



US DELTA REALTY

- HOME
- REVIEWED LISTINGS
- BUYERS
- SELLERS
- RESEARCH
 - ASU
 - School Facts
 - Colleges & Campuses
 - Economic Powerhouse
 - Student Tuition & Housing
 - City of Chandler
 - City of Tempe
- ABOUT
- *Vietnamese

Prioritizing the Health of Your Home and Making Positive Changes



Photo by Valentin Salja on Unsplash

(This guest post was written by Maria Cannon of Hobbyjr.org) Maria created Hobby Jr. to encourage young people to find a hobby they love. Her hobbies include gardening, quilting, sewing, and knitting, which play a major role in maintaining her mental health.)

Living healthier is not just a typical New Year's Resolution; it's an ongoing goal for many. By prioritizing the health of your home and making positive changes, you can reach your objective faster. If you aren't sure where to begin, here are some tips from US Delta Realty.

Picking Improvements

When you're picking improvements to make, look beyond your needs, especially if you may sell soon. By considering buyer trends, you can select projects with broad appeal, allowing you to increase the value of your home more effectively. By taking photos and keeping receipts, you'll have an easier time getting top dollar, so make

that a priority.

Straightforward DIY Projects

If you're looking for DIY projects that allow you to prioritize the health of your home and make positive changes, start with the basics. Clutter can lead to higher stress levels and anxiety. As a result, decluttering is an excellent first DIY project.

While you can simply declutter in a way that feels logical, it's easy to get overwhelmed by the idea. If you aren't sure how to get started, give the KonMari Method a try. It'll give you a framework to follow, making the project less difficult.

Another great DIY project is an air filter replacement. Your HVAC air filters remove contaminants from the air in your home, but they can only be at their best if they are in good shape. Usually, replacing them only takes a few minutes and requires a few – if any – tools, making it an excellent DIY option.

If you want to give your home a new sense of life and vibrance, introduce plants. Fresh greenery can be a mood booster, allowing you to bring a bit of the outside indoors. If you couple that with new paint, you can transform your space quickly and improve air quality. Select soothing shades to create a sense of calm throughout your house, turning it into a respite.

When to Hire Professionals

Some home upgrades aren't DIY-friendly. In those cases, you'll want to bring in professionals to ensure the work is done right.

One great project that can improve the air quality in your home is to add UV to your HVAC. UV light can kill germs, making your house healthier. But since the project is involved and impacts a critical system, work with a skilled HVAC technician instead of tackling it yourself.

Remodeling your kitchen to give you more room for creating healthy meals is also a good choice. Since it's an enormous undertaking, this one is better left in the hands of professionals. Once you're ready to begin, look for a skilled plumber if you need to

repair, replace, or relocate pipes. Since you'll pay around \$45 to \$150 per hour, make sure you read reviews and choose a licensed and insured plumber. That way, you'll get your money's worth.

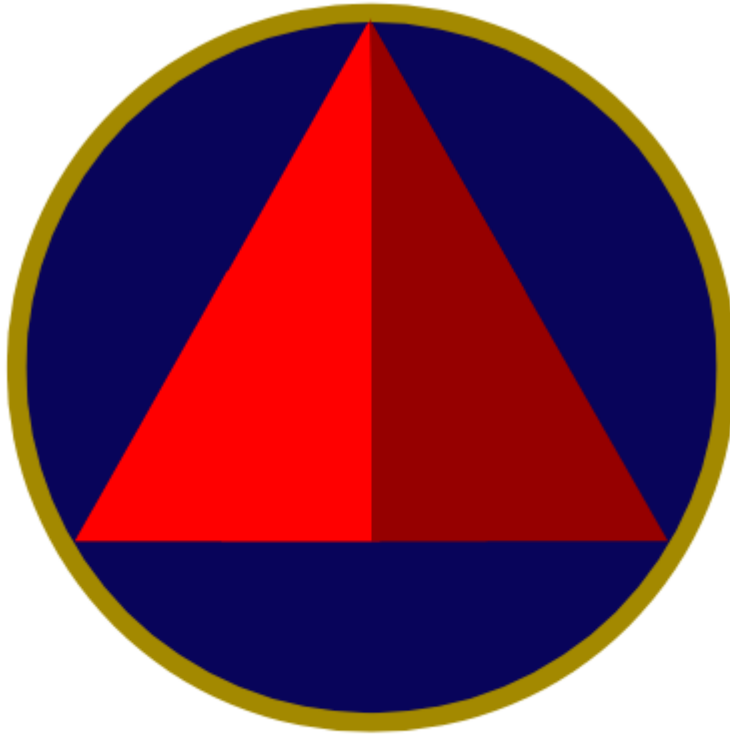
Paying for Home Improvements

Many homeowners can't afford to cover the cost of their home improvements out of pocket. If you're in that category and wondering how to refinance a house, then you may want to explore financing options.

