stay *inspired*

Right, greenery can help add color to a neutral room. Far right, an accent wall changes the look of a room.

PUT A FRESH FACE ON AN OLD SPACE

6 simple, affordable ways to spruce up your home

BY AMANDA DANAHER

Single mom Leslee Borman has two kids in college. So when it came to sprucing up her 1970s townhome in the Admiral Heights neighborhood of Annapolis, she had to find cost-effective ways to make it work.

"I didn't have an unlimited budget … I couldn't buy things brand new," Borman says.

So she found ways to cut costs without compromising her style and did a lot of the work herself. If you, like Borman, are looking to update your home on a tight budget, here are six cost-effective ways to put a fresh face on an old space.

1. REARRANGE YOUR SPACE

Start by moving around the furniture and accessories already in the space. If a room feels stale, try another arrangement for a fresh, new look that won't cost a dime.

Annapolis residents David and Rae Evans wanted to change their Sherwood Forest home's open-concept living space to feel more comfortable, so they turned to Wesley Thompson, interior designer and owner of Simply Wesley in Annapolis, for ideas. The furniture in the large, open living area was aligned almost too perfectly, Rae Evans says. Their kitchen island was evenly squared with the coffee table, couch and dining table.

"I had rectangles in front of rectangles," Evans says. "We rearranged the space to change the perspective, and now things flow better."

2. REFINISH FURNITURE

Give your furniture a fresh look with a new coat of paint, stain or fabric.

Borman updated her dining room set while keeping costs to a minimum by purchasing secondhand items and refinishing the pieces herself. She hired an acquaintance to help her reupholster the cushions and pillows on wicker chairs with a colorful fabric from Jo-Ann Fabrics and Craft Stores. She also refinished the round glass-top table by spraying the rusted black metal base with a "greenish-grey" color. The new color helped tie the
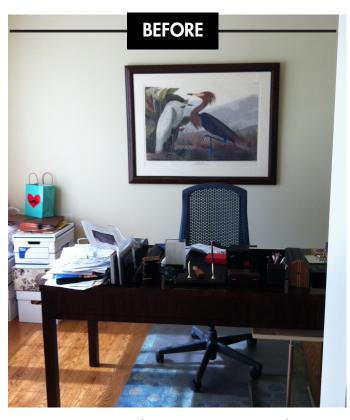
BEFORE

AFTER

table and reupholstered cushions together, she says.

Project cost breakdown: Table bought at an estate sale - $50; chairs purchased from an online yard sale - $75; fabric - $30; reupholster charge - $25/ per cushion for a total of $150.

3. REPLACE FIXTURES

Switch out ceiling light fixtures or lampshades for a new look at a low cost. Broman swapped the 1970s brass chandelier above her dining room table with a glass globe hanging light and nostalgic bulb purchased from Annapolis Lighting. The new fixture gives her dining room a more updated and polished look without compromising its charm.

Cost breakdown: Chandeliers range from $40-$275; lampshades from $30-$150.

4. CREATE AN ACCENT WALL

Pick one wall to paint or wallpaper to liven up a room with little expense or effort. If you have a larger space, an accent wall can help anchor and define smaller areas in a room, such as a reading nook or entertainment space. An accent wall also can highlight a room's focal point, perhaps a fireplace, bed or bookcase.

Before starting, make sure the accent wall is the only bright or textured wall in the room to keep the space from looking over-crowded or busy. Thompson also says to be sure the colors connect with something in the room.

Cost breakdown: Gallon of paint with primer ranges from $17-$45; painter's tape ranges from $4-$12; paint tray kit including brushes and rollers - around $30. Wallpaper ranges from $20-$200 per roll; wallpaper adhesive kits including paste, smoother, seam roller and sponge - $50.

5. INTRODUCE COLOR

A pop of color can add warmth and dimension to any space and can be easily accomplished by adding a few throw pillows, blankets or candles.

Borman brightened up her neutral living room sofa with a few textured throw pillows she purchased from a local home goods store. Buy several different pillows and leave the tags on

to see what fits best in a room, Thompson suggests. If they don't work, simply return them and try again until you find the right combination, she says.

Poufs — short cloth stools — are another way to add a burst of color and more seating in your living space, Thompson adds.

"Nothing is the limit," says Thompson. "Go for the texture, pattern and color you love and mix it up."

Cost breakdown: Throw pillows range from $10 - $75 depending on size; throw blankets range from $12 - $115; candles range from $5-$50; poufs range from $35 - $275.

6. ADD GREENERY

Adding fresh flowers or foliage is a quick, easy and fairly inexpensive way to freshen a space.

Sarah Bradshaw, of Cheverly, refreshed her mantel's soft neutral tones with a bit of green. She arranged a few fresh eucalyptus branches from Trader Joe's in a white ceramic vase.

The best part about fresh plants? Thompson says greenery can easily be swapped out according to the season.

"For flowers, it's also a great way to get in a pop of color that may not 'match' but be complementary to the existing color scheme," Thompson says.

Cost breakdown: Potted plants/flowers range from $5 -$150; silk plants/ flowers range from $35 -$275.