



7
DECORATING
RESOLUTIONS

BY LESLEE MASON

This year, resolve to make your home a beautiful, functional space. These resolutions will help get you started.



create
storage



Too much “stuff” often tops the list of complaints around this time of year. “Looking around the house and seeing stuff in the corners and seeing stuff on tables—it’s stressful for people,” says Lindsey Foster von Kalben, designer and owner of FVK Design in Markham. Her advice? Maximize your closet storage space with an organization system that meets your needs. For example, add shelves in a closet where items need to be stacked or extra rods for clothes. “If something is important to you and you need to make space for it in your house, there needs to be a space for it to go away to,” she says.

Of course, storage solutions only work if everyone is able to follow them. “Label your storage areas to allow your family to help you keep organized,” Foster von Kalben says. “Label your baskets, label your storage. Have a shelf in your closet that is ‘Bob’s shoes’ and a shelf in your closet that’s ‘Jane’s shoes’. Then everybody knows where things are supposed to go and it’s easier for everybody to be part of keeping your house beautiful.”



maximize
your
lighting



Pot lights address a lot of day-to-day lighting needs, but on full brightness, they don’t exactly create a relaxing environment. The solution? Add dimmer switches, suggests Foster von Kalben, who says they’re a cost-effective way to improve the lighting in your house. “It’s about creating an environment that you want to spend time in.”



make
room for
the things
you love

If storage alone doesn't cut it, it may be time to pare down. When de-cluttering, designer Rose Della Penna likes to take items out of a space. "Everything goes out. All the little décor pieces—your vases, books, lamps—and you only put back what you absolutely love," says the owner of Della Penna Design in Woodbridge.

Jen Walker, a stager and stylist with Pearl Street Home Staging in Newmarket says that type of approach is especially great if you need a little help re-imagining your space. Take bookshelves, for example. "They don't have to hold books," she says. "If you have a collection of something, maybe you want to put that there. Or maybe you change it depending on the season."

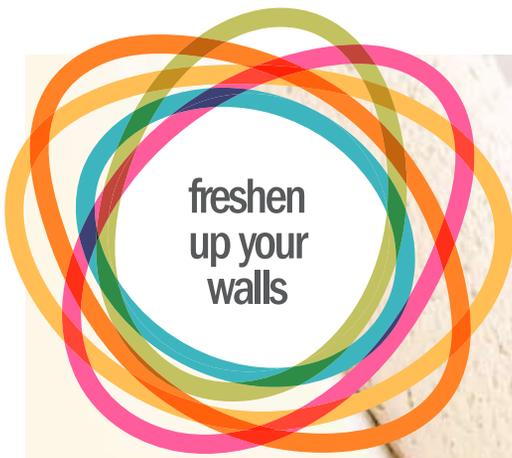
To make it easier, Walker suggests committing your goals to paper. "I find making lists of the to-dos you want to tackle useful to stay on track and motivated. And it's so satisfying to cross out what you accomplish!"



switch
up your
linens

In the bedroom, create a good quality bedding base and then accessorize according to the season. For example, in the colder months, place thick faux fur throws at the end of the bed. During warmer seasons, opt for lighter fabrics in pretty colours. "You want to walk into your bedroom and feel like it's a retreat," says Walker, who adds that big and beautiful throw pillows can also help create that effect.

The same goes for your bathroom. Della Penna likes to switch up bathroom towels at least twice a year. "Your spring-summer towels would probably be a lighter colour and then, in the winter, you can warm them up with warmer colours," she says. She does the same with entryway rugs, opting for heavier, more durable versions in the winter and lighter and brighter ones in the spring.



Your walls are one of the biggest areas in your home, so it's no surprise that paint has a big impact on your space. It's a great way to incorporate some new colours in your space, but is also very manageable, Della Penna says.

For ease, Walker suggests opting for a neutral shade and then adding pops of colour through accessories such as artwork and pillows. "That will completely change the look of your room," she says.

Della Penna likes to use no more than three complementary colours. "A nice flow is calming," she explains.

Not quite ready to paint? Even smaller projects like patching up walls and touching up paint can make a big impact. The same goes for baseboards. "Kids and pets can really give baseboards a beating, and we may not even be aware that they look bad," says Walker, who adds a fresh coat of white paint can do wonders. "It's amazing the difference it can make," she says. "All of a sudden, your home looks better cared for and cleaner."



A Japanese concept, wabi-sabi is about appreciating beauty that is imperfect, impermanent and incomplete, Foster von Kalben says. "When people are finishing their homes, they think they need to do everything at the same time. But wabi-sabi tells us it doesn't have to be perfect, it's not going to be there forever and you don't have to finish it all right now." Instead, Foster von Kalben suggests letting your space evolve and happen more organically.