

Decorating in a Downturn
Debbie Wiener www.slobproof.com

Yes, the economy sucks! But even a small decorating budget can yield big results, making your home look brighter, spacious and stylish.

1. **Paint It!** Use paint to make even empty, unfurnished rooms feel warmer and older room designs seem fresher. Yes, you can! In one week end, paint your ceilings in a pale sky blue, add color around your white fireplace, stripe your crown moulding with color pulled from the furniture and accent one wall in a white room with your favorite color. Freshen up areas showing the signs of wear and tear with a new coat of paint. A scrubbable finish, like Benjamin Moore's *Aura* provides one-coat coverage with very low odor. It's a perfect choice for winter re-decorating when it's too cold to open the windows. Need color inspiration? Check out the crown moldings, fireplaces and accent walls featured in my book, "Slob Proof! Real Life Design Solutions" from Penguin.
2. **Curtain Calls!** Give new life to older curtains that you can't yet replace. Buy colorful tie backs and decorative trim at your local fabric store. You can add tapes, scalloped edges and tassel trims to the inside or "lead" edges to make plain curtains look new again and "pop" with color and style. My favorite on-line trim source? www.mjtrim.com. Got too much on your window? Take down curtains leaving sheers or simple blinds to allow more light and spaciousness into your room.
3. **Follow the three R's!** Re-mat, re-frame and re-arrange your art and photos to update wall and table top displays. Replace white and off-white mattings with something fresh and colorful- grass green, pumpkin orange or periwinkle blue. Try a few new frames to give new life to your photos. Check out the assortment at www.exposures.com
4. **Toss It!** If you can't afford to change the sofa and chairs, change your toss pillows! Soft, down-filled pillows in unexpected patterns and colors will make the seating look new and feel luxurious. My favorite sources include www.blissstudio.com and www.companyc.com.
5. **Light it Up!** Nothing makes modest rooms look impressive like good lighting. Start by lighting up room perimeters to make small spaces look large and dramatic. Inexpensive canister up-lighting, purchased in home stores, fits in floor plants and behind furniture to add Hollywood style accent lighting along room walls. Battery-operated flameless votive candles use LED bulbs for realistic and long-lasting candle light that's perfect in groupings. Add them down the middle of a long dining table, along a fireplace mantel or on shelving for soft, zen-like room lighting. Upgrade the standard bulbs in your recessed lights and lamps to halogen and ensure you're getting the brightest, whitest light possible from your existing fixtures.
6. **Wite it out!** Keep the correction fluid "Wite Out" on hand for quick corrections to white cabinetry, doors, wood trim and even white tile grout! It quickly covers flaws, dings and damage until you have the time to re-paint. Got scratches on painted furniture and walls? Sharpie permanent ink markers come in dozens of colors and can be used to camouflage marks on furniture legs, walls, picture frames...just about anything in color.
7. **Do the Flip!** Rotate sofa cushions to hide wear and tear and to extend the life of your seating. Got a spot on that seat cushion? Turn it over and keep the clean side up when company comes. Rotate your area rug to extend its life span and even out the wear and tear. You may even be able to hide spots and stains under furniture with this simple move.

Debbie Wiener is an interior designer in Silver Spring, MD and head matriarch of a house full of slob. She's also the author of the top selling book, "Slob Proof! Real life Design Solutions" from Penguin Press. You can send Debbie your designing dilemmas by visiting her website- www.slobproof.com