While options like a personal loan or credit card may be easiest, they aren't always ideal if you want the best interest rate. If you want a better rate, going with cash-out refinancing or HELOC could be a wiser choice.

With a cash-out refinance, you'll get a new mortgage that's larger than your current loan, and you get to receive the difference between your current balance and the new loan amount in cash, giving you money to spend. HELOCs are a separate line of credit that's tied to your home's equity, allowing you to tap the value of your house without a completely new mortgage.

← [How to Create the Dream Entertaining Space You've Always Wanted](#) [The Assisted Living Transition: Tips to Help You During This Change in Living Arrangement](#) →



US DELTA REALTY

- HOME
- REVIEWED LISTINGS
- BUYERS
- SELLERS
- RESEARCH
 - ASU
 - School Facts
 - Colleges & Campuses
 - Economic Powerhouse
 - Student Tuition & Housing
 - City of Chandler
 - City of Tempe
- ABOUT
- *Vietnamese

How to Find and Buy the Ideal Vacation Rental



Image

courtesy of Unsplash

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When you're ready to take the leap to invest in a vacation rental, connect with experienced broker Chuong Tran to find the ideal property to fit your needs and budget. Reach out today! 480-336-8752

Investing in a Phoenix vacation rental requires some forethought. You want to find a property that will be a dream to visit, both now and in the future. Of course, it also

makes sense to invest in a property that could bring in passive income. As you prepare to enter this new venture, US Delta Realty explains how to set yourself up for success.

Cash or Credit

As Mashvisor notes, one of the dilemmas anyone making an investment faces is how to finance their decision, and your budget will greatly affect what you do. Paying with cash is ideal, so long as you leave enough funds in your accounts to cover other obligations. For instance, you should be in a good position for retirement, you want to have money set up for a rainy day, and if you have kids, you should be ready to help them with college if need be.

If you aren't in a comfortable position to pay with cash, your next step is to think about how you'll use the property. MortgageLoan.com points out that investment properties that you intend to use as a second home are viewed differently from those you intend to make money from. As an example, you could use a conventional mortgage for your purchase, although you will need the property to meet certain criteria, such as a resort-type location and distance from your primary residence. On the upside, with a conventional mortgage, you could opt for an adjustable-rate or fixed-rate loan. The icing on the cake: If you put at least 20 percent down, you can avoid mortgage insurance.

If you plan to purchase the property to rent out, there are a couple of things to bear in mind. Not all lenders will allow you to use a conventional loan, and some lenders might require you to set aside extra funds as a safety net. Some investors require as much as six months of house payments, plus an additional two months of house payments in reserves for each non-primary residence you own. Your best bet is to discuss everything with your lender.

Bear in mind your budget should also include things like hiring professional lawn care and bringing in people to take care of maintenance and repairs. And if your new property is far from home, chances are you will want to hire a property manager to watch over things on your behalf. While a property manager will cost extra, having someone handle bookings online, regular cleanings, and on-site support can lead to

more positive reviews and increased revenue.

Define Your Details

After sorting the details of your budget, establish search criteria for house hunting. Part of this will involve choosing a general location. You might have something specific in mind, especially if you already have a routine vacation destination. Another option is to choose an area based on general desirability. A qualified real estate professional like Chuong Tran will be able to help you narrow down your Phoenix neighborhood choices.

