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## Decorating The New Space

By Senitra Horbrook

When it comes to decorating a newer, smaller home, finding what works for you is more important than spending a lot of money to recreate all the latest trends.

“Utilize what you already own. Once in the space, make a list of things you might need and shop for those things,” said Holly Williams, owner of Inviting Interiors in Cherry Hill, NJ. “By adding color, window treatments, plants, and a few new accessories, you’ll create a cozy feeling in a new space and make yourself at home.”

The first step toward decorating your new home actually happens before you move out of your old home. “When people have lived in a home for a very long time, they will have way more belongings than will fit into the next space. They need to take a realistic look at their current belongings and assess what will and will not work in the new space,” said Williams, who helps seniors downsize and decorate a new home. Start by separating what absolutely does not have to go to the new house and donate those items. Memorable keepsakes like family pictures, quilts, and memorabilia collected through the years are important to keep. If you’re computer savvy, you can sell things on Craigslist.org, which Williams says is better than eBay because it’s local and no shipping is necessary. People can come by and pick up whatever they buy from Craigslist.

Once an entire home full of belongings has been whittled down enough for a smaller space, furniture placement is one of the most important factors to consider. Ideally, you should take accurate measurements of the room to make sure your belongings will fit in the new space. Remember that traffic patterns should be kept open. “Whenever you come into the home, there shouldn’t be obstacles in your way, especially for older people,” Williams said. “It takes awhile to get acclimated to a new place.”

Decorator Teresa Tocco, of Absolute Living Today in Mount Laurel, NJ said that one of the most common issues for seniors decorating a new home is figuring out the floorplan. She suggested finding a focal point in a room – for example, the television, the fireplace or a painting. “How do you want to use the space functionally?” she said. “For an entertainment area, the TV is the focal point. Other times, the fireplace is the focal point. As a decorator, I pull that out of them – what they want to use the room for.”

Williams said that the least expensive thing you can do that has the biggest impact is painting. “One of the easiest ways to take a space that is all white walls and make it your own is by choosing colors you love and applying it to the wall,” she said.

Painting a room with warm colors or earth tones like tan, brown, blue or green can create a sense of peaceful well-being. “Everyone generally relates to those colors. They typically work with most people’s belongings as

well as adding to a space for very little money,” she said.

Williams suggests seniors keep lighter colors on the walls because some seniors have declining eyesight. “Lighter colors reflect light,” she said. “Even on a dark day, the space will be cheerful.”

Since most downsizers are bringing a houseful of furniture, many decorators suggest buying only a few new items. “I always encourage people to get new linens when they move. It’s part of the “freshen up” mentality. If you bring all of your old stuff, you won’t feel like you’re in a new place,” Williams said. “Donate the old and purchase new bedding, bath towels, and kitchen towels. It creates a feeling of ‘Ok, this is my new home’ and that you are resettled. Change can be invigorating. People need change and a lot of time people will keep the same old bedding forever.”

Williams also recommends buying new window treatments or plants – real or faux. “A lot of people like to take care of real plants, especially older people,” she said. “Plants bring life into the space.”

When it comes to window treatments, natural woven shades are not that expensive compared to custom drapery, according to Tocco. Wood blinds or roller shades are less expensive options for window treatments.

Tocco is not a big fan of slipcovers, but says they can be good if you don’t have the money to reupholster. She also suggests new area rugs, throw pillows, blankets, paintings, and picture frames. “People have a tendency to want photos. There’re neat frames out there today – wire, art deco, traditional,” she said. “You can create a nice design on the wall, using wall space instead of tables.”

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