

## Stretching Your Decorating Dollar

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As the stock market falls and we question the stability of our economy, everyone who knows anything is trying to make the most of every purchase and of every dollar. Wise choices can be made to make the most of your decorating budget if only you know where to spend and on what.

First and foremost you want to concentrate the bulk of your money on the 'big-ticket items' of the space. A quality patio furniture set will last for years to come and can easily be updated with new cushions and other various accessories. A beautiful and comfortable couch will be used every day and can also be easily accessorized with pillows and throws. But it is these large items that will be used the most and thus must be the most durable and long-term choices, setting the initial tone of the space. These items can be found on sale and are usually cheapest during the off-season or just before next season's styles come in. Of course, bargains can also be found at thrift shops, flea markets and malls as well as on auction sites. It just depends what you are looking for.

Next, you want to spend on window treatments. These items can really make a statement and heighten the drama in your space. A good window treatment can bring a space from 'blah' to 'wow' with a colorful swag or a dramatic drapery. What frustrates most in the know is that so many people neglect this simple yet seriously effective step in home décor.

Finally you get to employ the use of accessories. It is the little things that really complete a look, like jewelry for an outfit, yet will not cost a fortune. Drawer pulls, wall art and candleholders can update a room's feel quickly and without breaking your budget. Even a properly placed wooden board game like a Chinese checkers or chess set on a side table can be used to as finishing touches. The great thing about these accessories is they can be easily replaced to update a room, bring in seasonal touches, or even just because a new trend caught your fancy. And all of this can be done at a reasonable price!

Decorating a space – be it the living room or the screened in patio – does not have to cost a small fortune. Even high end looks can be accomplished if you bargain shop, keep an open mind and keep the home décor accents as accents instead of the anchors of your design.