

SPRING CLEANING

Does your home need streamlining? Design pro Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz shows sleek ways to redecorate, renew and reorganize the rooms you use most

Use the same shade to tie together different lamps visually (you can vary the sizes, but keep the shapes the same).

Remove a piece of art and leave a wall luxuriously empty for a while; you can always bring the piece back later.

Flowers add life to a room, but avoid messy mixes by keeping the bunches simple, low and monochromatic.

Add texture to make a single-color palette interesting: a plush rug, velvet floor pillow or chenille throw.

after

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LIVING ROOM One easy way to make a room look more polished is to use similar colors throughout. Here, a range of pretty pinks—from pale powder to deep coral—pulls the living room together. "The new palette eliminates the visual clutter of different colors and patterns," says Noriega-Ortiz.

While the room below is certainly cozy—and uses sophisticated furniture arranged in a smart way—the mix of colors, bold patterns and bitty storage containers conspire to make it feel a little jumbled. The plan by Noriega-Ortiz for creating a more integrated space (opposite): Introduce a simplified palette.

He first slipcovered the charcoal-gray sofa in cream canvas and reupholstered the zebra-print lounge chair with a neutral nubby linen. He scat-

tered cream and pink pillows on the sofa as well as the floor, and he replaced the Oriental rug with a coral woolen one.

Instead of the dark wood coffee table, the designer chose a new one with soft lines in a light wood that doesn't contrast as sharply with the wood floors. The mahogany tray table was similarly swapped for a white Lucite cube, which cleverly creates a wealth of storage space to stash magazines and books (right).



QUICK FIXES Instead of slipcovering or reupholstering all of your furniture, choose the piece that will make the most impact (usually a sofa). Or target the accessories: Re-cover different-colored pillows in the same tonal range; drape throws in the same hues on furniture (one per piece, please). Add matching storage boxes to coffee- or side-table shelves so magazines can be tucked out of view. Swap vases and other decorative items in a range of colors and materials for a few in one color (whites and creams always work well).



before

produced by Jacqueline Goewey photographed by Michael Luppino



A television that fits its niche exactly gives a more finished look and eliminates "stash space" on the sides.

Often-used office supplies are easy to grab when placed in the pockets of a hanging see-through organizer.

Remotes are stored in a box on the Lucite table; underneath, an acrylic-and-chrome rack keeps magazines out of the way but still within reach.

after



The new sleekly styled sofa (below) seats three people and is only four inches longer than the original roll-arm two-seater.

TV ROOM/HOME OFFICE This is the place where we watch movies, pay bills, wind down—and where stuff piles up. Here, smartly proportioned, unfussy pieces spiff up a multiuse area.

Sure, the room below had potential. With a sleek wall of cabinets and a handy built-in office area, it provided plenty of storage. But a clashing mix of oversize furniture pieces made the room feel small. Noriega-Ortiz's fix? Replace the furniture.

