

Tips for Creating Your Dream Space by Sara Butler

No place like your home for the holidays (and guests)

One of the wonders of the holiday season is how it brings family and friends together—especially those loved ones who live far away and you haven't seen in a while. If you want to do a little more than roll out the proverbial red carpet, there are some relatively quick and inexpensive things you can do to spruce up your guest accommodations before your company arrives.

Some easy, quick home improvement projects to take on prior to the holidays include:

- **Paint:** If you've got the time, a new coat of paint in the guest room or guest bath can do wonders.
- **Window treatments:** Blinds, valences, shades, and curtains are inexpensive ways to add color to a room or change the appearance of the windows. You can even tie some red ribbon around your new curtains to give it a holiday feel.
- **"New" furniture:** While there may not be time to buy new furniture for holiday guests, you can give that guest room chair or sofa a facelift with new slip covers for older pieces of furniture or, better yet, having one or two favorite pieces reupholstered.
- **Closet Makeovers:** Guest room closets tend to be the natural place to store extra things. A spring cleaning in December of your closet is a good idea so that company staying for more than a night or two has enough closet space.
- **Linens:** A new comforter and pillow shams can instantly jazz up a guest room.
- **Shower curtains and bath towels:** Again, something new not only makes guests feel welcome, but makes you feel better, too. And while you're working on the bathroom, regROUT and repair or replace any tiles that need it. You can complete the bathroom makeover by buying a new toilet seat. With all the colors, textures and patterns out there, a new seat can really jazz up the room.
- **New artwork:** Whether it's your most recent family photo or a Monet print you just had framed, putting up new artwork in your guest room and bath can give either room a fresh new look.

While those are some of the things you can do for your guest accommodations inside your home, there are one or two things you can do on the outside to prepare for guests, such as:

- **Cleaning your gutters:** Helps avoid any buildups that could lead to wet basements and slippery sidewalks, possibly endangering the safety of company.
- **Motion sensor lights outside:** Your guests may not have been to your home in a while, if ever. Installing motion sensor lights along your sidewalk enhances their safety and adds a deterrent for potential burglars when you're out of the house during the holidays.

Creating a welcoming look and feel for guests doesn't take an extraordinary amount of time or expense. By undertaking just a few of these home improvement projects, you can give your home a mini-makeover and create a welcoming environment for your company.

Sara Butler is a staff writer for DirectBuy. For more information or other helpful tips for your home, visit www.directbuycares.com. You can send suggestions for future columns to questions@directbuycares.com.