



Time for an update?

Love your living room

By Lesa Knollenberg

My family had strep throat this winter. This means I spent a lot of time in my living room, distracting my kids from the pain with Brady Bunch repeats and popsicles. My time staring at the walls led me to a decision: It's time to update my living room. Like most people, I have neutral furniture, carpet and off-white walls. I would like a unique look. But, where to start?

"First, identify what you want to keep and what you want to get rid of," says **Gerri DiMaggio** of **DiMaggio's Euro Design**. "Identify those pieces, then let the professional you are working with know. From there, come up with a color scheme. I like to look at what the customer is wearing. Nine out of 10 times that's a color they like to be around. Set up a palette with colors you like to surround yourself with."

I was wearing red the day I met DiMaggio. I do like bold colors, but an entire room with red walls? She gave me an alternative: "I learned from my mom that

no matter what your color scheme, a touch of red in a room is nice; a large red vase and flowers, for example."

Once you have landed on a color scheme, what about artwork? **Kathleen Quade** of **House to Home Interior Design Services** echoes the theme of attraction in decorating. "Choose something that means something to you, something you are attracted to. Then choose colors from the artwork. Build your room around that."

How, then, to choose artwork? Discount stores are an inexpensive option. Authentic works from Art Fair on the Square sound lovely, too. If you want a unique living room that welcomes you home each evening, it's important that you choose artwork carefully.

Nicole Riewe and **Amy Kaul** of **The Great Frame Up** have helped many customers through this process. The Great Frame Up has an extensive on-site database where customers can access prints. Once you narrow down your personal preferences,

they can give you advice on framing options. Just like the local library, it's possible to check out frames to view them in the lighting of your own living room.

Riewe and Kaul often share their advice for redecorating: "Keep an open mind as you're looking. Your ideas might change as you go through the process." They also suggest creative framing, such as custom-framed mirrors over a mantel or object boxes, showcasing items that mean the most to you.

The next important step for a stylish living room is choosing accessories. Quade has three words of advice: "Take your time. Don't rush into redecorating a room. Look at periodicals (such as *Metropolitan Home*), tear out pages, make a folder of rooms that you like." Once you are shopping for accessories, she suggests that you "take your time and look for accessories that are visually interesting, with a larger impact. Use unique

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pieces on the mantel or cocktail table. Most people have a basic, neutral sofa. That's not a focal point. But once you choose your artwork and colors, you can add colorful pil-

lows. Don't be afraid of color, pattern or texture. Make each pillow a different pattern. Don't be afraid of size, either. Large pillows make a big impact."

Dimaggio reminds me that it isn't about breaking your budget. "You don't have to spend a lot of money if you hook up with the right people. You can still have a warm, charming, welcoming home. It's better to have one thing that you love rather than a lot of 'stuff.' Sometimes it's what you leave out that makes a room. Less is more."

Although I'm tempted to jump in and make big changes, I've started my search for a color palette for my own sanctuary. Next winter, when we're home with a brand-new virus, I want to feel better just being at home.

Lesa Knollenberg is a freelance writer who once confounded her quiet neighborhood by painting her living room a very loud teal.

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