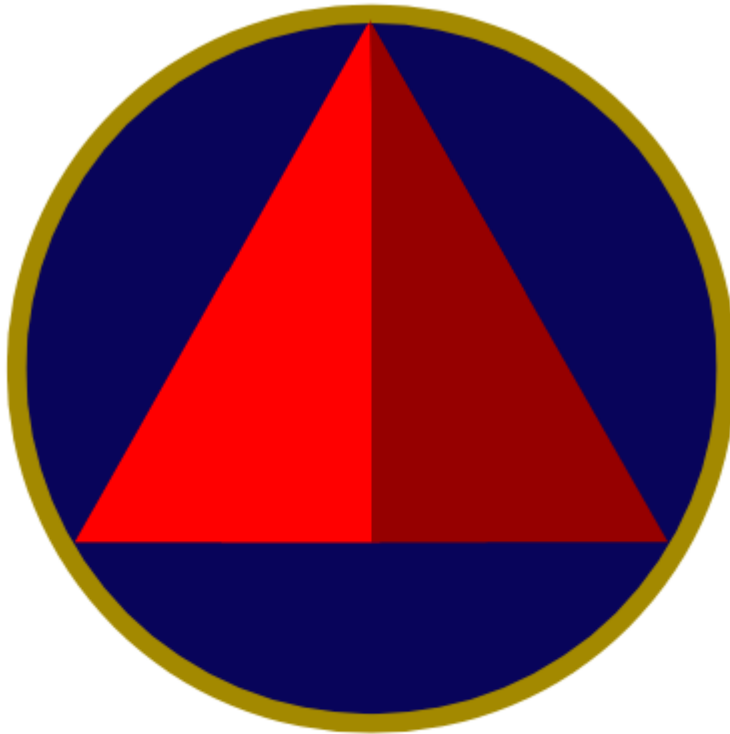
Then, think through property specifics. For instance, is a swimming pool important to you? Will you mind driving when you visit, or do you want to use public transportation? Is there onsite parking? If you plan to rent it out, think about area attractions guests would enjoy as well. Remember, the more desirable a location is to other people, the steadier the flow of guests, and the better your return if you ever elect to sell the property. To help with the search, you might want to print out a list of amenities and highlight your must-haves.

Consider the Business Side

It's worth noting that there are significant benefits to turning your vacation rental into a business, especially if you anticipate another rental property purchase down the road. Many rental investors choose the LLC status as a way to gain tax benefits as well as personal asset protection in the event of a dispute.

Investing in a vacation home is a major step, and you want to find the property of your dreams — not fodder for nightmares. Make sure you have your finances in order and think through what you want out of your investment. With good planning, you'll enjoy your ideal getaway in no time!

← [How to Create the Dream Entertaining Space You've Always Wanted](#) The Assisted Living Transition: Tips to Help You During This Change in Living Arrangement →



US DELTA REALTY

- HOME
- REVIEWED LISTINGS
- BUYERS
- SELLERS
- RESEARCH
 - ASU
 - School Facts
 - Colleges & Campuses
 - Economic Powerhouse
 - Student Tuition & Housing
 - City of Chandler
 - City of Tempe
- ABOUT

- *Vietnamese

How to Create the Dream Entertaining Space You've Always Wanted

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Ah, the smell of treats baking in the air. The sound of laughter and happiness. Wine glasses clinking. One of the biggest joys of being a homeowner is setting your space up for entertaining. Love having friends and family over? Well, there are a few hacks you can easily do to get your space ready for good times ahead.

With the holiday season looming in the not-so-distant future, it's time to get yourself on the nice list. Whether you're looking for the perfect entertaining home or looking to get your existing space ready, US Delta Realty helps you prep for a warm and inviting home setting.

Prime Features to Look For

According to CNBC, home sales in 2020 were the highest they've been in 14 years! People are out there buying, and if you've been looking to make the leap - now may be the right time. When looking for the perfect home or rental, why not keep in mind your entertaining needs? Here are some specific features to look for:

- **Flexible and multifunctional spaces:** For example, an open floor plan lends itself to kitchen space and a seating area.
- **Public/private divide:** Look for homes with a clear distinction between

entertaining spaces and family spaces. For example, all private rooms on the first level, with entertaining spaces on the ground level.

- **Backyard:** If you live in a city with great weather (like Tempe, AZ), a backyard is prime for indoor/outdoor entertaining. For example, you could place a fire pit, jacuzzi, barbeque, or pool for relaxing with your guests!

Worried that these features are going to set you back a pretty penny? To make your search easier, go to a site like Rent.com and select it to filter by price range. This way, you'll only see properties within your budget while accounting for features like bedrooms, bathrooms, and more! The best part is, you won't waste time considering properties that don't have what you're looking for!

