

# Inside story

## The easy spring refresh (that's mostly free!)

Bored of your own four walls in lockdown? Interiors experts round up their top tricks and buys to elevate every room in your house. By Emma J Page

AS RESTRICTIONS EASE a little on Monday, life is one step closer to returning to normal. But with many of us continuing to spend most of our time at home for a while longer, lockdown interiors fatigue remains

real. Learning to love your home again doesn't necessarily require a full-scale redecoration job, however; with just a few small tweaks to your interiors, you can seriously up the feel-good factor.

### FIND JOY IN ACCESSORIES

Small elements can lift daily rituals. 'Invest in functional objects that are also visually pleasing,' says designer Louise Robinson (louiserobinsoninteriors.com). 'A vintage butter dish, an elegant ceramic soap dispenser or an embroidered tablecloth all help to elevate the everyday.'

Make an event out of morn-

ing tea or coffee by starting a collection of cups, jugs and silverware, and add small touches to the dining table each evening. 'Making an effort with candles, flowers and linens lifts the spirits and turns a meal into an occasion,' says interior designer Laura Stephens (laurastephens.co.uk), who favours linen runners for instant elegance.

#### TOP TABLE

Elegant crockery transforms a meal. Tableware, from £12, Daylesford (daylesford.com)



#### LUXE LINEN

Abigail Ahern piles on texture to make a bedroom feel warm and cocooning



### SWITCH UP YOUR BEDDING

A new bedding set can be all it takes to transform your bedroom into a soothing sanctuary. Designer Abigail Ahern, who has collaborated with Secret Linen Store on a new linen collection in her signature 'bottom of the lake' shades, recommends layering bedding and throws in similar shades but different textures, to add interest without too much to distract the eye. 'Think of texture like a herb or spice - it adds instant pizzazz and helps to create an incredibly grounding, calming and cocooning ambience,' she says. Try a soft linen duvet cover and pillowcases layered with a waffle throw and ruffle-edged cushions. From £21 for a cushion cover, secretlinenstore.com.

#### SOFTEN IT UP

Add decorative touches to the bathroom. Paint, Annie Sloan (anniesloan.com). Similar shower curtain, Linenshed



### COSY UP YOUR KITCHEN AND BATHROOM

Functional spaces like kitchens and bathrooms can benefit from a relaxed approach. Interior designer Lisa Burdus (lisaburdus.com) wanted to add an island to her kitchen, so she repurposed an old kitchen table by placing it on a plinth, painting it light green and fixing a piece of marble to the top.

As for bathrooms, 'Adding furniture, a rug, art and accessories as though it was any other room in the house makes it feel so much warmer,' she says. Shower curtains have also had a style upgrade of late, and help to soften hard surfaces - look for one in waterproof-backed cotton or linen by Linenshed (linenshed.co.uk) or Balineum (balineum.co.uk) to add instant chic.



The kitchen-table island in Lisa Burdus's kitchen

## MOVE YOUR FURNITURE AROUND

It's easy to let months – even years – go by without reappraising the basic furniture layout of your living space. Yet stepping back to assess the bigger picture is a game changer. Most of us favour a triangular arrangement of sofa (often with its back to the wall) and angled occasional chairs, leaving an area of dead space in the centre of the room. But changing this arrangement can provide instant uplift. 'Life isn't static and nor should homes be,' says interior designer Henrietta Holroyd ([henrietta-holroyd.com](http://henrietta-holroyd.com)). 'Avoid being wedded to symmetry – changing the angle of a chair or the orientation of a coffee table can make a difference to how the space feels.' Relaxing areas needn't be confined to the sitting room either – with the addition of an armchair and an angled lamp, a bedroom corner or wide landing can be turned into a cosy reading nook.



A landing used as a seating area in a project by Kitesgrove. Sofa, £850 ([sofa.com](http://sofa.com))



### ALL CHANGE

Turn a cabinet and shelves into a bar area with lighting and a chair. Lamp and wall light, Pooky ([pooky.com](http://pooky.com)). Similar chair, Next ([next.co.uk](http://next.co.uk)). Wallpaper, Wayfair ([wayfair.co.uk](http://wayfair.co.uk))

## UPGRADE YOUR WALLS

Swapping the frame on a piece of art can elevate it, especially if you choose a colour pop, such as red. If you have wall space to fill, you don't have to opt for a painting or print. 'Hang what you like to look at,' advises Louise Robinson. 'I've framed wrapping paper, which looks lovely and costs pennies.' Framing a menu from your favourite restaurant will bring happy memories, and remind you of fun times to come.



