

(Style on a Dime) New uses for paint; making the old look new again

Written by Marcia Humphrey
Monday, 21 September 2009 15:20



A few weeks ago I had to have my hardwood floor replaced because hairline cracks began appearing and then progressed to what looked like blisters. Thankfully, the floor was still under the manufacturer's warranty and they were replaced with no problems. The only thing I had to do was remove all the furniture and wall hangings in that area, so that the flooring guys could easily take up the damaged flooring and then reinstall the new product. Once I had removed everything- from the kitchen, entryway, and bathroom, my walls began to call out to me. They said, "Girl you know that it's wrong for you to leave us like this! We feel so naked wearing nothing but this beige paint! This is not even like you!"

Now when walls talk to you, you must listen. I promptly went out to my garage, where I had stored some discount paint, and decided which color I'd use to properly "dress" my walls. As you know, one project leads to another. I got to thinking about all the things that can be done with paint that make a big impact, even if the budget is small. Here are a few ideas just in case your walls-or furniture- start talking to you!

1. Wood Furniture - Are you tired of your old bedroom set or has your child's dresser seen better days? Prepare to paint it by cleaning it with a household cleaner (don't forget to rinse), sand it lightly, and then wipe away the dust. Next you will want to apply a primer and allow it to dry well before rolling on two coats of your favorite paint color.
2. Fabric - If you want to breathe life into your old decorative pillows, just grab fabric paint which can be found almost everywhere. Buy or make a plain pillow cover and give it your own signature style!
3. Metal - Is your outdoor furniture looking a little sunburned? Get it ready for a second life by wiping it down and letting it dry. If you want to make it a super quick job, like I just did on my rocker, pick up spray paint containing rust inhibitors. You'll save the extra step of priming. Do it now and your almost new outdoor furniture will be ready to make its debut...again next spring.
4. Rugs - Let's say you have a boring sisal rug and you want to give it some pizzazz. Consider using a stencil and a few thin coats of paint to make a decorative pattern. Another option is to use masking tape, a ruler, and your favorite paint color to create a striped pattern on your rug.

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Don't let a tiny budget keep your walls (furniture, fabric, metal accessories, or rugs) looking naked. Paint is one of the cheapest things you can buy to make a real impact and mistakes are easily corrected. Find \$5 paint by browsing the paint sections at Lowe's and Home Depot, where they sell "oops" paint (a color that didn't turn out as planned). For more on painting tips and techniques visit www.ehow.com. Spread a cheerful vibe throughout your room by grabbing a paintbrush and spreading some paint! Enjoy!

Marcia Humphrey is an interior decorator and home stager who specializes in achieving high style at a low cost. A native of Michigan, she and her husband, Lonnie, have three children.