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Stylish Solutions

By Ann McDonald



My home in a work in progress. Notice the smooth walls. They are so much more current. Our timeline is four weeks, based on a rough formula I came up with when we are managing simple interior updates: One week per 1,000 square feet. Our pug Bella is oversees the painters faithfully, each day. She loves to be part of the crew!

polyester pantsuit when it's 2017.

What does this involve and why do it, even if you are planning to stay in your home another 50 years?

Sometimes we simply don't see what our home actually looks like. We've looked at the drapery so long, and paid so much for it years ago, we miss that it is incredibly outdated, even for a traditionalist.

Design is not a one-and-done type thing. Many homeowners think it is. It's not. Drapery has a life span. Tile backsplash has a life span. Even custom cabinets, have a life span.

Historic styles once considered sacred still need updates. Consider LED lighting or better water flow with a newer faucet. You source appropriate style-sensitive suppliers of course, and good places to start include appliances and windows that will reduce your electric or water bill.

Essentially we take a good hard look stylistically at what would better serve your lifestyle, especially financially. I know historic homes can turn into money pits, so let's do what we can with what we have access to.

For other homes, ask yourself, do our cabinets bang a bit? Do our windows open easily? Is the granite on our kitchen counters from 15 years ago? If so, consider those items to be on the list.

A great way to see what you seek is to peruse some of the Open Houses this next weekend. Ask yourself if you can see what has been updated versus what has not. Practice looking differently, at different price points.

Look and take note of tile. Look and take note of light fixtures and finishes. Look and take note of carpets. Then, go back to your own home and try to identify some of the items in your own home that need to be updated.

The first two things to consider which make, in my professional opinion, the biggest difference:

Welcome to March! While the sun is peeking through rain clouds, we are tackling an update of inside style this month. Depending on how long you have been in your home, it might be a good idea to look hard at what should stay and what should go.

As a design firm, we advise clients to take a deep look, every 10 to 15 years, at an interior update. For our purposes this month, let's call it a proverbial botox or laser peel.

Minimally invasive, an interior update is certainly more than a simple "teeth cleaning." The interior update can have down time and mess, but should be accomplished in less than a month, if well planned. We typically allocate one week per 1,000 square feet of home.

If your home is 2,000 square feet, plan for a solid two weeks; 4,000 square feet, plan for a month.

My personal recommendation for this type of update is that you plan to work from home to oversee it during this time, or hire a seriously good manager to coordinate this type of project.

While these are surface updates, they must be coordinated and overseen to prevent them from taking over or running off schedule.

Interior updates can range from \$10,000 to \$100,000 depending on the scale and type. For our discussion here: no walls or footprints are modified, no plumbing or electrical is being moved. An interior update like this is mostly about not getting caught wearing the 1970s

1) Wall texture and color. Are your walls in need of a "skim coat"? Perhaps you've never even noticed your wall texture before. Once you start to observe, you'll become a resident expert and start to see how wall texture greatly affects the style of a space. Paint can cover a multitude of design sins, but it cannot ever make up for a dated texture.

After you get the texture right, paint. Colors do more than trend, as paint has come a long way in the past 10 years. The change in color is just the start. With better quality, you can update the inside of your home quickly.

I always recommend professional painters, as it is a true skill set. If you are budget conscious in this area, you may be able to help with some of the prep or furniture moving, but please leave the painting to the ones who do it 40-plus hours a week.

When we remodeled our home 10 years ago, we opted for a smooth texture everywhere except in the living and dining room, which we covered in a heavy antique texture. In our current spring clean, we had the entire area changed to a beautiful smooth coat. The new paint sings on the walls. I feel happy every time I walk in!

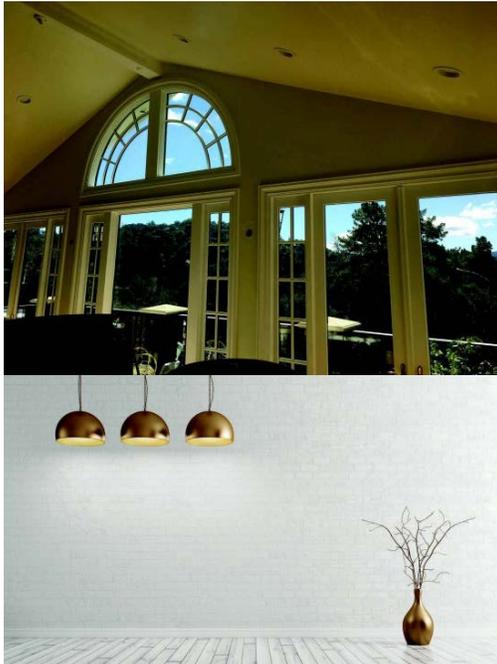
What rooms will you change?

Most painting contractors can handle the texture change, and will charge by the square foot. Be prepared, it can be messy, but oh so worth it! Look at the photos on page D10 to see progress in our home.

2) Lighting fixture updates. The other area we are updating is lighting fixtures. For a relatively inexpensive amount, you can update your look. The budget for lighting fixtures can be \$100 to \$300 per fixture on the low end, up to \$500 or more per fixture on the medium to high end. Certainly the sky's the limit, but with the advent of Amazon Prime and other shopping sites, we can now source many brands online that were off limits to the consumer just five years ago via the design trade.

Next month we will be tackling the balance of the project and I will share photos of our progress again. I allotted four weeks to complete the entire project, and even with the rain, we are right on schedule.

Granted, this is what I do for a living, but even with careful planning, some things can be on back order. My team and I spent one week with a deep plan, and had three rooms as contingencies, meaning, if we ran over budget, we'd hold off on those rooms. I will let you know how it goes!





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