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Wally Martinez

Fire Up Redesign Ideas

Perhaps you have been thinking about giving your fireplace a makeover, but it just wasn't practical during the peak cold-weather season. Now that the weather is warming, it is a good time to reassess plans for revamping a fireplace to improve its function or appearance. Fireplaces can be assets and add to the value of a home, but only if they're in good working order and are functional and attractive in a space. To begin on a fireplace project, it's first important to understand the decorative features that make up a fireplace. 1. Face material: This is the material, either stone, brick or marble, that surrounds the fireplace opening. On dramatic or full-wall fireplaces, the face material may extend from floor to ceiling. 2.

Surround: A full surround outlines the opening of a fireplace. It is a decorative feature that often ties into the overall design scheme of the fireplace. 3. Mantle: A mantle is traditionally a wood shelf or beam that rests above the opening of the fireplace. It is a decorative element and one that lends drama to the fireplace design. 4. Screen: Screens can coordinate with room design and appeal to enliven a boring fireplace. Some also serve as protection against errant embers. When changing the look of a fireplace, modifying the above elements can offer the most dramatic impact. Think about how the fireplace fits into the room and your overall design. Brick can be warm and cozy, but may not coordinate with your modern theme. Changing the face material can quickly update the look of a fireplace. If the budget allows, reface with stone, marble or another surface material that appeals to you. Or, if you seek a quick, but dramatic fix, consider



Consider updating the look of your fireplace by refacing or adding decorative accessories.

painting existing brick the same color as your walls so that the fireplace becomes less of a focal point and more cohesive in the room. Redoing a mantle is another way to transform the look of a fireplace. Sometimes mantles are not proportionally sized in relation to the scale of a fireplace and can overpower or be lost. If you are painting face brick to coordinate with wall color, consider a bolder mantle color so it pops and defines the opening. One of the easiest facelifts you can give to a fireplace is a good cleaning and a new screen. Removing old residue and stains from the face of the fireplace can refresh the look. There are a variety of screens available that can be custom-fit or freestanding for your fireplace. Accessorize with irons and tools to add even more design appeal.

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