

## **Starstyle® Top Ten Budget Design Tips from Cynthia Brian, ASID Home, Garden, and Parenting Expert**

Would you like to decorate your home but don't have an idea where to start? Cynthia Brian, ASID, is a certified interior designer from California and a professional member of the American Society of Interior Designers offers these simple ideas to get you going quickly!

1. Use something you love as your inspiration for your design.
2. Cut out photos you love from shelter magazines. Create a folder of tear sheets so that you can begin to identify your style, taste, and textures that enthrall you.
3. Start from the bottom up-in other words; work with your flooring, carpet, or throw rugs as a base. Move up to finding furnishings and window treatments.
4. Let your friends and acquaintances know that you are looking for good quality FREE furnishings for your college digs. You'd be surprised at how happy people are to get rid of items they no longer want, especially if you will come and take them away. One person's trash is another's treasure!
5. Check out the clearance tables at your favorite stores. Many items get marked down because the packaging is damaged, yet the goods are in perfect condition. We got an air mattress at 50% off at Bed, Bath, and Beyond because the box had been damaged in shipping.
6. Recycle items from home to create a new look. A \$20 slip cover from a discount store turns a tired seat into a chic chair.
7. Good lighting is key for both tasks and drama. Thrift stores, garage sales, and outlets are havens for discovering fun lamps. Just make sure they are electrically safe.
8. Get out the guns-the staple guns, glue guns, screwdriver guns, and drills. Scissors, duct tape, wire, and a small tool kit are the best friends for do-it-yourselfer's.
9. Paint is the least expensive way to execute bold design. Don't be afraid of color. Once you've chosen your paint colors, carry your paint chips in a baggie with you so that you can find items that will work with your décor. Don't think you will remember the exact color-there are over 200 versions of white! Do make sure you are allowed to paint rented rooms and use plenty of plastic to protect the floors.
10. Plants are a very inexpensive way to dress up a space. Orchids offer the biggest bang for your buck-they easy to maintain and bloom for 1-4 months offering value, beauty and elegance. It's a good training for students to care for another living being. If you can grow a plant, you can grow a relationship;

One of the best investments you could make is to hire a professional interior designer for a consultation that will include suggestions that you could implement on your own. Go to [www.asid.org](http://www.asid.org) to find a qualified person in your area. Make a plan and stick to it. Resist impulse buying. Most importantly, get your children involved in the design process. When my own children were young, I let them choose colors and fabrics that they loved and wove their motifs into our household décor. It boosted their confidence and by involving everyone, truly made our house a home. You don't have to spend thousands of dollars to live in comfort, beauty, and elegance. Don't be in a hurry, take your time, enjoy the process! And most of all, have FUN!

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*Cynthia Brian, ASID, is a popular speaker, dynamic writer, and savvy media personality appearing regularly on radio, TV, and in print. She is the New York Times best selling author of Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul, author of Be the Star You Are!®, The Business of Show Business, and Miracle Moments®. When she's not writing or performing, you'll find her in the garden! Tune into her weekly radio program. [www.star-style.com](http://www.star-style.com).*