Seating All the Way

If you plan to have multiple guests over at a time, flexible seating will be the name of the game. Incorporate elements like ottomans, occasional chairs, and bench seating to host your loved ones. This will provide seating well within reach and prevent last-minute scrambling from making everyone comfortable. Counter stools and folding chairs are other viable options as they offer different seating types for both the indoors and outdoors.

Set the Mood

When creating a space people will enjoy, spend a little money on the small details that will set the mood for your guests. Check out the following easy home fixes:

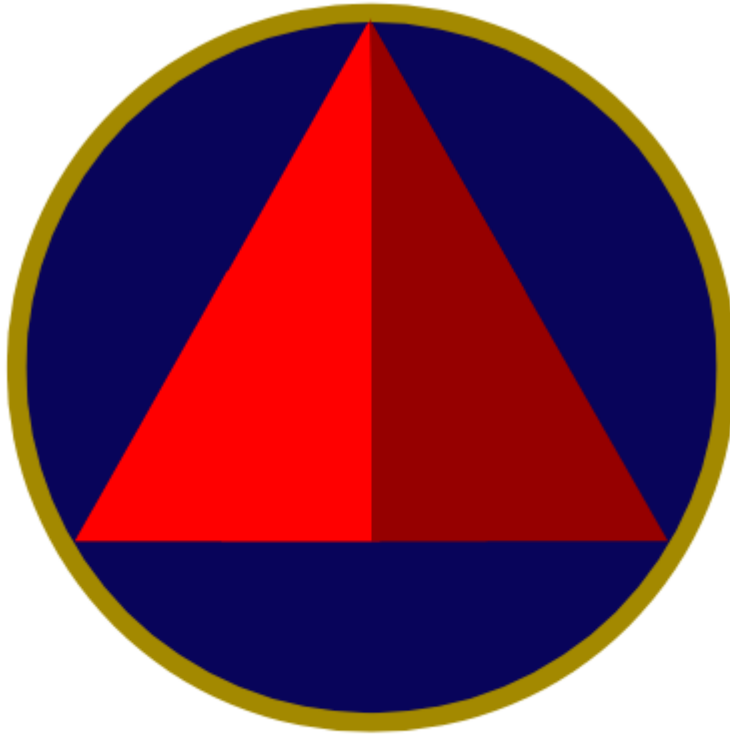
- **Music:** Investing in a quality sound system will set forth the relaxed atmosphere you're going for long before your guests get comfortable! Look for a system that connects rooms inside and outside.
- **Lighting:** According to Elemental LED, it is ideal to have a mix of direct, indirect, and mood lighting with dimmers. This will allow you to control the mood with ease.
- **Storage:** You'll need to have lots of creative storage solutions to house all those platters and serving dishes! It's a bonus if you have a pantry or small spare room to accommodate all your entertaining supplies in one place.

Essentially, you need to be considering every facet of your entertaining journey. This will allow things to go by smoothly, without a hiccup – and your guests will have more fun too!

From holiday parties to game nights and movie specials, entertaining is a big priority for so many homeowners out there. Hosting is the ultimate combination of connection and comfort – and don't forget to infuse your personal style in there as well! We hope this article helps you get started on the lovely soirees you've always dreamed of. Happy hosting!

Looking to buy your dream forever home? At US Delta Realty our objective is to use our knowledge and expertise in helping you achieve your real estate goals. Contact us at chuong@usdeltarealty.com or give us a call at 480-336-8752! Entertaining is made all the more manageable with the perfect home setup.

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US DELTA REALTY

- HOME
- REVIEWED LISTINGS
- BUYERS
- SELLERS
- RESEARCH
 - ASU
 - School Facts
 - Colleges & Campuses
 - Economic Powerhouse
 - Student Tuition & Housing
 - City of Chandler
 - City of Tempe
- ABOUT
- *Vietnamese

Simple Ways to Get Your Home in Great Shape Before a Sale

(This is a guest posting by Alice Robertson. Alice began her career in the home organization industry as a professional house cleaner. After cleaning and organizing her clients' homes for years, she decided to open her own home organization business. Over the years, she has built an impressive client list, helping to make spaces in homes and businesses more functional. She recently created Tidy Home as a place to share the great cleaning and organizing advice she has developed over the years.)

