SUN NEW HOMES & CONDOS

Fresh flowers and accessory groupings make this living room come alive. Photo courtesy of Kylemore Communities.

In this renovation, a new countertop increases the value of the kitchen and makes it more functional. Photo by Brandon Barre.

Put some spring into your home

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Refreshing your home is a great way to change the look of interior spaces without the massive cost of renovating and the mess of rebuilding.

A clever refresh can make as much impact to the look and feel of your space without the hassle of a larger project. Here are some quick tips to make this easily achievable.

1. Change your wall colour. Painting is the fastest way to change the atmosphere of a space. It is inexpensive and relatively fast to do. If you have been living in dark colours, switch to lighter ones so you experience the full impact a change of paint colour can bring.

2. Add throw pillows. This is a simple way to bring an old sofa or chair back to life. Pick a few toss pillows with lots of colour or pattern and layer them on top of furniture as this will help to distract from what's below it. And to help tie a room's colour scheme together, pillows can be a great way to make the whole space flow better, so overall, the room will look larger.

3. Change your kitchen countertop. This is slightly more costly than some of the other options, but it can have a large impact, particularly on a room that has so much influence on the rest of the house.

Adding a solid surface counter top can increase the value of your home and make the room more functional. Options like quartz or granite are durable and beautiful and really do make a kitchen look more expensive.

4. Add colourful art. There are many options available now to source artwork from, including original pieces by local artists to big box retailers that sell large scale reproduction pieces.

This is an easy way to get colour into your life without having to paint your walls. To create a focal point using art, be sure to buy a large piece with strong visual elements so it is easy to read from a distance.

5. Keep window coverings light. To keep a space open and airy, it's important to allow as much light as possible to filter into the room. One way to do this is to use sheer drapes rather than heavy lined drapery.

Sheers come in every colour today and can be installed so they look fresh and modern. Sheers let in some light so they don't darken a room or make it feel heavy.

6. Decorate with fresh flowers. Such a simple addition to any room, decorating with fresh flowers adds wonderful colour and texture. This is an easy way to liven up a room and they don't require any real work.

Remove as many extra green leaves as possible and cut the stems shorter so it's the flower that your see the most. This will also help the flowers to last longer.

7. Group accessories. Often the challenge is not which accessories to purchase but how to arrange them. Group accessories in arrangements of three, five or seven items and place them together on a large tray.

This will add a more powerful statement, create a focal point and keep the space less cluttered. Without the clutter, the room will open up and flow better.

8. Add a mirror. It's no secret that a mirror reflects light or draws attention but it is also a great tool to create drama!

Adding mirrors on walls across or adjacent to windows will create the sense of a secondary window and can add depth in otherwise flat spaces.

For more interest, choose a mirror with a chunky or detailed frame, as this becomes a feature as well.

9. Buy a new area carpet. Area carpets are the perfect way to unite a space and to brighten a room. If you have dark wood floors, a light carpet can add the sense of light.

If you lack colour, put colour in the area carpet so it draws people to the center of the space where the carpet is placed. And carpets add warmth and dimension to any room, as they are often pieces of art themselves!

— Author, television personality and celebrity designer Jane Lockhart appears as a regular guest on the Marilyn Denis show. For more information, visit www.janelockhart.com.

A deep navy blue was used to bring life to this bedroom designed by Jane Lockhart. Photo by Brandon Barre.

Throw pillows are a simple way to bring an old sofa or chair back to life and can also be used to tie a colour scheme together. Photo by Brandon Barre.