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NEW HOMES & CONDOS



Wood pallets can be upcycled into everything from wall shelves, to privacy screens, to plant holders, and seen here, as a headboard.



A modest amount of fabric and a staple gun is all that is required to recycle these removable cushions.



A few vintage suitcases make a stylish and practical living room side table or bedside surface.

Upcycle decor: Big on style, easy on the wallet



In this age of disposable goods, we're often left feeling as though we need more disposable income, just to keep up.

No doubt, the home goods market is awash with stunning products to fulfill our every design whim.

I often marvel at how the retail options have seemingly multiplied tenfold since I started designing now nearly two decades ago.

As a designer, I love having lots to choose from but I don't love how this all feeds into a perpetual need for newness.

There have been interesting psychological tests performed where one group is told to select a free poster to take home with the catch that once they pick, they can't change their mind.

A second group is offered the

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same, only they are instructed that at any time they can come back and change to a different poster

The results revealed that when told you can have something different, you're never content with what you have.

Those faced with a decisive choice were really happy with their initial selections and had no desire to change it.

With the peppering of options available now, what this all translates to is our constant hunger for change in our homes.

It's near impossible to resist the itch, so rather than fight it, I'm going to help with the next most responsible bit of guidance.

Here are four quick and cool decorating fixes that cost between nothing and a few lattes.

Keeping up with the Joneses has never looked better on your Visa bill and I swear these frugal fixes are all designer approved!

Shipping pallets

These roughly constructed wood pallets can be upcycled into everything from wall shelves, to privacy screens, with one of the coolest uses I've seen being a living wall, with cascading potted plants slipped between the slats.

For young clients of mine, I used a double wide pallet as a headboard, finishing it with a simple cord and Edison bulb wrapped around as a side light. Their hipster hearts were in love with the results.

Vintage suitcases

A great solution for extra storage hidden in plain view, a few vintage suitcases make a stylish and practical living room side table, or bedside surface.

A great place to look for these is at the local second hand shops or better yet, your great aunt's attic!

Old ladder

Old ladders are one of my favourite repurposed pieces. Here I used it in a living room to hold extra blankets but they're also terrific in washrooms for a charming towel bar that can also double as extra towel storage, or slip magazines or newspapers over the rungs for a casual reading area, or powder room reads.

Granny chairs

I love crisp new furniture, especially in kitchens or eating areas. Big box stores have made it far more affordable as well, but too much new, leaves little room for the necessary imperfections that are the finishing touches.

I love popping a vintage chair beside the bathtub to hold soaps or updating a pair of affordable found chairs with fresh new upholstery fabric like we did here.

Looking for chairs with removable seat cushions means you can recover them yourself with a modest amount of fabric, and 30 minutes with a staple gun.

 Melissa Davis is a celebrity designer well-known for her appearances and creative work on several HGTV programs. Visit her at www.melissadavis.com.



Old ladders are terrific for holding extra blankets or for a towel bar in the washroom.



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