points with a neighbor and give away that old push mower you've been keeping ever since you bought that new power model. Make someone less fortunate a happier person. Exchange junk in the garage for pocket change — sell, sell, sell!

Clearing away the clutter that you don't use will make it easier to organize the clutter that you do use. Everything in your home will be much easier to organize. Go through everything from clothes to coffee cups as you attempt to clear out what isn't needed.

Organizing your home involves the creative use of file boxes (and other containers of all sizes shapes and forms) coupled with big bright labels or samples of the contents. It is an absolute no-no to store anything anywhere without prominently labeling the contents. A box with 20 rolls of ribbon should have 20 half- or one-inch long strips of ribbon taped to the side of the box. Just labeling the box "ribbon" won't do the trick.

• Store like items all in one place. For example, if you have a home office, you probably have a tape dispenser there. In the laundry you may have a gift wrap area where there is another roll of tape. Oh, and don't forget the craft room or garage where more tape is kept. Once you start looking you may discover that you have six partial rolls of tape all over the place.

This holds true for rubber bands, paper clips, napkins, towels, pens, pencils, stereo cables, telephone accessories, tools - you name the item and we bet you can find more than one.

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Punching up the color of a room is one of the easiest and least expensive ways to transform space.

## Creative decorating helps spring new life into your home

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Ah, spring, it's almost time to let your hair down, step outside, breathe in the fresh air and have some good old-fashioned fun. Or, in some cases, it may be time to start your spring home decorating projects.

The promise of the warm weather and longer days has the tendency to make almost all of us want to spruce up our homes with updated decor. With that in mind, the following are some inexpensive and highly effective ways to motivate you, while making the most of your spring decorating dollars:

Add an area rug. Unlike wall-to-wall carpet, area rugs can bring colorful designs and patterns into your room without overwhelming it, and once you buy them they are yours to keep, as you can take

them with you if you move. Area rugs can be well used by the frugal decorator, as they're extremely versatile, and can serve many purposes. For example, they can start off in the living room, move to the family room or bedroom, and eventually end up in the garage or an indoor/outdoor room.

Punch up the color with paint. Painting is one of the easiest and least expensive ways to transform a room. So, if you're thinking of painting but are hesitant about covering the walls of an entire room with a brighter color, Pratt & Lambert Color Marketing Manager Peggy Van Allen says there are plenty of ways to experiment with color — even before putting it on your walls.

There are numerous tools on the market that can help tap into a consumer's imagination by

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## Unseen benefits of energy efficient windows and doors

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When it comes to protecting your home from the damaging effects of the sun, what you can't see - invisible ultraviolet (UV) rays - can definitely impact you. Thankfully, there's an easy and practical solution that provides built-in "sunblock" for the home.

Most homeowners know that upgrading windows and doors can help them save money and conserve energy. However, a lesser-known benefit of energy efficient windows and doors is their proven resistance to harmful UV rays.

For example, windows and doors with Low-E glass block most UV rays - the invisible part of the spectrum that causes premature fading of furnishings and is linked to health hazards like skin cancer.

That's because the coating on

Low-E glass both absorbs heat and reflects the sun's light back into the outdoors.

For the ultimate in UV protection and energy efficiency, windows with laminated glass can block almost all harmful UV rays. Laminated glass has an interlayer sandwiched between two window panes.

This gives windows the strength needed to stand up to impacts caused by storms, and it also filters the sun's light, admitting the desirable, visible spectrum and blocking harmful, invisible UV rays.

"Homeowners are becoming increasingly sensitive to interior fading and wear and tear," said Brian Hedlund, product marketing manager for JELD-WEN windows.

"It's not only because they want

to keep the carpet and drapes from fading, but also because UV exposure is perceived as an increasing health hazard."

While UV resistance is a valuable collateral benefit of energy efficient windows and doors, there are practical benefits too. Savings for a typical home from replacing single-pane with Energy Star qualified windows ranges from \$125 to \$340 a year, depending on the region, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

For homeowners and builders, here are a few basic tips for selecting energy efficient windows and doors.

1. Consider upgrading outdated windows and doors. Replace older single-pane windows with dual-pane units, which insulate the home from both hot and cold

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### SPRING ZING

## Small-scale improvement projects with big results

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After bundling up all winter, spring elicits feelings of joy and excitement with its promise of sunshine, warmth and renewed life. Take the cue from Mother Nature and rejuvenate your home this season. Without spending an overwhelming amount of time and money on an extreme remodel, achieve high-impact results with small-scale home improvement projects sure to give any home zing this spring — inside or out.

Begin by opening windows and drawing the curtains, allowing fresh air and sunlight to infiltrate the atmosphere. Pack away the apple-cinnamon scented candles and potpourri, and introduce aromas of freesia, lavender and rose. Lighten the decor by exchanging dark-hued linens with white and neutral tones, and incorporate vibrant tones in every room with vases of freshly-cut flowers. Now that your home is infused with spring scents and colors, decide on home improvement projects to pursue.

Gatherings with family and friends often bring everyone to the center of the home, the kitchen. It is an ideal place to begin refurbishing. Ranging from \$500 to \$800 and a few hours of time, a granite island extension creates an eye-catching and functional kitchen addition. Granite adds a touch of luxury to any space and has become today's building material of choice due to its elegance and durability. Just a small amount of this lustrous stone has a big effect, so replacing all of the countertops to upgrade a kitchen's appearance is unnecessary.

Due to its complexity, professionals should always handle cutting and preparing granite. In an effort to keep the cost to a minimum, homeowners can consult with local suppliers in search of small, remnant pieces of granite. Suppliers frequently have small portions from previous jobs sitting idle in a warehouse and are often willing to sell them at a reduced price. They will provide a template of the desired design for approval, cut the granite to your specifications and deliver.

The homeowner can accomplish the installation in just a few easy steps. After cleaning the existing countertop, run a bead of Liquid Nails Ultra Duty Poly around the perimeter as well as a zigzag bead down the center. Carefully place the new granite countertop in place. Verify spacing is accurate on all sides. If removing the existing countertop is desired, apply a bead of Ultra Duty Poly to the perimeter of the cabinet and continue with installation. Allow adhesive to set over night or a minimum of eight hours.

Now that the inside has been given a breath of fresh air and is ready for entertaining, begin focusing on the outside. Take a step back and look at the home's exterior. The winter months tend to wreak havoc on the landscaping and the overall appearance of a home, leaving homeowners with a long list of outdoor to-dos. Begin with the flowerbeds by pruning perennials and removing annuals. Add lively new plants infused with the colors of spring. Next, take a look at the home's overall curb appeal. Have years of winter wear-and-tear taken their toll, requiring a fresh coat of paint?

"Exterior paint not only makes for a beautiful home, it provides a barrier against wind, rain and direct sunlight," said Vanita Marzette, ICI Paints brand manager. "For many, exterior painting can be an overwhelming undertaking. For this reason, This Old House paint is offering homeowners the chance to win 30 gallons of exterior paint, plus \$2,500 to be used towards the labor and materials needed."

Log on to [www.thisoldhousepaint.com](http://www.thisoldhousepaint.com) from May 1- June 15 for complete contest rules and to enter to win. The winner will be selected by a random drawing.



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