

How To Make A Dorm Room Your Own



Making a dorm room your own does not require a lot of money or know-how. It starts with a vision, a few comforts from home and some collaboration with your roommate.

Children spend roughly 17 to 18 years living under Mom and Dad's roof. When the time comes to go away to college, young men or women find themselves on their own for the first time in their lives. Once youngsters move into their dorm rooms, many attempt to add a few personal touches to their new home.

All too often a college dorm room is drab and uninspiring. Universities tend to make dorm rooms sparse so they are easy to maintain. Very often walls are made from concrete or brick, and the space may not be very large. In addition, dorm rooms are often shared with a roommate, and the idea of spending semester after semester here may not be so appealing.

Students tend to arrive on campus with fixed budgets and not a lot of spending money for new furnishings, so dorm rooms often become populated with garage-sale finds and hand-me-downs. This may only add to the room's poor aesthetics.

Making a dorm room your own does not require a lot of money or know-how. It starts with a vision, a few comforts from home and some collaboration with your roommate. The following are a few tips for young men and women looking to turn their dorm rooms from drab to fab.

- Know the dorm rules before making any permanent changes. Rather than face fines at the end of the school year, know what you can and can't do to your room before making any changes. For example, schools may frown on holes in walls or other structural changes, so invest in stick-on hooks for hanging photos on walls.

- Consider using a dorm room planning Web site. Certain Web sites enable students to share a collaborative shopping cart with roommates so they can coordinate colors and avoid buying two of the same items.

- Remember, the bed is the pivotal piece of the room. Most dorm rooms fit little more than two beds and two desks. Therefore, the bulk of your design will come from outfitting your bed with a comforter that adds color and life to the room. If you haven't yet decided on a color scheme with your roommate, you may want to opt for neutral colors, or even basic black-and-white, which will blend with anything.

- Invest in other creature comforts. A nice area rug and a few decorative lamps can remove the institutional feel of overhead fluorescent lights and cinder block walls. Task lighting enables you to get work done at your desk or to read on the bed.

- Consider curtains to add a homey feel. While blinds certainly have their utility, fabric curtains can help absorb noise and also make a dorm room feel more like home. If your dorm room has an attached bathroom, hang a shower curtain and use thick towels to make the space seem more like home.

- Carve out a spot for a mini refrigerator. Students should not survive on cafeteria food alone. Bring a mini refrigerator for those late-night cravings. This will save you from overpaying at vending machines or at the nearby convenience store.

- Ask Mom what laundry detergent she uses. Smells can trigger powerful memories and emotions. Washing linens and clothing with the same detergent used at home can make school feel more familiar.

- Don't forget photos. Frame photos of friends and family members and place them around your area of the dorm room. This way you will have familiar faces smiling back at you when you need a little pick-me-up.

Tips For Quick Weeknight Meals



Cold dinners, including salads, are an option for time-strapped families who still want to enjoy meals together on weeknights.

Enjoying a meal together on a weeknight is a goal for many families. But adults often find themselves pressed for time on weeknights, and that time crunch can make it difficult to enjoy a homecooked meal.

But time is not the only thing getting in the way of family meals. Be it after school activities, long commutes or late hours at the office, many things can make it difficult for a family to sit down and enjoy a meal together. The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse notes that family dinners are one of the most effective ways for parents to engage in the lives of their children. Studies have also shown that families who eat together tend to eat healthier, as parents can more effectively monitor their kids' diets, including whether or not their youngsters are getting enough fruits and vegetables, when they are dining together.

While it may not be feasible for parents and kids to scale back their busy schedules, there are steps parents can take to make weeknight meal preparation quicker. By shortening the time it takes to make meals on weeknights, families might be able to sit down to dinner together more often.

- * Plan ahead. The most effective way to make more time for family meals is to plan ahead. Planning meals on the fly encourages everyone to fend for themselves, making it difficult for families to enjoy nutritious meals they can eat together. Plan for the coming week's meals on the weekend, when you can survey your pantry and make a trip to the grocery store if need be. Planning ahead also allows you to prepare certain parts of a meal in advance, which will save you time on busy weeknights.

- * Make cold meals. Dinner does not have to be served

hot, and cold meals often take less time to prepare. Consider serving salad or sandwiches on those nights when you are especially pressed for time. When serving sandwiches, serve them on whole grain bread to add some nutritional value to the meal.

