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Remodeling Ideas Under \$500

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- 1. Curtain Rods:** One of the most economical ways to change the look and feel of a room is to add curtain rods and sheer curtains. Having sheers at the windows softens the edges of a room and helps you feel a sense of peace. I have done it in my house and every remodel we have done for Sweet Tea Hospitality. I suggest black or nickel curtain rods and Ikea sheer curtain panels that you can get for \$4.99.
- 2. Electric Fireplace:** If it were only personal preference, I might add a fireplace to every room but that is not practical. However, it is a game changer to brighten up a tired room or refocus your attention when entering a room. These are easy to find and install (just plug them in) and are not expensive. Use them as a focal point when arranging furniture and especially when changing the purpose for a room.
- 3. New Pillows:** When you can't afford to change out furniture, consider rearranging the room and getting new throw pillows. I do this in every room of the house (obviously not the kitchen). You can actually change out the color scheme of a whole room without painting or buying new furniture by coordinating the colors and patterns of your accessory pillows. Look for bargains at Home Goods and Kirklands. A two-for-one pillow sale is the perfect time to change an entire room.
- 4. Paint Exterior Doors:** For curb appeal, choose a designer color and paint the outside doors, including the garage door. Without the expense of a full exterior house paint job, you can change the look of your house with one can of paint. Check magazine websites for the colors that are currently trending and would compliment your house/brick color.
- 5. New hardware:** This is one of the simplest ways to change the look and feel of your kitchen and/or bathroom. Even without paint, your cabinets will look like they have received an update by changing old hardware for new handles and knobs. You have the opportunity to make a major change for a minor cost and you can for sure do it yourself.

6. New Light Fixtures: A new hanging light/chandelier over your dining table and/or a vanity light in your bathroom will focus attention upon entering the room. Again, spend some time looking at design websites and magazines to see what the latest trends are in lighting. You can change out fixtures without having to do any electrical work. Simply exchange an old, dated light for a clean, bright new one. Voila!

7. Indirect Lighting: Add lights under the cabinets in your kitchen. These are easy to install, can be purchased in Lowes or Home Depot and they add a high end look to the kitchen. Also install dimmer switches throughout the house to give your rooms a cozy feel.

8. Paint Old Concrete: Nothing makes a home look tired and worn like old, dirty concrete on porches and patios. The answer is much easier and less expensive than you would think. We have used several different techniques, but your favorite paint dealer can give you the details of which paints work best and how to apply it. The result is new looking concrete without new concrete prices.

9. Update the Fireplace: There are many techniques for updating fireplace brick and we have used them all. Take some time and research what you want your fireplace room to look like before you decide. We used a smear in the Coastal Cottage, we whitewashed the sunroom fireplace in our Southlake home and we have straight painted fireplaces in other projects. The room brightens beautifully.

10. Window Boxes: Personally, the look of cedar flower boxes attached below major exterior windows is stunning. Again, we are looking for inexpensive ways to completely change the look of a house. Window boxes add depth, texture and character to flat exteriors and they are inexpensive to make. You can get materials and patterns at your local DIY store.

11. White bedding: Looking for an instant update with very little effort or expense? Change out your current bedding set with a white comforter set. This gives you a new pallet to work with and gives the room a clean, fresh, bright feel. Here is where the throw pillows come into effect as well. Check out #3 above and get a whole new bedroom feel.

12. New Artwork: Many times we don't consider the fact that keeping the same artwork year after year is as tired as having the same color/furniture without any change. You can change the look and feel of a room by just changing the pictures on the walls. Choose a new theme or a new color scheme and watch how it transforms a room or the whole house. When working with a lot of color in a room, I suggest predominantly black and white artwork. If you have original artwork that is very expensive and/or sentimental, consider changing the location and/or emphasizing different colors in the pieces.

13. Area Rugs: If you don't have area rugs or you have worn, outdated rugs, now is the time to change that. You can change the look of a room through dimension, texture and color without changing anything else in the room. Watch for sales at places like World Market and even Home Depot but also check out places like Unclaimed Baggage and Carpets.com who offer free shipping and returns if you don't like how it looks in your room.

14. Paint Mirrors: Many older homes have built-in mirrors installed everywhere from closet doors to office shelves. Originally the idea of a mirrored wall was intended to make a room look larger. You will find by painting a mirrored wall a light, bright color will lighten the room but will also give it more depth and make arranging furniture simpler. Read about the process for painting those mirrors and change everything about a room. It looks amazing!

15. Use Lamp Post Lights: Whether inside or outside a lamp post light will give you a brand new look. I have used them in kitchens for ambient lighting, in bathrooms for vanity lighting and on porches for fun additional lighting. These are currently trending and are very inexpensive. I think you will really enjoy how they look.

Did your mother ever tell you "Every little bit helps"? Well the same principle works with remodeling, reimagining, or refocusing all or part of your home. Take some time, think about the purpose of each room and ask the Lord to help you see the steps needed to revitalize your home. He will help you and you can do it!

Karen Conrad