

# Affordable Design Tricks to Provide an Upscale Look for Homes

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**We all want our homes to have designer touches like the ones we see in magazines and model homes; unfortunately, those high-end professional looks often come with a high-end price tag. So how can you design a space that looks the part without breaking the bank?**

"It doesn't take a lot of money to transform your space into something extraordinary," says Brenda Dillon, VP of Merchandising. "With a few smart choices and some simple design tricks, it's possible to recreate the magic in your own home -- without spending tens of thousands of dollars."

Here are eight affordable design tricks from Ashley Furniture HomeStore that'll give you the look you want for less:

1. Declutter. No matter how nice a living room, bedroom or kitchen may be, it'll never look good if it's sloppy. Spending a few days overhauling the clutter and organizing your space is one of the easiest ways to give your home a dramatic makeover, at almost no cost. If it's in your budget, consider a professional cleaning service to give every room a once over. If not, encourage (a.k.a. bribe) family members, a relative or a friend to come and help you get the job done.
2. Paint. Nothing lends a fresh, new look to a room more quickly and easily than a coat of paint. Whether it's crisp white or a neutral hue, choose a high-quality, high-pigment paint to create an air of sophistication and affluence to your space. If you have outdated cabinets and can't afford to replace them, a quick coat of paint can do wonders. Don't forget to paint interior doors and trim to get rid of scuff marks and add a crisp, clean look.

3. Be a copy cat. When it comes to furniture, it can be a lot like fashion. While you may not be able to afford the exact designs that the celebrities are donning, chances are you can find some quality items that'll give you nearly the same look. Whether you like contemporary, old world, metro modern, traditional classics, or vintage casual, it's easy to find some inspiration either online, in a magazine, or in a model home and replicate it -- often for a fraction of the cost. (Tip: Invest in one or two designer pieces, like a sofa, art work, or accent chair, and build the room around it.) If your budget is ultra-tight and your couch and chairs have seen better days, consider reupholstering or a good cleaning -- then add a stylish throw or a few toss pillows to cover up imperfections.
  
4. Fix the flooring. Hardwood flooring offers a clean, contemporary look that carpet and tile just can't. While it's a good investment, it's often cost-prohibitive for those on a budget. Smart alternatives can be laminate flooring, engineered hardwood, direct print bamboo, vinyl tiles/planks, or porcelain (wood grain) tile. If any kind of new flooring is out of the question, you still have some options. Consider getting the carpets professionally cleaned or, if you have tile, re-grouting gets rid of unsightly stains and makes it look completely new. Add a new floor rug to tie together a seating or dining area and you're good to go!
  
5. Change out accessories. Whether it's lighting or frames, gold and brass has given way to more subtle and modern looking silver, chrome and brushed nickel. Replacing wall, floor or table lamps, as well as candle holders, and picture/art frames with decorative accessories in newer hues can create a dramatically new look.
  
6. Add crown molding. Relatively inexpensive, and available at home improvement stores everywhere, crown molding adds detail and character to a room, while tying the walls and ceiling together for a rich, finished appearance. (Tip: Choose a wider trim for a more expensive

look.) In the kitchen, consider putting crown molding around the top of the kitchen cabinets to achieve the look of custom cabinetry.

7. Update fixtures. These little extras go a long way in creating a finished, upscale look in your home. While you may be tempted to scrimp on kitchen and bath fixtures... don't. The difference in cost between a medium- and high-quality faucet, for example, may not be much -- but the look and quality is. Since it's something you'll use every day for many years, it's best not to cut corners. When it comes to hardware finishes, however, it's easy and inexpensive to change out the drawer and cabinet pulls in the kitchen and bathrooms... replacing them with more unique pieces. Hardware stores, antique shops or even flea markets are a good place to start.
8. Replace window treatments. The right window treatments let in natural light, while offering privacy; they also can make or break a room. Replacing old or broken blinds and outdated window coverings can instantly spruce up a room. But what about the cost? If you like the idea of curtains, be sure to choose lined fabrics (for an upscale look) and instead of buying them off the rack, pick a style from specialty fabric store and have them help you create a custom look within your budget. If you like a more fitted, sleek look -- roller or roman shades are a simple, stylish, economical solution -- with natural woven shades in bamboo among the hottest new trends. If you can't afford to replace window coverings in the entire house, just do it in the most visible rooms, like the living room, entry way and kitchen.

To learn more about the latest decorating trends, or to browse the hottest new furniture collections and accessories, visit [AshleyFurnitureHomeStore.com](http://www.ashleyfurniturehomestore.com).

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