

Home After The Holidays

The holidays are warm and festive. Holiday décor adds life and sparkle to your home. Everything is dressed up and ready for parties and family get togethers. But New Year's Eve has come and gone. As your home slips out of its party dress, what do you see? It's a grey January day outside and the same mood permeates your home. Don't despair! This is the perfect moment to brighten your spirits as you refresh your home.

All eyes have been directed to your holiday décor. Without this center of interest, the space may seem lifeless and unhinged. Redirect the center of interest to your most important focal point. Take advantage of the impact of the hearth, important artwork or the spectacular view.

If you've moved or removed furniture, art and accessories to accommodate the seasonal items, now is a good time to look around, before you put everything back.

Assess your space. Is the paint a little tired? What about the color? Is it the best compliment for your upholstery, window treatments and flooring? Maybe a darker or lighter shade of the same hue would add impact. Putting everything in place in a freshly painted room will give you a bright, fresh start to the new year. And don't forget the floors and carpet. A good cleaning or a coat of polyurethane will erase the wear and tear of holiday traffic.

But wait! Before you put everything back where it was ask yourself these questions. Will the furniture arrangement create a sense of balance? Does the use of color, texture and size of accessories and art give the space a cohesive feeling or does the room lack theme and flow?

How about lighting? General lighting should be bright when needed with dimmers that create a more intimate feeling. Is task lighting in the right places for reading, eating, working, etc? Is accent lighting being used to highlight artwork, large plants and sculptures?

Here is a guide to furniture arrangement:

- . Traffic pattern should allow for easy access and movement around the room.
- . Make sure the conversation area is comfortable. Guests shouldn't have to strain their necks to talk with each other.
- . Provide a quiet corner with adequate task lighting for reading or enjoying a cup of tea.

Take a good look at artwork and accessories. Over time art, accessories, family photos and collections seem to accumulate all by themselves. Use only your very best artwork on the walls in your main rooms. Hang artwork where it can be enjoyed. Place small pieces where they can be easily viewed. Remember, if you are standing on a ladder to hang a piece of art, it's too high.

Families tend to grow and so does the photo collection. Edit your collection. Keep only your favorites and frame them in the same material, one that works with your décor. Use like metals or wood tones. You'll enjoy the family members more when you create a uniform environment for them.

Keep accessories under control. Use only the things you love to look at. Group collections for more impact. If you have several collections, rotate them with the seasons. You and your friends will enjoy a standout collection that is not competing for attention.

It's a new year. Get a fresh, vibrant start by refining your environment. You'll see your things in a new light.

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