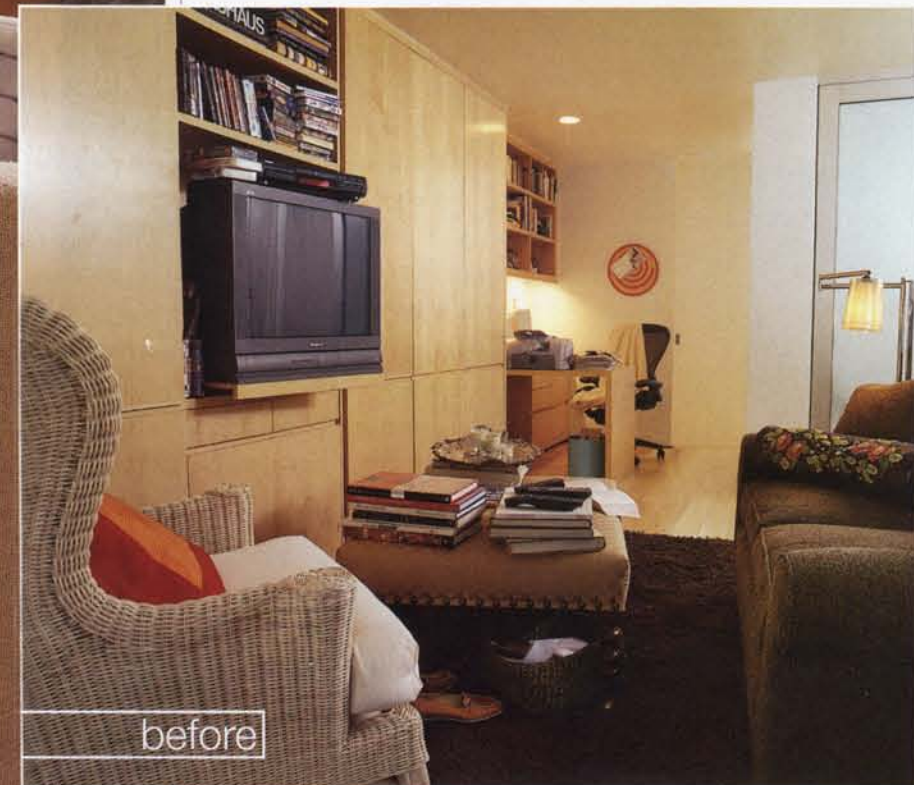
Instead of the original sofa, a curvy two-seater, the designer found one with more modern lines that holds three. The wicker wing chair didn't mesh well with the other pieces (proving that outdoor furniture doesn't work in just any indoor space), so he went with a low-slung art deco-style easy chair covered in a gray mohair that

complements the sofa fabric. The original ottoman that was used as a coffee table invited clutter. (Another design trend that can go awry: Ottomans are multifunctional but also bulky space-eaters.) Not so a streamlined Lucite table. Finally, Noriega-Ortiz switched the thick chocolate shag rug for a brightly hued flat-weave one.

In the office area (right), a smaller Lucite swivel chair subbed for the oversize one. A bulky computer monitor vanished in favor of a trim style, and desk clutter was reorganized inside a series of shelf-size storage boxes.



Videos and DVDs are now organized and hidden from view using stackable boxes in a cabinet below the TV.



before

QUICK FIXES If you don't want to get rid of a dark, bulky sofa, simplify it: Tossing on some throw pillows is an easy update, or try covering only the seat and back cushions in a lighter fabric to minimize the expanse of dark upholstery (wrap cushions tightly with a medium-weight fabric; pin firmly in the back). Organize the ottoman: Hide books and magazines in low baskets underneath, and add a tray or covered box on top to hold remotes. And consider removing the carpet for the warm months; the bare wood floor will make the room feel larger and less busy.

For product information see page 460.



A new lamp takes up less table surface than the broader-based mirrored-glass one.

A sturdy storage cube seats only one but has less room for clutter to gather—and it holds rain boots.

after



before

FOYER It's the first place you see—and the last. To organize this high-traffic area that tends to accumulate odds and ends, the key is concealment: Stash the stuff. Get it away and out of sight.

The first change Noriega-Ortiz made here: using a chest of drawers (above, left) instead of the original console table (above). "A piece with storage is more useful, and one without legs looks more streamlined," the designer explains. The dresser holds typical entryway stuff (gloves, sunglasses, scarves, etc.) and is also used to store handbags.

A tray on top of the dresser neatly organizes daily-life detritus (mail, money, cell phone); a small mirror behind it is a useful

addition and not as overwhelming as the original artwork.

In keeping with the idea of concealing, Noriega-Ortiz nixed a clear glass umbrella holder that showcased its vares (here's one place where a clear material doesn't help) and chose a ceramic stand that hides them. The patterned rug became a smaller striped runner that makes the space seem bigger.

Finally, the designer tamed the original exuberant flower arrangement ("a typical sight in entrance areas," he notes). ■



Arranged from small drawers (top) to large: a few grab-and-go items, such as sunglasses and scarves, then purses and totes.

QUICK FIXES Instead of replacing both the console and the footed bench, swap the bench for a storage piece that will also work as a place to sit (search for a simple chest or trunk, with or without a cushioned top). Create compartments inside the chest with storage boxes so you can stash boots, bags, scarves and wraps separately. On top of the console, add a narrow tray to hold keys, dog leashes and other items.

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