When you make the decision to put your home up for sale, there are so many details to think about that it's easy to become overwhelmed. From planning for moving day to making sure your mail is forwarded to the new address, there are plenty of things to take care of. That's why it's important to make some of the process as easy as you can, as it's already stressful enough. Luckily, when it comes to staging your home and preparing it for the market, there are tons of tricks and tips that will help you get it in shape quickly.

Working with the right agent is a big help because they can tell you the best ways to stage and prep your home for the area you're in. Buyers are different everywhere you go, and they all have different needs when it comes to their dream home. Once you understand what changes need to be made, you'll zip through the staging process in no time at all.

Here are a few tips on how to get your home into shape before you put it on the market.

Get Some Outside Help

It always helps to have an outside eye taking a look at things when you're ready to sell your home; you see your house every day, which makes it hard to identify potential problem areas. Be realistic and honest with yourself about things that need

to be changed, and let your Realtor know that you expect them to point out any issues. They want your home to sell, so it's important that they are able to give you pointers from an objective point of view. Take notes so nothing gets overlooked, as this will help you get your home ready quickly.

Depersonalize

One thing a Realtor may point out is the number of items in your home that are personal, such as family photos, drawings on the fridge, or collections of books or movies. While you may feel these items make your house feel more welcoming, they can be a distraction to potential buyers who want to be able to envision themselves living there. Downsizing them will not only help the buyer, but it will also help make things a little easier for you when it's time to pack. Go through each room and depersonalize as much as possible while still making the areas inviting.

Cut the Clutter

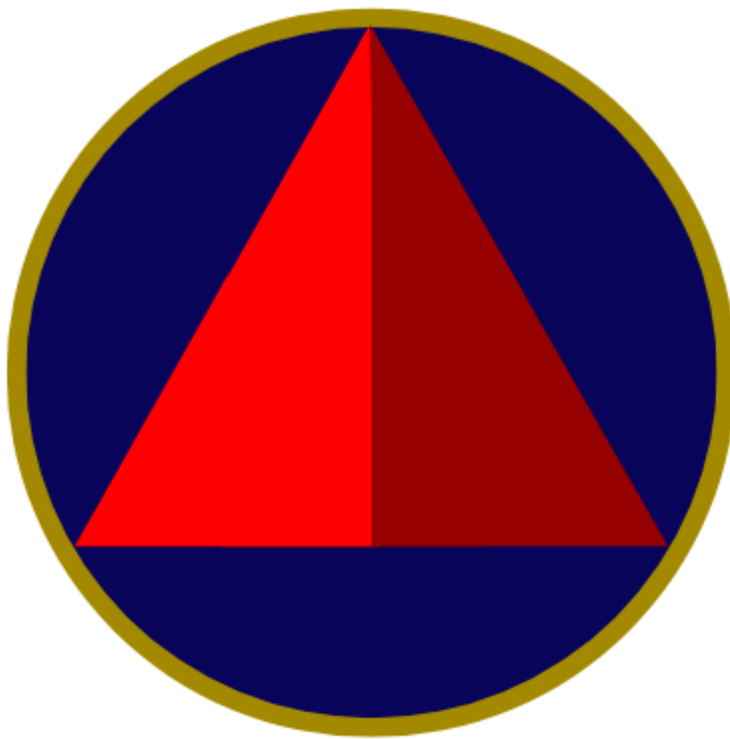
Many people hear the word "clutter" and immediately think of tables stacked high with old magazines, countertops flooded with dishes, and toys on the living room floor. However, clutter comes in many forms. It can show up in closets and drawers rather than open spaces, and it can be found in even the cleanest of homes. Almost everyone has clutter in some form inside their homes, so take a look around the house to see what could be pared down. Keep in mind that potential buyers will open drawers and peek in closets, so you can't forget those areas.

Use Some Design Tricks

Removing a piece of furniture from each room or painting the walls a lighter color will make the spaces appear bigger, and it will also help eliminate distractions for buyers so they can see more of the home. If possible, consider renting a storage space to keep those extra pieces in so you won't have to shove them in the attic or basement — which buyers will also look at. Remember, home staging is important, but don't forget to dust everything off too, especially if you're moving things around.

Getting your home into shape before you put it on the market can take a little time, so make sure you begin as early as possible and ask for help when you need it. By staging your house the right way, you can ensure a quick sale and still get the amount you want from the buyer.

