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Room for Improvement

by Leah Scott

IF MOTHER is shaking her head over the worn spot on the carpet and wondering what to do about Dad's easy chair, (it was ready for the attic years ago and he won't give it up) she'll be waiting for you to come home spring vacation all steamed up with some new ideas. Don't disappoint her, for there are any number of things that you can do to regenerate comfort, beauty, simplicity and hospitality into a "worse for wear" living room or house.

COLOR

Color is used more now than ever before and in rich full tones. The pale languid tints are out, in favor of clear hues and deep shades. White is one of the most modern neutrals used by decorators, and it combines well with bright accents. The general trend is for fewer colors and plain surfaces with attention focusing on textures and weaves. Slip covers lend variety in this way as well as add life to old furniture.

Such colors as dark and violet blue, olive green, gray, brown, red violet, gold and chartreuse are found in the modern rooms and may be varied to fit the period styles. Here are five general rules that may help in choosing and combining colors:

1. Cool colors need warm accents and warm colors need cool accents. Either warm or cool colors should predominate in a color scheme.
2. A color scheme is helped by the use of a neutral.
3. Colors with a hue in common combine well.
4. Warm colors should be light and cool colors dark when used together.
5. The colors at the top of the color wheel should be kept lighter than those at the bottom; e. g. the violet in a scheme is always the darkest color, yellow is always the lightest.

FURNITURE

Classical modern creations are the latest designs in the furniture kingdom. The curved lines of Greek and Roman days have been used to soften the stern, straight, massive lines of the modern era. These pieces will combine well with most of the period styles you might have and lend a graceful, cultural atmosphere to any room.

Some of the combination pieces are good with modern furniture. There are single chairs that may be pushed together to form a sofa or separated for individual use. Many of these combine



with a corner chair to make a seat with a right angle. Tables, book shelves and chests of drawers also come in sets to be combined in various ways, thus escaping the monotony of one shape and allowing for original arrangements. In whatever you select make sure it conforms to such principles of good design as simplicity, unity and balance and that it harmonizes with the furniture with which it is to be used. Look for the label to see what material is used in producing the article, and examine the joints where two sides meet to make sure that locked joining is used.

WALL COVERING

Paint or paper, take your choice! After all personal preference makes a room express your personality. In any case the walls are the background and large figures or brilliant colors bring them into prominence and often make the room seem smaller. The size of the room then might determine the wall treatment. For very light rooms, dark walls may be used, but in most cases the lighter tones are easier to work with.

Modern arrangements use fewer colors in the scheme and the walls are usually

of a plain color or with a small design. A few carefully-chosen pictures used for decoration are more effective than many. Groups of pictures hung at eye-level and in relation to a furniture group add interest and individuality to the room. If you have decided to follow the Williamsburg trend and use large medallioned wall paper, don't ruin the effect by dotting pictures over an already decorated surface.

FLOOR COVERING

Again fit the type to the room. Braided or hooked scatter rugs are appropriate for the simple period or early American room while a plain colored rug or broadloom carpeting is more appropriate for the modern plan. At one time the plain rug was in disfavor because it revealed foot prints. The new rough textures and deep pile have overcome that difficulty. However, as one decorator said, "we'd rather see footprints than roses."

Another new feature about broadloom carpeting is the sealex type which is a boon to the moving housewife. Carpet the present floor from wall to wall. When a different house becomes home, simply cut off from the "too long" side and stick on to the "too short" side and have a floor covering that looks as if it belonged. "Personalized floors" are sponsored by a commercial linoleum company. This plan allows the individual to design his own rug by using inserts and borders.

ACCESSORIES

Lamps, books, pictures and bric-a-brac must be thought of as definite parts of the design and atmosphere of a room. Consider shape, size, proportion and balance when making selections and arrangements. Pottery and china are once again accepted for informal arrangement on shelves and tables. Group a few simple pieces.

Lamps these days can be both serviceable and beautiful. After shape and color have been decided upon, look to the shade. An efficient reading lamp shade has a white lining, is wide at the bottom and open at the top, and is thick enough and low enough so that the wires of the light cannot be seen through or under the shade.

The books in a room are usually the favorites of the owner. If a book's cover clashes with the room's color scheme, a neat paper or leather cover will make it harmonious with the surroundings.