

Q: **FAST FACELIFTS** What's the quickest, easiest way to spark up a room? We asked designers around the country for their best tips.

TRY NEW LAMPSHADES Take a few lamps to a lighting store, plan to spend \$25 to \$50 per lamp, and challenge yourself to pick new shades in colors you wouldn't normally choose to bring a little more color into the room. If the shade is dark, especially one for a bedroom, make sure it's opaque so the light will be directed up or down.

REORGANIZE A BOOKCASE This brings an instant sense of order. Place books so the spines are at the very front of the shelf. Don't randomly intermingle objects with books; set aside one shelf for displaying your accessories. *Jeffrey Bilhuber, author of Jeffrey Bilhuber's Design Basics, New York City*

CHANGE THE MAT ON ARTWORK I often find it's the color of the mat, not the frame, that dates a picture. Change the look of the piece by swapping out a light-color mat for a dark one or vice versa. Or choose a new color of mat and use the art in a different room.

COVER IT UP! Slipcovers are the best and easiest way to make furniture look new (below). Consider reversible ones—a wintry color on one side and summery white linen on the other. If you're looking for someone to sew a slipcover, check the bulletin boards in fabric stores or ask the clerks. *Steven Ellis, Chicago*

TIDY UP YOUR ENTRY It's a visitor's first impression, so don't let it become a dumping ground. Designate a place for mail and keys, like a small decorative tray or bowl. Add a basket for shoes at the bottom of the stairs so you can grab the basket on your next trip upstairs and put things away all at once.

TRY A NEW COLOR A powder room is a great starting point. The room doesn't get a lot of use, so you can experiment with color and go for drama.

LOOK FOR BARE AREAS Ask yourself what simple items could add interest. A change may be as easy as rearranging furniture or putting an oversize potted plant in a corner.



THROW OUT, RECYCLE, OR DONATE If there's a chair no one ever sits in or a table that just collects junk, get rid of it. Same with old VCRs, cell phones, and computers. You'll feel lighter—and your home will be more comfortable. *Abbey Koplovitz, Boston*

ADD AN AREA RUG A rug anchors a furniture grouping, promotes an orderly feeling, and defines a space. Use painter's tape to outline various sizes on the floor to get an idea of how a rug could work in the room. In dining areas, the rug should be large enough to contain the chair legs when someone pushes back from the table. If you're hard-pressed for space, the rug needs to at least contain the legs when the chairs are pushed up to the table. *Karen Oenick, Atlanta*

REARRANGE ART AND ACCESSORIES Put something in a different place (such as rearranging a shelf display, *above*) and all of a sudden a room feels fresh. When hanging art, be sure not to go too high. A good average eye-level height is to have the center of a painting 5 to 5½ feet from the floor.

CHANGE ACCENT PILLOWS When done each season, it's a way to be trendy without making everything in your house a trend. *Jane Hirsch, Atlanta*