← How to Create the Dream Entertaining Space You've Always Wanted The Assisted Living Transition: Tips to Help You During This Change in Living Arrangement →



US DELTA REALTY

- HOME
- REVIEWED LISTINGS
- BUYERS
- SELLERS
- RESEARCH
 - ASU

- School Facts
- Colleges & Campuses
- Economic Powerhouse
- Student Tuition & Housing
- City of Chandler
- City of Tempe
- ABOUT
- *Vietnamese

Staging Your Home for Sale: How to Make Your House Perfect



Image via Pexels

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When putting your home on the market, it's not as straightforward as simply getting an agent and listing your property. Instead, you need to prepare by decluttering and getting everything ready to stage. Here are some effective strategies to get your house market-ready.

Scope the Area

The best thing you can do to get an accurate picture of how to get started is to investigate other houses on the market in your area. Indeed, checking online listings can let you compare price ranges to find similar homes in your area, and see how they have been staged. By doing so, you can get an idea of where to begin your own process of depersonalizing, decluttering, and making your home look immaculate. Better still, you could ask other agents and homeowners questions you may be unsure of and get a feel of what buyers want and dislike.

Keep Clutter Out

Now that you have a plan in place, it's time to declutter your property. To give yourself a solid start, focus on anything that might be expendable, such as broken goods that have been gathering dust. Next, move on to old clothes and perhaps even presents you only kept out of a sense of obligation. Still, if you are hesitant to let certain things go, keep in mind that many belongings can be moved out of the house for the time being.

Set the Table

It's easy to overlook things like setting the table when staging your house. After all, we're usually concerned with cleanliness and making our properties appear neutral. Thankfully, small touches can make a house feel like a home, without appearing lived-in. When it comes to setting your plates, choose a placement that works for your dining table and furniture, either casual or formal. Of course, even a basic setting can be transformed with a well-folded napkin, so practice different fold types until you find one you love.

Stage the Living Space

Likewise, you want your living spaces to be warm and inviting without having an overwhelming sense of personality. To achieve this, you should first find (or create) a focal point in your living room. This might be any special feature, furniture, or accessories you have available, such as a fireplace, a piece of artwork, or even a large vase with tasteful flowers. A good focal point will not only draw the eye from imperfections, but it will also help create balance. If you have a den in addition to your living room, you'll have to give it a defined sense of purpose — is it an office, a media room, or a library? Once you choose one, you can then determine how to arrange your furniture to see how you can improve the room's flow and movement.

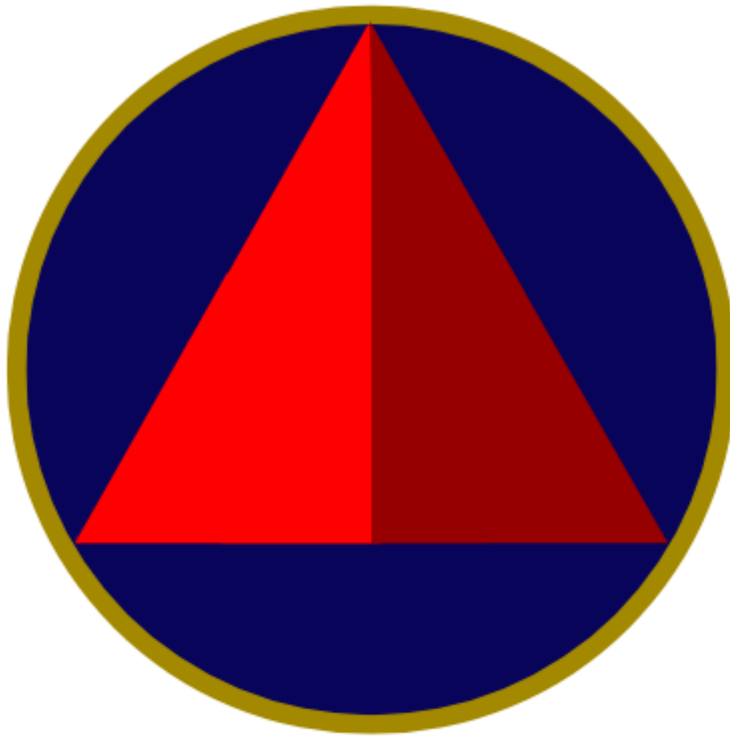
Make the Bed

Last, but just as important, is the bed. You've decluttered your closet and organized your nightstand, but don't overlook how the bed can transform a room. A focal point is necessary here as well, and that often involves the headboard. Of course, if your bed doesn't have one, it can be replicated with a piece of artwork where the headboard would go. For some extra pizzazz, take a few tips from the hotel industry on how to make a bed look polished. This will include ironing your sheets and any duvet covers you use. This will give you crisp edges that make your bedroom appear cleaner and more professional than it otherwise would.

