

Dusting Off the Cobwebs

A three-part series on you and your home

by Ann Jagger & Karen Jensen

A cold glass of water on a hot summer day is wonderfully refreshing. Waking from a mid-afternoon nap is revitalizing. Taking a brisk walk on a cool autumn morning is invigorating. Our homes are an integral part of our everyday lives yet we tend to overlook the impact our homes have on visitors as well as our own overall well-being. This is the first of a three-part series on how to save time, money and aggravation while revitalizing your home for living and for selling.

If you have lived in your home for more than a year or two, you have most likely grown accustomed to your surroundings. The accumulation of additional items for you and your home has begun. For those who can claim they have been in a home for five or more years, this accumulation has turned into “stuff”. Piles and boxes filled with who knows what now fill our homes. We collect more items every year and eventually we look around and realize we have no empty corners, no storage space and no closet space left. We are overwhelmed and don't know where to start. Take a deep breath and let's take control of our homes once again.

Procrastination and De-cluttering

Fear of not knowing how to do something, fear of an overwhelming task and fear of the amount of time and energy it will take to organize an area are all causes of the “do nothing” word -- procrastination.

Step one: Pick one room to start with and forget about the rest of the house. Look at how you use this room and determine if the room is really set up for what you do there. Write down the activities that take place in this room so you can determine what needs to be moved both in and out of the room.

If you pay your bills in the kitchen, then be sure you have an area set up in the kitchen for incoming and outgoing mail, stamps, pens, envelopes, labels and anything else you need to streamline your bill-paying process. This reduces stress, saves time and may help to eliminate late payments for you.

Step two: Mark your calendar and set aside a block of time to work in this room. If you are going to rearrange furniture and need help, ask someone to assist you during that assigned block of time. You can help them do the same at a later date.

Step three: Clutter needs to be addressed methodically. As you organize your room, do NOT move a pile from one place to another. Take every item in the pile and either put it away where it belongs, put it in a box to donate to charity, give it to a friend or relative or place it in a box for a garage or yard sale. Label the boxes appropriately. Continue this process by starting in one corner of the room and moving clockwise or counterclockwise around the room.

When you finish this room, you will have a tremendous sense of satisfaction and you will once again be able to enjoy this space in your house. As a bonus, you will find that cleaning this room will be easier and faster, again reducing stress and saving you time.

Updating

Once your home is de-cluttered and your rooms are set up for an efficient living environment, you may want to take a look at updating your space. If you are living in a recently-built home, this process is probably unnecessary. In the event your home is 10 or more years old, a facelift may be in order.

You may want to consider updating light fixtures, bathroom fixtures, kitchen hardware, old appliances or a fresh coat of wall paint or new flooring. These changes can be done gradually and you get a fresh new look that you can enjoy on a daily basis. Many of these updates are done when people sell their homes, especially those that are 20+ years old. Updating gradually gives you the benefit of a revitalized home while spreading the costs over a longer period of time. Updates will also help you to sell your home at the higher end of your market range. Keep this in mind if you intend to sell your home within the next 1-3 years. Some people have actually decided not to sell after they completed updates on their existing home. Imagine that!

Lightening

Sunlight and proper lighting will change the mood of your home. Dark areas can be depressing. From a selling perspective, buyers will leave a poorly-lit home with a negative impression. If a buyer gets that feeling while being in your home for less than 20 minutes, what is your home doing to you from a position of well-being? It is well documented that people living in areas closer to the North Pole are more prone to deep depression due to the severe reduction of sunlight for 6 months a year. A well-lit home is inviting and uplifting.

Be sure your rooms are well lit and replace burned out bulbs right away. Heavy drapes block sunlight and are great dust magnets. Keep blinds open whenever possible. Replace lighting fixtures that do not properly light up a room. Don't block windows with furniture. Keep windows clean. Removing screens from windows will allow 10-20% more light into your home. Watch the outdoor landscaping to be sure shrubs and other growth do not block the windows.

Another way to lighten things up is to change paint colors on walls. A lighter color will make the room feel larger. If you have small rooms with lots of dark wood, consider painting the wood. You will be amazed with the transformation.

Part Two of the series deals with brightening, maintenance and cleaning of your home and doing it in a way that saves you time and money, and allows you to enjoy your surroundings year-round.

If you are interested in getting a handle on your living space, and have the time and energy to handle the work yourself, call us to discuss a Prehance™ Evaluation for your home. In a few hours you will have the information you need to get your project started.

For more information, visit our website, call Ann or Karen at 919-781-4887 or email us at info@homesinmotion.org