

## Paint-free ways to brighten your home

During the winter, homeowners know that shortened days mean less light inside their homes, which can become dreary. Many homeowners pick up their paintbrushes in an effort to make their homes more colourful. But homeowners need not embrace their inner Picasso to brighten their homes' interiors. The following are a handful of paint-free ways to add some splashes of colour to your home this fall.

- Bring nature inside. Flowers and plants can make colourful additions to a home's interior. Flowers tend to be aromatic, which can make a stuffy house in which windows need to be kept closed a lot more pleasant. Plants and flowers also can improve indoor air quality. Several studies have shown that houseplants improve indoor air quality by filtering out volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, that can be harmful to human health. That's especially important come late fall and winter, when homeowners typically shut their windows and keep them shut until spring, making it difficult for fresh air to enter a home.
- Invest in some colourful throw pillows. Natural sunlight brightens a room come spring and summer. But sunlight is increasingly scarce as fall turns into winter, and

rooms that do not boast too many colourful accents can quickly grow drab as summertime sunlight dwindles. Instead of buying new furniture, invest in some colourful throw pillows to give a room a more vibrant look. Patterns can be mixed and matched to provide some contrast and transform a room from somewhere to spend time into a sight to behold.

Paper the walls. While many of today's homeowners prefer paint to wallpaper, those who want a less permanent solution to brighten up their homes may want to consider removable wallpaper. Such paper is less expensive than traditional wallpaper, and many do-it-yourselfers find removable wallpaper is easy to both install and remove. Choose a colourful pattern that can turn an otherwise plain wall into a potent palette that adds some life to your home's interior. Because removable wallpaper does not require a significant financial investment, you can experiment with various colours or change things up each month if you so desire.

Add some artwork. Another way to add colour to the walls inside your home without dusting off your paintbrush is to hang some colourful artwork. Paintings that feature bold colours tend to draw your immediate attention when you enter a room, and that quality can make you forget the room is not benefitting from natural light. If you want to go the extra mile, find a painting that features colours which match throw pillows or other accessories in the room. This way your walls and your accessories are working in concert to make a room more colourful.

Rug it out. A patterned throw rug is another accessory that can effectively brighten a room without much effort or financial investment on the part of homeowners. When choosing a throw rug, find one that's colourful but does not clash considerably with existing furnishings, as you don't want the rug to draw attention for all the wrong reasons. You have more freedom with regard to rugs if you're furnishing an empty room, as you can choose whichever rug you look and then choose additional furnishings based on the rug.

Homes tend to darken as late fall turns into winter. But homeowners can brighten their homes in various ways, even if they prefer not to paint.

