

One-Day Redesign

Using existing items to redecorate is a simple, inexpensive, eco-friendly solution for sprucing up a room

By Kristin Boyd

Interior designer Donna Hoffman is like a modern-day Mary Poppins. When working on a one-day redesign, she snaps her fingers, and all of the furniture, wall art and accessories in a client's home magically pop into their proper places.

OK, so maybe it's not that easy.

But one-day redesign, in which designers use a homeowner's existing items to redecorate, is a simple, inexpensive, eco-friendly solution for those looking to spruce up their spaces, Ms. Hoffman says.

"A lot of people don't understand how powerful one-day redesign can be. They think, 'Oh, I have to start (re)designing from scratch.' But if you put furniture or accessories in the right location, they just sing. It can make a huge difference," says Ms. Hoffman, a former QVC Network host who now owns Interiors by Donna Hoffman in Yardley, Pa.

Interior designers know redesigning a room can often feel like one more overwhelming task on your to-do list. Where should this painting go? What should I do with this oversized chair? How can I create a collage of my favorite photos? Before long, homeowners are stumped and frustrated.

"Most homeowners already have things that they like or that they've collected. They just don't know what to do with them," says Mary Vignone, owner of Room Revivals in Princeton. "They throw up their hands, and say, 'How is this going to work?' Most are afraid to try something new."

That's why one-day redesigns, also known as one-day makeovers, are a great option, particularly for homeowners who'd rather repurpose items than toss them, or those homeowners who have a shoestring budget and are trying to get the biggest bang for their buck, Ms. Vignone says.

"It's the ultimate in green design because you're using something the homeowner already has," she says. "For less than a new piece of furniture, you will have a whole new space. It is a great way to get a whole new look on a limited budget. It creates a whole new appreciation for your home."

How it works

One-day redesign is sort of like putting together a puzzle, Ms. Hoffman says, and the pieces needed for a snazzy upgrade are all within reach.

"I want to know what do you love? What items are your favorites? What's bothering you in the space? People buy to their tastes, and people keep buying the same things over and over, the same colors and the same shapes," she says. "Instead of saying that's a living room chair, say it's a chair, and it can go anywhere. You're looking at what is working in room and

what's not," Ms. Hoffman says.

Take a look around your house, she suggests. That brass lamp collecting dust in the attic might be great for a small reading area in the living room, and that handmade wicker basket from your grandmother just taking up space in the bathroom could make a trendy magazine rack or be the perfect place to put your mail. And the plush recliner that no one ever sits in would get far more attention if it was positioned in front of the coffee table, rather than shoved into the corner.

When gearing up for a one-day redesign, interior designers often arrange a consultation, which allows them to get a feel for the space and allows homeowners to discuss their design likes and dislikes. The designers then study the space, eyeing the layout, architecture and focal points (or lack thereof), before "shopping" the home and selecting items that could help create a cozy new design. Homeowners can also note which items are up for grabs and which are off limits.

"I decide what is off in this room, and figure out how do I correct it from a design standpoint. From there, I ask,

what can I keep in this room, and where am I missing some things? What do I need to make it work? Then, I make a list of what I need to move or add. Whenever I can, I avoid putting something into a dump. I don't want to see it tossed."

Design day

Design day is like playtime, the designers say. "It's a fun process. It's instant gratification, It's like a scavenger hunt, a puzzle," Ms. Hoffman says. "We're reusing, repurposing and reassigning things that are already there. The brilliant thing is you can completely change a room by just moving a few items around, and homeowners don't even realize it. You're creating a vibrant new space."

With most one-day redesigns, homeowners leave the home and return at a designated time. This allows the designers to work freely without anxious homeowners peppering them with questions or seeing the space in disarray. It also allows designers to experiment with various arrangements before deciding on which works best.

"Just like on the TV shows, the client leaves because it can be a nerve-wracking experience," Ms. Hoffman says.

There are several common mistakes that designers are on the lookout to fix while completing one-day redesigns. "Not having a focal point is a big mistake. You need to drive the eye to a focal point, or the room starts to shut down and seem cramped," Ms. Hoffman says. "You can also move the eye with color."

Furniture placement, lack of lighting and overuse of accessories can also produce major design no-nos, she adds. "Most people have way too many little, itty-bitty things, so it's important to edit and distill the items. Maybe focus on something larger or group items in a different way," she says. "You have to think about an item's relationship to other items. You don't just want to fill space."

Sample ideas

One-day redesign can include "heavy lifting" like rearranging furniture to create a better flow from room to room, or simple changes like switching drapery or floral arrangements, says Lou Ann Harney of Décor & You in Somerset. "Adding fresh plants, incorporating lighter colors, swapping out area rugs, changing candle scents are great ways to redesign a space, especially during the springtime," she



• Interior designer Donna Hoffman worked her one-day redesign magic on this living room.

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says. "It's great to 'borrow' from other rooms and add some fresh accessories."

Designers can also repurpose items, adds Ms. Vignone. Ideas include using an old suitcase as a stylish, vintage side table, or using leftover wrapping paper to make framed artwork.

The final product

Homeowners are often in awe when they return home and see their new spaces, the designers say. Some homeowners have cried, while others have been speechless. Most are floored by the changes. "I've had clients say, 'I can't believe I live here,'" Ms. Hoffman says.

The designers suggest homeowners allow time to readjust to the space because the redesign can take some getting used to. "They need to be open to change," she says. "There's a comfort level with repetition. It can be difficult because they are used to seeing their rooms in a certain way."

If homeowners are truly unhappy with the one-day redesign, restoring the space to its previous look is typically an easy fix. "One-day redesigns don't include construction or painting, so there is nothing that can't be undone," Ms. Vignone says. "Nothing is permanent."

However, she adds, "My goal is for the homeowner to be happy and comfortable with the space when they come home. That's what is most important to me."



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