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PEGGY BERK'S

TEN SIMPLE WAYS TO RENEW YOUR HOME AND LOVE IT ALL OVER AGAIN

as featured on

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Peggy Berk is an award-winning interior decorator as well as a certified interior redesigner serving both residential and commercial clients. Her company, [Area Aesthetics](http://www.AreaAesthetics.com), provides, full service interior design, as well as one day interior redesign services and home staging. An Associate of the Interior Design Society, she is also the featured designer on the Home Decor Exchange where she answers decorating questions and authors a monthly feature for the HDE newsletter.

Peggy's “Rental Redesign” column, which debuted last year and instantly amassed a very large following is about to become the centerpiece of a new online publication that will launch this summer under the “Rental Redesign” name.

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TEN SIMPLE WAYS TO RENEW YOUR HOME AND LOVE IT ALL OVER AGAIN

This is my favorite list of things you can do to renew your home - and fall in love with it all over again. The beauty of this list is that you can pick anything you like, in any order - make the smallest change or tackle something substantial. Everyone can find things on this list that they can do to love their home all over again.

Drop me a line at pberk@areaaesthetics.com and let me know how you're doing!

Peggy

TEN SIMPLE WAYS TO RENEW YOUR HOME AND LOVE IT ALL OVER AGAIN

1. Designate a space for clutter and resolve to keep it cluttered.

Surprised? While it's true most people would put getting rid of clutter at the top of their lists, I've been in enough homes to understand that if clutter is part of your lifestyle, it will just keep coming back. I do, however, believe that it's possible to control the impact of clutter in your home - and it's simple. Choose a spot that's not visible from the public areas of your home and designate a surface, chest or cabinet of some sort for the paper and other things that usually end up in piles all over your home. Give yourself permission to toss anything you don't want to deal with immediately into your clutter area without even thinking about organizing, filing or putting it away later.

Trust me, if you have no area for clutter you will spontaneously make one, and another, and another. If you have a designated area, it will contain the clutter and keep you from feeling overwhelmed by it. You'll have a much easier time with everything in one spot when you do decide to sort it all out and, in the interim, at least you will know where to find everything you can't find.

2. Try at least one new color in your home to break your "color habits".

Be bold, do something unexpected or something you've always wanted to try. If you are really hesitant, put the color inside a closet door - somewhere where you can see and react to it. The room which makes me smile in my home is one in which the painter made a mistake and used a color that I never would have chosen for myself. As I was awaiting his return visit for a repainting, I discovered that every time I walked into the room it made me smile. The room has been repainted a few times over the years, but always with what I call "my happy mistake."

3. Pick the room or area in your home in which you find it hard to relax and do three things to make the room quieter.

For example, think about replacing high contrast colors with a monochromatic scheme or toning down the color with a more muted version. Try simplifying the lines in the room and paring down accessories. Get those bookcases in shape, with all books flush to the front of the shelves in size order, and create some empty wall and tabletop space where the eye can rest.

4. Conversely, pick one room or area in your home that feels bland and the most uninteresting and do three things to elevate the tempo and energize the room.

Try introducing higher contrast or bolder colors. Layer in accessories, some interesting coordinated fabrics in the form of throws and pillows, and some new textures. Replace large artwork with a grouping that will add motion to the room.

5. Make at least four changes in your home to freshen it up and lighten it up for summer.

Change or reduce the number of layers in your window treatment to let more of the outside in. Do what your grandmother did - use lighter slipcovers on upholstery and seasonal accessories such as bowls of fresh summer fruit and vases of fresh flowers. Pick up those heavy rugs. Now is the time to send them out for cleaning. Replace them with light floor cloths or leave the floors bare for a cooling sensation underfoot.

6. Rethink the least used room or area in your home.

It may be great to look at, but if it isn't serving any function, you can do better. Is its formality no longer appropriate for your lifestyle? Are your college-aged kids really going to miss the playroom? Should you have retired that home office when you retired?

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7. Walk through your home room by room and consciously gauge its impact on your senses by isolating various aspects of the experience.

What do you see, hear, smell? What can you touch? How does it make you feel? Make adjustments in each room as needed so that the experience is always pleasant and inviting, and appropriate for the room and its function.

8. Create a space just for you.

It can be as simple as a chair in which you can escape with a good book or an entire room. Surround your space in your favorite colors and textures. Make it a place you can use for your most relaxing activities and the best spot you can imagine for just sitting and doing nothing at all. Sit in your personal space at least 10 minutes every day.

9. Approach the design and decoration of your home with joy.

Whether it's a little change or a major renovation, try to focus, not on the chores involved, but on the vision you have and the progress you are making toward it. Appreciate the changes, and appreciate yourself for making them.

10. Invite guests a least once a month.

When we tidy up for guests, we reawaken our consciousness of all the little things that we can do to make our home inviting and comfortable, details that often get lost in the chaos of our daily lives. Your guests will feel it, but more importantly, so will you.

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