



PRESS HOME



A fresh coat of paint is the quickest way to bring change to a living space after becoming single. (Getty Images)

UNSPOUSING YOUR HOUSE

PURGE, REDECORATE, AND BRING IN LIGHT, LAUGHTER, AND JOY

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Saying adios to a significant other is no easy task.

Unspousing one's space and making the adjustment from cohabitating to living alone — after a divorce, breakup, or someone's passing — takes hefty doses of courage.

"Clearing the clutter is both liberating and empowering," says designer Tonia Omeltchenko of Fox + Chenko Interiors, an award-winning firm based on Long Island. "You are essentially taking control of your life and allowing yourself to facilitate positive change."

She and her design partner Jen Fox offer suggestions for creating a space that reflects the new you

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LIGHTEN UP AND START FRESH!

They start with tips for women.

"Show off your signature style to create a feminine home," she says. "Have fun with gorgeous color and a mix of patterns in luscious fabrics such as velvet, linen, or silk on your furnishings, walls, and window treatments. Look for graceful furniture silhouettes, in materials of mirrored finishes, custom metallics, and specialty woods."

For guys, it's time to make a masculine statement.

"Choose furnishings of rich materials such as leather, shagreen, or stone," Omeltchenko suggests. "Shake up a traditional seating area by centering recliners around a cocktail table. Consider a live edge table in a beautiful wood to impart a modern organic feel."

They also suggest choosing strong colors and bold patterns to personalize the bedroom.

The master suite is where the design budget for luxury items should ideally be spent," Omeltchenko says. "High thread-count sheets, sumptuous pillows and bedding, beautifully layered window treatments, and soft adjustable lighting are both soothing and exciting. So, whether one is looking for self-healing or ready to move on to another relationship, they'll be ready for any eventuality!"

THE JOURNEY

Life's not about the destination, it's about the journey, the saying goes. Same goes for design.



Becoming single is an opportunity to personalize your living space. (Getty Images)

furniture. Paint fresh colors on walls for an instant change.

"Consider purchasing some key furnishings to update your look," Omeltchenko suggests. "A modern sectional sofa offers plenty of seating and can replace a more traditional configuration with a sofa and chairs. Custom window treatments perfectly finish your rooms and add a special sense of style."

Keep spaces bright and airy and

in their room. Be sure to include familiar toys and belongings. Involve your child so they have a say in selecting any new bedding or furnishings.

THE EX FACTOR

A breakup can be an incredibly painful experience.

"Having reminders of your ex-partner around your living space is likely to prolong this period of grief," says Marisa T. Cohen, Ph.D., a local relationship coach and educator.

She suggests removing items such as photos to avoid reminders. But don't be too quick to purge everything when in an emotional state.

"You may come to regret that later," she says. "Wait until the emotions dissipate a bit and then decide what you want to save. And don't do anything too drastic (like renos) if you aren't feeling yourself."

Having a support system and seeking advice from a coach, therapist, organizer, or designer can make a big difference.

REDECORATING CAN BE EMPOWERING

This is the opportunity to focus on what you want your space to look like.

"Take the time to really think about what is important to you and how you want that reflected in your home," Cohen says. "Use your new space as a canvas to explore your own interests and style. It can be a wonderful time for self-exploration as you decide what you want to fill your space with."

Both designers suggest creating surroundings that bring joy.

"Focus on yourself as you heal and move forward with your life," says Fox. "Take time to discover what makes you truly happy. Stretch out and fill your spaces with light, laughter, and love!"

"We suggest staying focused and completing the goal of making your home reflect you and your interests as you start a new life," says Fox.

Declutter, purge, and rearrange the

bring life and good energy in with plants.

What about the kids? According to both designers, it's important that children feel secure, safe, and happy