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ASK TARA

Designer and colour specialist Tara Dennis offers her advice

Bedroom facelift

Q How can I freshen up my old, tired bedroom? Wendy, Northcote, Vic.

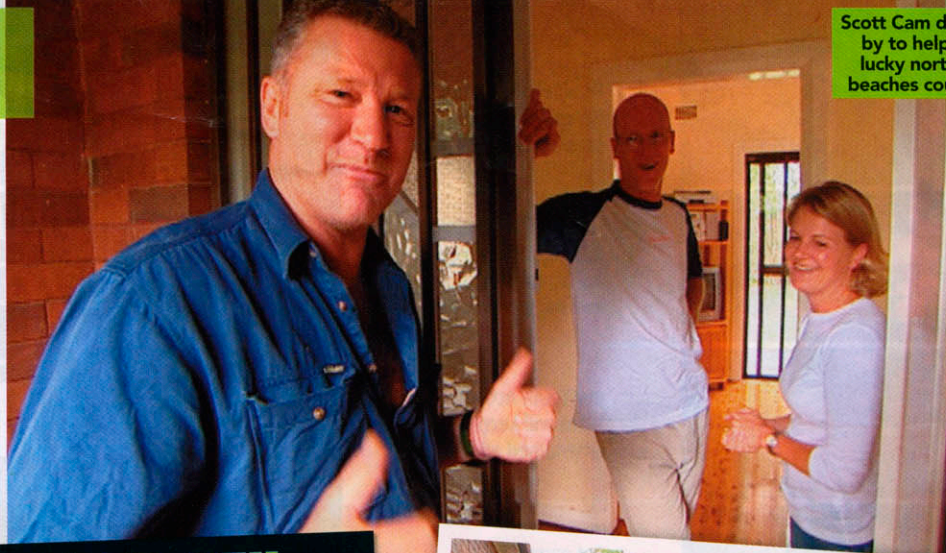
A Choose an item you love and base the theming of the room around its style or colour. If windows are small, always make sure the drapes you hang are wider than the frame as this will make the windows appear larger. A new coat of paint is also one of the easiest ways to freshen and update a room.

Budget designs

Q I've moved house and need to redecorate, but can't really afford to. Where should I start? S. Jacobs, Woonoona, NSW.

A The best way to renovate or redecorate on a budget is to start with the rooms you use most. Work with neutral shades, then accessorise with colour, such as a bright cushion or throw. A creative way to decorate walls is to buy small canvases from an art-supply shop, put your own collages on them and hang them in a small cluster. Make sure you plan your redecoration so you purchase items of the right size.

Send your questions for Tara Dennis to: Your Home, GPO Box 5245, Sydney, NSW, 2001, or email womansday@acp.com.au Include contact details. No personal replies. See contents page for location of our privacy notice.



HOW TO FIX ...

DODGY doors

When Nick and Louise from Sydney had a sticky problem, *Our Place's* Scott Cam came to their rescue

There's no need to call in the professionals when your sliding doors just don't want to budge.

All you need is a little grease and oil change.

"Firstly," says Scott, "remove the door by lifting it up as far as it will go, then tilt the bottom of the door towards you over the top of the lower tracks. Place it safely against a wall.

"Now check the tracks. If there are any bends in the sliding track, simply straighten them out using a hammer and a block of wood.

"Next, clean and lubricate the rollers on the underside.



A squirt of oil and the door's as good as new!

The best oil to use for this is heavy-grade clock oil as there's less chance of this type of oil gumming up later. Speak to a watchmaker about where to find clock oil."

Scott's tips for winter

- If you have gaps between the base of your doors and the floor, attach rubber flaps to keep out winter draughts.
- Invest in an oil heater, as they use less energy than fan-forced heaters.
- Check your roof for missing or broken roof tiles that may need replacing.
- Make sure your gutters are securely attached and free from leaves.
- If you have a fireplace, check the chimney for built-up soot and have it cleaned.
- If your hot water tank's on the old side, you might like to think about replacing it before the cold weather sets in. Tanks start to give out after 12 to 14 years.

DOOR MAINTENANCE

- Make sure you vacuum the tracks of your sliding doors regularly to ensure dirt doesn't build up.
- Regularly clean the track with a brush and soapy water.
- If a non-sliding, standard door is sticking, lightly sandpaper the part that seems to be causing the problem.
- Also check to see there's no water leaking from anywhere that could be causing the wood to swell.

■ Our Place screens on the Nine Network, Fridays at 7.30pm.

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