

CLEAR THE CLUTTER!

Easy organizing tips and small-space solutions





BEFORE & AFTER

Fast Face-Lift



Three weeks and modest investment gave a young family the fresh, fun kitchen they dreamed of, without the expense and mess of a major renovation. Steal their ideas for your own budget makeover.

BEFORE

It all started with Instagram. After falling for a pair of chairs posted by a local vintage shop, homeowner Dana Siomkos struck up a friendship with the owner, Amy Hughes, a design and remodeling expert. A glass of wine or two later and Amy had taken on the update of the kitchen Dana shares with her husband, Zane Latta, and their young daughters. The rest is social media history.

When Dana and Zane bought their Maplewood, N.J., colonial, the kitchen was functional but uninspiring. "It wasn't really our style, but everything worked and it was all good quality," Dana says. Wary of the expense and disruption of a major remodel, the couple didn't feel they had any option but to live with the space as it was. And so they did, for nearly three years.

But then they met Amy, the owner of Salvage Style, a vintage design shop, also in Maplewood. "I was delivering some chairs, and Dana and I were chatting, and she was lamenting that they'd have to wait forever to redo the kitchen," says Amy, who also has years of experience as an Ikea kitchen-design

teacher and several budget renovations under her belt. "When I saw the space, I knew that it had all the right stuff—it was just lacking color and a modern design sensibility," she says. "And I didn't think it would cost a lot or take more than a couple of weeks to give it a new look." Dana and Zane jumped at the prospect of a makeover, and the project was soon underway, with Amy serving as renovation consultant and designer.

The plan was simple: Paint the sturdy, solid-oak cabinets and the walls, and replace the backsplash. Because the appliances were fairly new, and the white solid-surface countertop was neutral and in good shape, they decided to keep them, a major budget-saver.

Amy suggested a two-tone approach for the cabinets, with a rich blue on the base units and crisp white above, for a brighter look. Because the cabinets had a clear finish, they had to be stripped and sanded before receiving their fresh coats of paint, a big job Dana and Zane were happy to leave to the pros.

They decided to replace one large wall cabinet with open shelves. "The cabinet over the dishwasher was tall and bulky," Amy says. "It made the space feel smaller and more closed off."

Smart Style Solutions

With the color update complete, it was time to add character. The herringbone backsplash was the biggest splurge of the project, Amy says. "The tiles were just long subway-style tiles from Home Depot, but installing them in a specialty pattern costs a lot more."

To save money, she chose stock lumber for the floating shelves. "We found pieces with the varied look of antique lumber—for about a third of the price." Another budget win: the brass cabinet hardware from Nest Studio. Dana provided her recruiting firm's assistance in return for the pricey pulls.

The transformation took about three weeks and cost \$7,300, including new furniture and rugs. Dana and Zane love the results. "It's clean and bright and looks like 'us,'" Dana says. "We're happy in our kitchen now."





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THASSOS WHITE MARBLE 1X3 \$14 tilezz.com



