



Decorating Your New Home

So you've just moved into your new dream home. You've unpacked, now what? Can't wait to make it yours? Here are some tips that can help you along the way.

Prioritize

It is very common to move into a house and have a long list of projects you want to tackle. Most people can't do them all at once. The solution is to look at what you currently have, and prioritize your projects based on your family's needs and of course, your budget.

Window Coverings

One of the more important items are window coverings, not only to dress the window, but to give privacy in your home, and protect items (flooring, furniture) from harmful UV rays. Temporary shades allow you to cover your windows while you research so you don't rush your decision. Custom window treatments are expensive, and this is not an area where you want to make a mistake. Styles range depending on the size of the window, its shape and the use of the room the window is in. The benefit of choosing a good quality window treatment is that it will last a long time.

Paint/Repaint Your Walls

The nice part about painting is that it can be done quickly and with very little cost. Selecting a paint colour after your furniture, window treatments and other more expensive permanent items have been selected is recommend. If you have yet to purchase these items, you can use a more neutral paint palette based on what you like and what you think you will likely be purchasing in the future. When selecting your paint colours, you'll want to be sure to keep the whole house in mind so there is a general "flow" between rooms.

Doors, Trim & Ceilings

Generally all doors and all trim (window casing, baseboards, door frames, etc.) should be painted in the same colour. This colour is usually a white or off-white, but can also be a darker or lighter tone than the walls. White accents the trim; colour will generally mask it (depending on your wall colour). To give your ceiling the appearance of greater height, use a lighter colour (again, white or off-white). If you want a more intimate look, consider painting the ceiling a darker tone, or the same colour as the walls.

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Lighting

Consider changing your light fixtures, particularly if they are dated. A new chandelier in the dining room can make a huge difference. Also, if the room is generally dark, you could always have pot lights installed. The goal is to ensure that you have enough general lighting as well as task lighting to enable you to complete your day-to-day activities (i.e. reading lamps).

Re-arrange Furniture to Create Larger, More Open Space

For furniture, start with all your furniture either out of the room, or if that's not possible, in the centre of the room. Consider the tasks that are performed in this room (reading, homework, conversation area, etc.). This will help you to select the pieces you need in this space. Now take a look at the architectural elements present in the room, such as a fireplace or large bay window. You may want to use one or both of these as your focal piece. Keeping this focal piece in mind, arrange the furniture around it so that it's the first thing you see when entering the room. For example, create a conversation area by placing the sofa on one side of a fireplace and 2 chairs or a loveseat on the other. If you need to divide a room, consider using a low level element, such as a sofa, sofa table or bookshelf rather than a screen.

Kitchens

By far the most important room in the house, it should be the most functional. The most common problems new homeowners have with a kitchen are usually esthetics or function. If esthetics are the problem, and you aren't ready to pay for a full kitchen renovation, consider painting the cabinets and changing the knobs or even changing your countertop. If you'd prefer to change the functional aspects of the kitchen, perhaps open it up, or create more storage, consult a professional for suggestions and design ideas.

Further Renovations

Larger scale renovations will by far take more time and consideration on your part. Take each room one at a time, and always select your more expensive items first and then work around them. Keep everything together in a file or on a presentation board. This way when you are shopping for new items, they will be at your fingertips. If you are ever in doubt, consider hiring an expert in this field, if even just to bounce your ideas off of them. The cost of this could save you a lot of headaches once your renovation has begun.