- * Turn breakfast into dinner. There are no laws regarding what qualifies as dinner and what does not, so families without much time on their hands on a weeknight can turn breakfast into dinner. Eggs are both quick and easy to prepare, and they can be served alongside toast and grapefruit. When making omelets for dinner, add some spinach or another vegetable to make the meal more nutritious.

- * Lean on seafood more often. Seafood can be healthy and delicious, but that's not the only reason it's an ally to time-strapped families. Seafood should not take much time to cook, as even those dishes that take more time than simpler dishes like sauteed shrimp will still take less than 30 minutes to complete. That's significantly less time than meals in which beef, pork or poultry is the main entree.

- * Leftovers aren't just for lunch. Leftovers are often relegated to lunch, but extras from a meal cooked over the weekend can be used as a quick go-to meal on a hectic weeknight. If the family enjoyed the meal the first time around, there's no reason they won't enjoy it again. When eating leftovers for dinner, make sure the leftovers are fresh, but try to avoid serving leftovers the night after they were initially cooked.

- * Enjoy meals as a family is a great way for families to eat healthy and stay engaged in one another's lives. And even families with hectic schedules can employ a few tricks to make dining together more convenient.

How Parents Can Get Involved At School

Research indicates that children whose parents get involved with their education are more likely to earn better grades and less likely to have behavior problems in the classroom.

The concept of parents working in conjunction with schools is nothing new. A 1987 study by Paul G. Fehrmann and colleagues documented the importance of parental involvement on their child's grades. Published in the Journal of Education Research, the study found that when parents stayed directly involved in their child's studies throughout high school, the child's grades improved.

There are many different reasons for parents to get involved with their child's school and the community. Helping their children succeed is just one of them. The choice is just how to go about connecting with the school. Here are a few ideas.

Work with the teacher

Teachers are increasingly facing obstacles with regards to time and funding. Many must preside over large classes and are responsible for outfitting their classrooms with certain supplies. This presents ideal opportunities for parents to step up and pitch in.

Volunteering in your child's classroom is a good way for you to help

his or her teacher and get a firsthand account of what your child is doing in class. You may be asked to prepare and package homework assignments or put together materials for craft projects. Some teachers welcome parents who come in to read books to the class or even give spelling tests. Think about chaperoning a field trip or helping with the set-up and clean-up of class parties. If you keep an open dialogue with the teacher through phone calls or e-mail, you may be presented with plenty of opportunities to get involved.

Attend meetings

Parent-teacher associations or organizations are often instrumental in helping a school to run smoothly. They are the people behind fundraisers and special activities outside of the classroom. The PTA is also privy to information on upcoming events before the rest of the school community.

Attending monthly meetings can keep you up to speed on the goings-on at your child's school. It will also ensure your voice is heard with regards to school policy. Showing your face at meetings will also give you the opportunity to meet other parents.

Attend special events

Not every parent can serve on the PTA or be present in the daily activities

of the classroom. However, you can show your support by attending special events hosted by the school – such as fundraisers or field-day activities.

Volunteer your time with the setup of teacher-appreciation lunches and bake sales, serve as a tour guide for the school when new parents are invited, build sets or make costumes for a school play, or take pictures of events and create a collage to be put on display in the school.

Volunteer your skills

Some schools can benefit from the specialized skills of parents. Ask if you can come in and talk about your job or hobby and demonstrate it to the class. Individuals who have technology skills can volunteer to install computer software or to run networking throughout the school. If you have a background in print layout, find out if you can help design and publish the school newsletter or yearbooks.

Anytime a parent volunteers his or her time, that means less funding has to go to hiring an outside vendor for the job, saving the school money it sorely needs.

Being involved in your child's school sets a positive example for your kids and provides their school with some much-needed assistance.

Convenience @ your back door! 24/7

Pump'N Pak

Corner of W. Cherry & Stanford • 605.624.8050

St. Agnes
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Fall Registration

Preschool through 5th grade is on
Wednesday, August 12th
4:30 - 7:00 p.m.

General Assembly at 5:30 p.m.

Registration will take place in the classrooms & new addition.
Please come, even if you are pre-registered.
Call if you are unable to attend.

Classes Begin: Wednesday August 19th, 2015
at 8:20 a.m.

Contact:
St. Agnes School
909 Lewis Street
Vermillion, SD 57069
605.624.4144