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# Spring Renovation Challenge: How to Redo Every Room in Your House for Under \$500



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Posted 5 days ago

Now that spring has officially arrived, you've probably started going through a mental checklist of the rooms in your home that could use a little pick-me-up.

But why stop at spring-cleaning—why not go for a whole home makeover? 'Tis the season to get revitalized, after all.

What's that, you say? You don't have thousands of dollars at your disposal to give your walls, floors or furniture a face-lift? Fact: You can make big improvements—no matter what your budget.

That's why we challenged three interior designers to show us how you can inexpensively (and easily!) spruce up four major rooms—the living room, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom—for \$100, \$300 and \$500.

## The Living Room

### If You Have \$100 to Spend ...

At about \$30 a gallon, a fresh coat of paint is a cost-effective way to give any room a face-lift. "I like a light color on the wall—a soft gray, green or blue—and then a slightly darker shade of that color on the ceiling," says Kimberly Ward, an interior designer and blogger at PinkEggshell.com who believes the accent ceiling is the new accent wall. For another \$25, buy a few yards of eye-catching fabric that complements the new color, and drape it across your curtain rod as a valance.

There's also a cost-free way to create added dramatic change: Move some furniture around. For example, position the couch so that it faces a window instead of the TV.

### If You Have \$300 to Spend ...

"My rule of thumb is at least seven sources of light," says Cathy Hobbs, an interior designer and alum of HGTV's Design Star. "This includes not just lamps or overhead lights but also windows, mirrors and reflective surfaces, like a shiny decorative piece."

Your choices for shedding more light to revamp a living room are endless, from creating a statement wall with a trio of inexpensive mirrors or springing for two gorgeous lamps. And remember that the lighting should be beautiful, as well as functional, so consider upgrading a standard overhead fixture with a more stylish pendant. Another lighting upgrade that Ward swears by: dimmers, which can “change the mood dramatically.”

### **If You Have \$500 to Spend ...**

Choose a color or theme that inspires you—maybe you dig an ultramodern vibe or you prefer a global retreat—and pepper that inspiration around the room with different fabrics and patterns. “I always start with a rug,” says Ward, explaining that it’s easier to match accent pieces to a rug than the other way around.

She suggests shopping for one in the \$250 to \$300 range, and then playing mix-and-match with curtains, a new throw or toss pillows for the couch. Textiles make a more lasting impression than tchotchkes ever will—and your living room will look insta-chic.

## **The Bedroom**

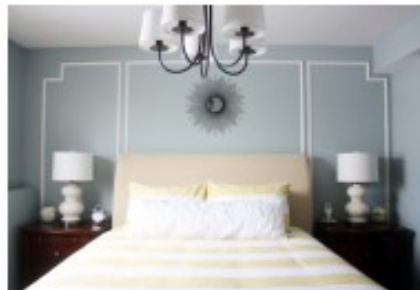
### **If You Have \$100 to Spend ...**

Turn one of your walls into a focal point using decorative molding, says Ward. You can simply nail the molding to your wall in the desired pattern, fill the nail holes with putty, and then create contrast by painting the molding a different color from your wall.

This creates a giant picture frame effect—and you can get creative with what goes inside. Perhaps it’s patterned wallpaper or a collage of your favorite photos. The idea works especially well behind a bed (see below) or if you want to set off your bedroom’s sitting area. You can also get the same effect using paint—just use painter’s tape to help you create a four-sided border.

### **If You Have \$300 to Spend ...**

Ward says that people often select nightstands that are too small, too junky and too far away from the bed. And despite what magazines will have you believe, she asserts that this area shouldn’t be littered with books and other personal effects in plain view.



Courtesy of [iHeartOrganizing](#)

For \$300, she says that you can splurge on a high-quality piece that looks great and gives you ample storage space, like this antique, [three-drawer nightstand](#). If you prefer to spread your dollars out, try a less expensive model, such as this [\\$70 piece from Target](#), and then spend the rest on a statement duvet cover and accent pillows.

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## What's the best thing about staying in a fancy hotel? A bed that makes you feel like royalty.

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### **If You Have \$500 to Spend ...**

What's the best thing about staying in a fancy hotel? A bed that makes you feel like royalty. "Most people are attracted to the sumptuousness of a hotel bed and want to bring that feeling into their own bedroom," Hobbs says.

The key to re-creating that luxe hotel effect for an instant boudoir upgrade: Surround yourself in down. You can get a thick duvet insert for about \$150 and a high-end featherbed for about \$175. With the remainder of your budget, splurge on some lavish, high-thread-count sheets.

And while we're on the topic, here's Hobbs' secret to a perfectly dressed bed: Skip the fitted sheet in lieu of a larger flat sheet. So if you're outfitting a queen-sized bed, tuck and fold a king-sized flat sheet over the featherbed and mattress for a custom fit.

Got some money left in your budget? The bedroom is an excellent place to experiment with dramatic lighting, so consider installing a simple, hanging light fixture over your bed, says Nicole Gibbons, an interior designer who appears on OWN's Home Made Simple.

### **If You Have \$300 to Spend ...**

Vinyl is making a comeback. (Yes, you heard right.) Peel-n-stick flooring has come a long way since the '70s: You can now buy vinyl flooring that looks like hardwood and other upscale finishes—plus the tiles come in larger rectangles, instead of squares, for a much sleeker look. “I’ve had a lot of success with vinyl floors,” Hobbs says. “It’s one of my favorite upgrades—an affordable, low-cost refresher.”

### **If You Have \$500 to Spend ...**

Depending on the size of your kitchen, says Hobbs, \$500 might get you an all-inclusive package at one of the big-box stores for a countertop revamp that includes the price of the counters and installation. For example, at Home Depot, the cost of covering an 18-square-foot countertop would probably run you about \$450. (Check out their [cost estimator](#).)

Of course, the amount you spend will depend on the size of the area that you’re trying to cover, but you can find laminate for less than \$30 a square foot, compared to \$50 or more for granite.

## **The Bathroom**

### **If You Have \$100 to Spend ...**

“Nowhere do you get the most bang for your buck than the bathroom,” Ward says. So stop using that plastic shower curtain and splurge on a “grown-up” fabric version in the \$50 range. You should also be able to find a comfy, plush bath mat for \$30 or one that resembles those chic bamboo mats at your favorite spa.

### **If You Have \$300 to Spend ...**

“Look for better ways to store and display things,” says Ward. “You want your bathroom to be as efficient as possible,” as opposed to cluttered with dust-collecting toiletries.

If you don’t have a lot of space for towels and toiletries, she suggests investing in a shelving unit that’s more pleasing to the eye than your typical over-the-toilet model. You can maximize storage by either mounting multiple floating shelves or a single, sophisticated piece, like this [one from Pottery Barn](#), that’s as elegant as it is functional.



Courtesy of [West Elm](#)

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**The typically smaller size of bathrooms means you'll pay less for materials in this room of your house—and that means more pop for your dollar.**

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**If You Have \$500 to Spend ...**

The typically smaller size of most bathrooms means that you'll pay less for materials in this room of your house—and that means more pop for your dollar. That's why Ward turned to Wallpapers To Go, which stocks discounted designer wall coverings, when she was redoing a client's bathroom recently. The cost of the wallpaper and the installation? It all rang in at just \$279.

If you want to go bold, opt for a design that's a little less subtle, like black-and-white stripes or a fleur-de-lis. To add to the wow factor, complement your new walls with inexpensive flooring. Ward loves this [wood-inspired porcelain tile](#) that costs just \$1.75 per square foot.