



# MOVE-IN READY

Serious upgrades that don't take serious construction

By Yanic Simard

**WANT TO ELEVATE** your condo look without having to spend a week living in a hotel — or living in a construction zone? I've put together some of my top tips for giving your home a major boost without tearing open the walls, for a big decor upgrade at any time.

## Area Rugs

» Don't want to commit to wallpaper? This is where a large area rug comes in to add that sense of richness and texture in a big way. Even if you have beautiful hardwood floors, a large rug adds a layer of new texture (and optionally a pop of colour) while defining a seating or dining area, with a softness that adds

a sense of "home." When it's time for change, roll up the rug and place it in a new space, or resell it as vintage.

» Size your rug to tuck fully under the furniture. For biggest impact run a custom sized rug from almost wall to wall in one area, leaving a 12-18-inch border of exposed floor. A custom cut plain (solid colour) carpet can achieve this look without breaking the budget.

## Wallpaper Murals

» Another way to add the feeling of wallpaper without all the labour is to use a single roll of paper and hang it poster style across one accent wall (for the casual sophistication of a Paris apartment), or cut it to fill



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oversized gallery frames.

» Using a grid of 10, 20-by-20 in. frames, you can fill an area over three ft. tall and 8 in. wide, perfect for livening up a wall in the sitting area or a hallway.

## Layered Lighting

» No amount of pot lights in the ceiling can provide enough even lighting to unlock your space's full potential. Plug-in sconces with beautiful cords are perfect for flanking



a sofa or cabinet, and will help balance the heavy furniture piece with some extra light.

» Try a long swing-arm sconce to add light over harder to reach places, like on a compact desk or over a favourite reading chair.

### Headboards

» Upgrading to an oversized, upholstered headboard can really fill in the look of a bedroom space, especially if you choose an extra tall style to give some play of heights. Many companies supply standalone headboards that can be attached to any bed, so you can make this upgrade without changing your existing frame and mattress.

» Choose an oatmeal beige to subtly contrast white walls, or use a royal blue for a restful pop of colour (and leave the sheets clean and white).

### Regal Mouldings

» Whenever possible now I usually

install extra deep baseboard (8 in. plus) in homes to give a high-end European look. You can upgrade just your baseboards to give your walls a new look, or for an even easier solution simply add an extra strip of moulding above the top of your baseboards to stretch the existing a little taller.

» Also consider adding crown moulding, especially in places like ceiling coves or windowless bathrooms. It finishes the ceiling in a stately way that lends a sense of history.

### Mixed Textures

» Perfectly matched furniture can be pleasant, but sometimes lack in personality. Mixing different materials and textures gives a sense of energy, so try contrasting opposites, like warm wood versus sleek mirror, or crisp stainless steel against antiqued bronze, and mix different fabrics like leather and wool for different hand-feels.

» A sofa with two chairs is a classic seating configuration, but there's no rule that says the chairs have to be the same. Try a low lounge for when you feel like sinking in, and a more formal upright seat for reading or conversation — mixing periods and silhouettes will give your home a little edge.

### Flowers

» A vase of fresh flowers isn't only for magazine shoots — a few blossoms can add life to your space. One of my favourite clients would keep vivid carnation blossoms in bud vases and this simple touch gave a sense of care to her entire home.

» In the bathroom blooms are extra-unexpected; add a live tropical orchid to your vanity or perched on a stool next to the shower/tub.

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