

## Summer Fresh: Lighten Up for Summer

It's time to throw open the windows and welcome light summer breezes into your home! There are plenty of ways to lighten your interiors for the summer. You don't have to completely redo your home to achieve a summer look. A few small, inexpensive touches can turn around a room.

Indoor summer decorating is based on light colors, light styles, and light fabrics. Furniture is relaxed and cool, curtains are delicate and feathery, and everything is arranged with breeze and sunshine in mind.

Bring the outdoors in! Add fresh flowers or grasses in vases or baskets to tabletops, counter tops, and shelves. Explore the possibilities... you don't have to buy roses or carnations. Azaleas, forsythias, lilies, and many other common yard shrubs and flowers can make beautiful casual arrangements. Twigs and branches can be quite decorative if you use your imagination. You can change your scarf valence's scroll brackets with small grapevine wreaths for a rustic summer touch. Use silk florals to add a touch of the outdoors to windows and walls.

Does a particular table skirt seem too heavy? Replace it with one made of see-through organza. Likewise, change out a dark Oriental rug with a floor covering made of sisal or sea grass. Even a mix of throw pillows in pale sherbet shades can make a difference. Your room, and your mood, will be lightened considerably!

So how can you "summer-ize" your home? Here's a mix and match list of affordable ways to update your home in time for the new season.

- Drape sheer cloths or summer floral fabric on a side table
- What can you do with your heavy winter draperies? You don't have to take them down to lighten the look... consider changing the valence and tieback to a lighter color.
- Display a bed of sand with shells on a tray for the coffee table
- White bedding and furniture add a fresh feel to a bedroom. Replace a down comforter with a white coverlet and white sheets.
- If you're not ready to go completely white in a room, try working in soft blues or greens. To further lighten the feel, replace a heavy wool rug with one in striped cotton.
- Cut fresh, long branches and fill tall vases to set on each end of the mantle
- Buy an orchid plant for every bathroom; keep them fresh with twice-weekly watering
- Make simple new covers for throw pillows or purchase inexpensive ones.
- Choose a pretty floral fabric and make a runner for the dining room table.

- A can of paint will freshen up a room faster than any other option. You only need to paint one wall to make a difference. Perhaps a soft green or orange will work well to update the room.
- Change lampshades for the season. For the summer, try lampshades in lighter colors and fabrics like linen.
- Try new artwork. Buy inexpensive black frames, and add black and white photos. Group them together on a wall for a graphic look.
- Move furniture to change a room's dynamic. Turn sofas diagonally or moving lamps between rooms. Don't forget the newest rule of home décor: there are no rules! Be bold and have fun.
- Wicker furniture: Neither a southern porch nor a northern garden room is complete without at least one piece of easy-going wicker furniture. Effortless elegance makes wicker pleasing year-round.
- There's no easier way to make a quick change in your home than to change the accessories. Add flowers and plants, hang pictures, and pull out interesting collections to set the mood for summer.
- Plants, flowers and more plants; bring the outdoors in!

AND

- Don't forget the basics. Though it may seem self-evident, no amount of sun can penetrate windows that are full of winter grit. Clean all of your windows and trim any shrubbery for crisp, clear summertime views.

Try these suggestions and enjoy the season with your updated summertime style.