

Published February 5th, 2020

## Design tips to shoo away winter blues

By Amanda Eck



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The chilly air and overcast skies can dampen our spirits, but using a few tried and true design tips can help enhance our homes and chase away the winter blues. Bringing in pops of color and shimmering light are just a few ideas that pack a punch. Here are my five go-to's to brighten these often dreary days:

1) Pillows/Throws: Switching up accent pillows on sofas and beds are great ways to add a pop of color during the darker winter months. They are also a budget friendly way to update your space. Some of my favorite sources for pillows are: Etsy, Little Design Co. (<https://www.shoplittledesignco.com>), Arianna Belle (<https://ariannabelle.com>) and for a great local resource Linen & Cloth (<https://linenandcloth.com>). Along with new pillows try adding a colorful throw blanket at the end of your bed or on the arm of your favorite chair.

2) Layer Art: While I love a great gallery style wall, there is something about leaning and layering art that brings depth and interest. Leaning your wall decor provides a great deal of flexibility in your design since you can easily change or move it. It also minimizes damage to your walls, which is great if you are renting. Great places to layer your art are on entry tables, fireplace mantles, and bedside nightstands. And don't be afraid to mix art pieces with a framed mirror. Which brings me to the next tip:

3) Mirrors: Mirrors are great for brightening up a room and making the space feel larger. Before you hang a mirror take into account what is across from it. I reached out to our local Feng Shui expert, Michele Duffy, and she had this to say: "Mirrors are the heavy lifters in Feng Shui and are affectionately called the `aspirin' of Feng Shui. Sparkly clean mirrors are recommended opposite windows to bring more light into a space, placed in a dining room to reflect and amplify the abundance of happy meals with friends and family, or to create more spaciousness in a tight space like a foyer."

4) Natural elements: I know I have said it before, but there is nothing better than a bouquet of fresh flowers to help brighten up a space. I also love to go out into my yard and cut branches from my trees or shrubs to bring in some green on those dreary cloudy days. And don't underestimate the lure of a bowl of fresh fruit. Placing a bowl of green apples on your coffee table not only adds a pop of color but it encourages a healthy snack when watching television.

5) Candles: Smells play an important part of our psychological makeup. Scent can affect our memory, our emotions, and even how productive we are. I am a professed candle-holic; ask my family, there is always a candle or two lit when I am at home. When my kids' friends come over they always comment on how good our house smells. One of my son's friends even begged his mom to buy him a candle so his house could smell like the Eck's house. I like to change up the scents with the seasons. I am currently burning a winter scent called Fir & Grapefruit. And if having lit candles make you nervous due to small children or for health reasons, try using a diffuser with essential oils. Or put some cinnamon sticks and orange peel in a pot of water and boil it on the stove; that was my mother's go-to when we were little. She also loved to put on a pot of fresh coffee right before company came over.

I hope these little tips give you some inspiration to drive away the winter blues in your own home. Until next time friends!



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As the Owner and Principal Designer of Lamorinda-based Amanda Carol Interiors, Amanda Eck believes your home's interior should be both approachable and well- appointed. She often asserts, "Beauty is a necessity." With a distinct sense of style that mixes contemporary and classic design she fashions spaces that are both elegant and inviting. Her design aesthetic is inspired by anything visual but especially fashion, architecture and art. Visit <http://amandacarolinteriors.com> for more design ideas.

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