

Six easy ways to get an Easter home makeover

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Barbara Chandler says take your house down the catwalk during the Easter break, dressing it in the fashion colours of the season — the latest paints and fabrics will make the task easy



(Pretty cushions (£30 to £80) and Jane Churchill Mayflower curtain fabric (£49 a metre) from John Lewis)

More Londoners are tackling DIY than ever. “Yes, we’re now a DIY nation,” confirms Katherine Paterson, marketing director of B&Q, whose campaign to “skill-up Britain” offers in-store workshops and demos.

So with a four-day weekend ahead and no one going anywhere if weather predictions are correct, use your time to give your home a spring makeover. You don’t need to be an expert: with today’s clever products, DIY is not difficult.

1 Take your house down the catwalk and dress it in the fashion colours of the season — pastels and vintage flower patterns. Or go for the brights — turquoise, lime and pink.

Take down heavy winter curtains, send them to the cleaners and put up lightweight curtains, or pastel or white blinds (John Lewis and Ikea have charming voile panels, with no-sew hemming tape to adjust for length).

Scatter with flowery cushions or buy a flowery upholstered chair (Next does one for £375).

2 Paint is the great transformer. Supermarket own-brands in fashion colours cost about £16 -£17 for a 2.5-litre can). But a “designer” paint brand will cost £30 or more. [Farrow & Ball](#), for example, has eight London branches, as does [Fired Earth](#).

Buy the right paints for the right room. Special kitchen paints resist steam and grease, and ones for bathrooms are mould-resistant. Extra-tough paints (such as Dulux Endurance) withstand heavy wear, while Dulux Light and Space paint reflects light.

“Magic” paints (a little scarily) make painting white on to white easier — it goes on as pink and then fades from pink to white within an hour. Explore unusual finishes — Crown’s Suede and Metallic range is particularly intriguing.



(Paint rusty metal with Hammerite’s Direct to Rust paint)

3 Paste-the-wall patterns have revolutionised wallpaper hanging — no more pasting tables or stepping on wet wallpaper. Prices start at about £20 a roll. Allow two rolls for a feature wall, and about eight rolls for the whole of an average room.

Stay in fashion with dusky damask, fresh florals and textured neutrals. Paper all four walls of a small room. A grander room can take a feature wall — the chimney breast, say, or the wall behind a bed.

4 Tiles. Use specialist paint to cover ugly tiles — International One Coat Tile Paint from www.international-paints.co.uk, for example. First clean the old tiles with hot water and a mild detergent, rinsing well, use masking tape over the grouting and then clean up the grouting with a grout pen.

5 Restore garden decking with a decking cleaner (brands include Ronseal and Cuprinol).

All you have to do is brush it on and leave it to work. Ronseal Stripping Gel will remove old finishes, and Cuprinol Decking Restorer will put the colour back into grey wood within 15 minutes. Finish with Decking Oil for a protective natural finish, or apply Decking Stain for a richer colour.

The Cuprinol Power Pad is a useful tool for applying stain finishes easily with a little bit of effort.



(Freshen faded decking with Ronseal's Decking Oil — brush it on and leave)

6 Give old furniture a new paint finish. Use two coats of gloss or matt paint for older wooden pieces. If you'd rather shop, Kevin Naylor paints original pieces beautifully (the coffee table on our front page is £330; www.kevinnayler.co.uk/hand-painted-furniture).

Plastikote has made its spray cans easier and cleaner to use (www.plastikote.com); Cuprinol has a new outdoor paint in 16 fashion shades (www.cuprinol.co.uk). You can even paint on to rusty metal using Hammerite's Direct to Rust Paint.

Paint rooms with a smartphone

Websites, apps and social media make DIY easier. More than a third of us upload our pictures of DIY success to Twitter or Facebook. Just launched is B&Q's own YouTube channel.

The updated Dulux Let's Colour Studio app is free. On your phone, snap a favourite shade, and then get colours to complete your scheme. Or go online to use the Dulux Mouse Painter to colour in an uploaded digital picture of your room. Visit www.dulux.co.uk

Find painting hints and videos, plus ready-made colour schemes, on www.crownpaint.co.uk

Don't miss the best DIY deals

B&Q is doing buy one, get one free offers on lighting and wallpapers, plus "three for two" on indoor and outdoor paints, and 15 per cent off selected power tools. Fired Earth has a buy one, get one half-price offer on all paints and wallpapers. Wickes has 25 per cent off colour emulsions, this weekend and next; also 25 per cent off tiles, decking and hardwood interior doors until April 16. Visit www.wickes.co.uk

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