

# HOME

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# Style

4 CLASSIC AND TIMELESS DESIGNS



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## BREATHE LIFE INTO UPHOLSTERY

Whether or not you've put furniture cushions in storage for the winter, they're due for a cleaning. Follow manufacturer's instructions to clean them, but if they still look worn or stained, that's your excuse to buy new ones and give your outdoor space a whole new vibe.

Shop for cushions with weatherproof fabrics, and really think about color. "Use a lighter color for your upholstered cushions and make that color the common thread in your space," suggests Warren Sheets, founder of Warren Sheets Design, an interior design firm in San Francisco.

**This deck space**, designed by Morgante-Wilson Architects in Evanston, Ill., uses light upholstery as a base for darker and more colorful furniture and pillows.



## MAKE A CLEAN SWEEP

Pull out the pressure washer to clean up dirt and grime that's accumulated on your deck. "This is a great thing to do in the early spring, as the melted snow is gone and has left behind a layer of grit," says Carrie Woleben-Meade, director of design at Mariani Landscape, a landscape design firm in Lake Bluff, Ill.

Just be sure to follow manufacturer's instructions and monitor the setting on your power washer. "Avoid using your power washer on a super-high setting," she says. "That can actually damage your flooring, whether it's stone or wood, which can become splintered if you apply too much pressure."

## REPAIR A WEATHERED DECK

If your wood deck needs more help than a simple cleaning can provide (Has the protective coating faded or worn away? Are boards split and decaying? Are you battling mold and mildew?), set aside time this spring to clean

it and apply a fresh coat of waterproof stain, and replace boards as needed.

If you're renting and can't stain your deck — landlord's orders — there are other things you can do.

"Mask imperfections by clustering a trio of potted plants together," says Kirstin Hoffmann, director of merchandising at Dot & Bo, a curated furniture and home décor shopping site. "The height of the plants will draw the eye upwards and away from the weathered deck, while modern planters will help cover up any large patches of chipping paint." »







## CONSIDER THE FIRE PIT

Don't overlook this popular outdoor fixture — clear away leaves and debris to keep this versatile alfresco centerpiece ready for action year-round.



## BRIGHTEN UP

An easy way to open up your outdoor space is to hang mirrors on the perimeter of your deck or patio. "Hang old mirrors you have lying around your house or snag a few at your local thrift store," Hoffmann says.

The right lighting will make your deck brighter, too. In fact, inexpensive strings of lights can transform an outdoor space without much fuss. "With the flick of a switch, they make any backyard inviting and entertaining-ready," Hoffmann says.



## GO FAUX

Remember that an outdoor space lacks the walls and ceilings that give indoor rooms a feeling of intimacy. "You want to think in terms of creating 'walls' through landscape architecture such as a low wall of brick, wood or stone, or such as boxwood hedges that can form walls via foliage," says Fred Wilson of Morgante-Wilson Architects in Evanston, Ill. "Add overhead elements such as a trellis, sail shade or oversized umbrella — all of these will help define the space by shading and covering it in certain sections." ●

## Starting Fresh

Not everyone has a finished deck for warm-weather fun. If your deck or patio is a blank slate, you'll need to do some prep to transform it into a backyard oasis.

First, assess the whole space and decide what your priorities will be for the deck, says Carrie Woleben-Meade, director of design at Mariani Landscape.

Think about whether you'll be using the space for outdoor dining or whether it will be more of a casual space where you plan to hang out by a fire pit, for example.

Next, sketch a mock-up of how the space might look, she suggests. "Include any elements you plan to include, whether that's a hammock, an outdoor table or chaises."

Once that blueprint is in place, it's time to order your furniture. Again, before you start your shopping, make sure you know exactly how you're going to use the space.

"Are you planning to entertain larger groups or just enjoy the deck as a family?" Woleben-Meade asks. "That'll help you decide what items you need."