**PICTURE THIS**  
Coloured picture frames in a room by Louise Robinson

## RETHINK YOUR LIGHTING

'Don't feel limited by not having the wiring to instal wall lights,' says interior designer Kim Stephen ([kimstephen.com](http://kimstephen.com)). 'Many now come with cords and plugs, and running the wire down to the nearest socket can look charming, especially if you change the flex to something decorative.' Brands such as House Doctor ([housedoctor.com](http://housedoctor.com)) and Garden Trading ([gardentrading.co.uk](http://gardentrading.co.uk)) offer contemporary-style lamps, and Dowsing & Reynolds ([dowsingandreynolds.com](http://dowsingandreynolds.com)) has an affordable selection of braided cable flexes. Simply changing the shade on a lamp will also give it new life.



Wall light, Garden Trading



**TIDY IN STYLE**  
A tray by Jeffrey Billhuber for The Lacquer Company

## REORDER YOUR CLUTTER

Trays help to contain mess, and lift functional items. 'Zoning surface areas helps to maintain a sense of order, especially in open-plan layouts,' says Kitesgrove's Clara Ewart ([kitesgrove.com](http://kitesgrove.com)). 'Try The Lacquer Company's gloss trays, which can add sophistication to a home bar, hold desk accessories or make a feature of a beautiful lamp [[thelacquercompany.com](http://thelacquercompany.com)].' For kitchen condiments and bathroom acces-

sories, West Elm sells chic marble trays ([westelm.co.uk](http://westelm.co.uk)). Sometimes it's a case of switching up what's already there. Take a tip from filmmaker Nancy Meyers (known for the drool-worthy interiors of her films, including *The Holiday*). 'I decided to keep most of my coffee table books open,' she posted recently on Instagram. 'Why did it take a pandemic to [make me] realise how nice this is?'

# NEW SEASON PICK-ME-UPS

Treat yourself to a little spring cheer



**Small scallop tote planter,**  
£36, Matilda Goad  
(matildagoad.com)

HANDMADE  
AND PAINTED



**Galley Birdseye  
blue side plate,**  
£10, Daylesford  
(daylesford.com)



**By Design: The World's  
Best Contemporary  
Interior Designers,**  
£49.95, Phaidon  
(whsmith.co.uk)



**Ton armchair,**  
from £293, Nunido  
(nunido.co.uk)



**Round scalloped  
place mats,**  
£28 each, Edition 94  
(theedition94.com)



**Kubu breakfast tray,**  
£100, The White Company  
(thewhitecompany.com)



**Ceramic jug,**  
£55, Raawii  
(yoox.com)



**Globe plug-in wall light,**  
£79.99, Homary  
(homary.com)

CHEER UP  
BREAKFAST



**Egg-cup plate,**  
£27, Matilda Goad  
(as before)



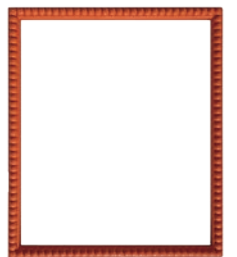
**Indian paper lampshade,**  
£83, Rosi de Ruig  
(rosi-de-ruig.myshopify.com)



**Cement soap dispenser,**  
£30, Cox & Cox  
(coxandcox.co.uk)



**Aurora footstool,**  
£390, Ceraudo  
(ceraudo.com)



**Bobbin frame,**  
(available in nine colours),  
£115, Etalage  
(etalage.co.uk)



**Seaspray laundry basket,**  
£65, Braided Rug Company  
(braided-rug.co.uk)



**Hibiscus coffee  
cup and saucer,**  
£40, Burleigh  
(burleigh.co.uk)



**Twisted candle,**  
£13.50 for one, Wax Atelier  
(waxatelier.com)

REVERSIBLE



**Flatweave runner,**  
£75, Habitat  
(habitat.co.uk)