

**Ask a Designer – by Claire Nagy, Newcastle Interiors**  
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*We're ready to update our family room/kitchen area for spring, but we're not sure what pieces to bring in. We would also like to also decorate our deck with new outdoor furniture. Do you have any suggestions?*

With spring as the time for renewal many of us not only want to spruce up our interiors but we can't help but wish to be enjoying the outside as well.

For a quick update to your family room and kitchen there are a few simple changes to make for immediate results. Replace artwork that is reminiscent of winter, with art that has fresh spring colours such as pink, green and soft pastel blue.

Roll up heavy wool rugs and take down winter drapes and replace them with brightly coloured fabrics and sheers. This will immediately lighten and brighten your space.

Another inexpensive option to update the look of your room is to change or slipcover sofa cushions. For a weekend project re-upholster the kitchen chairs for a brighter and cheery look.

Don't forget to treat the senses. Now is a great time to add candles as the endless variety of scented candles and reed diffusers enhance the spring feeling in any home. For scent and brilliant pops of colour use flowers. Place a single colourful stem in clear or seeded glass vase or fill brightly coloured ceramic containers for a touch of sunshine in the home. Create a floral impact, by grouping potted plants such as a few Hydrangeas together, the effect is striking!

Each spring there is a new variety of patio furniture and accessories from which to choose. The trend to create outdoor rooms is in full swing with no signs of slowing down.

Once you've established your theme, either an extension from the inside or something completely new for your outdoor space, begin to look at the overall picture needed to create an inviting space outside.

To create a well appointed outdoor room, choose furniture to maximize this theme and accessorize in order to create the feeling of actually a being indoors with the luxury of being outside. To enhance your outdoors experience, add to your outdoor room - lighting, cushions, an outdoor rug, and garden planters all with your chosen theme in mind. To keep the feeling of intimacy in your space use an all weather privacy screen, gazebo or pergola. For romantic (and warmer) evenings outside, a chiminea, fire bowl or patio heater adds just the right touch.

A note on outdoor lighting! No longer do you have to rely on landscape lighting to light the way! Today there are weather resistant lamps and chandeliers in a variety of styles to create the perfect look for any outdoor room.

*Claire Nagy is an active community citizen involved in a number of charities that support families in need. She is a graduate of the Staging Diva Home Staging Business Training Program, a certified professional Interior Redesigner and a member of the Interior Redesigners Association. To learn more go to [www.newcastleinteriors.com](http://www.newcastleinteriors.com).*