The bulk of the work can be done in a short amount of time. After that, it's just a

matter of maintaining what you've already accomplished. By making your home look clean, tidy, and open, and knowing what others in the area are doing, you stand a better chance of a sale.

← How to Create the Dream Entertaining Space You've Always Wanted The Assisted Living Transition: Tips to Help You During This Change in Living Arrangement →



US DELTA REALTY

- HOME
- REVIEWED LISTINGS
- BUYERS
- SELLERS
- RESEARCH
 - ASU
 - School Facts

- Colleges & Campuses
- Economic Powerhouse
- Student Tuition & Housing
- City of Chandler
- City of Tempe
- ABOUT
- *Vietnamese

Moving in With a Partner for the First Time? Try These Creative Decorating Tips for Couples



Image via Pexels

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business. Over the years, she has built an impressive client list, helping to make spaces in homes and businesses more functional. She recently created Tidy Home as a place to share the great cleaning and organizing advice she has developed over the years.)

While moving in with a significant other is an exciting time in a relationship, you're likely to encounter some challenges along the way—especially as you adjust to sharing a space and getting used to one another's habits. However, one alarming study says that home decor prompts approximately 72 arguments between couples each year! From agreeing on a style and price range to shopping together for a new piece of furniture, decorating your space may be the biggest challenge that you and your partner will face as you settle into your shared home.

To keep the peace as you and your partner begin to decorate your new space, it's important to establish several ground rules. When creating these ground rules, remember to set a budget, choose a color palette to work with, and decide which styles, colors, and furniture pieces are off-limits. These rules will help you and your partner to create a space that you'll both adore.

For some creative tips that will help you and your significant other to decorate a new space in a way that you'll both love, read on!

Mix Your Favorite Materials, Accents and Color Schemes

When decorating a new space with your live-in love, it's important to create a blend of one another's styles—whether it be contemporary, rustic, modern, or feminine. This strategy will balance your space and help you and your partner to feel more content in your shared home. To make this possible, design experts recommend:

- Filling your space with a variety of materials, textiles, patterns, shapes, finishes, and textures.
- Using decorative accents like plants, candles, picture frames and throw pillows to incorporate your favorite color schemes.
- Displaying a bookshelf or cabinet that holds your partner's favorite accessories, books, and decorative accents—even the ones you aren't crazy about.

While your partner may own a certain furniture piece, painting, or decorative accent that you can't stand, the item may grow on you if you keep it around for awhile. According to the experts at HGTV, you shouldn't knock it until you try it! Plus, you may find a creative way of incorporating the undesirable item into your shared space.

Instead of throwing these unwanted items out as soon as you move into your new space, try moving them around from room to room to find ways of blending them in with some of your favorite pieces. If you don't feel like moving bulkier furniture pieces around your new home, however, many home decorating apps are available to simplify this process.

Shop Together to Find Items You'll Both Love

Even if just one of you will be shopping for your new home decor, you and your partner will create a lifelong memory if you do at least some of the shopping together. If you dread the thought of navigating a massive department store with your partner, however, lifestyle retail stores like Crate & Barrel may be better options for you and your love.

Also known as specialty retailers, these lifestyle retail stores sell a wide selection of rugs, vases, curtains, light fixtures, sofas, chairs, and other decorative pieces fit for any home. Crate & Barrel, for instance, sells quality home decor in a wide variety of styles and color schemes—helping you and your partner to meet somewhere in the middle as you design your new space. While shopping at Crate & Barrel can be costly, you can usually find Crate and Barrel coupons and promo codes to help you save on your purchases.

As you and your live-in love begin to decorate your new home together, you'll likely encounter some obstacles along the way. However, these simple tips will help you and your partner to keep your arguments to a minimum and focus on the things that really matter—like the reasons you chose to move in together in the first place.

← How to Create the Dream Entertaining Space You've Always Wanted The Assisted Living Transition: Tips to Help You During This Change in Living Arrangement →
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