



Bookshelf: Slob style

Most of us don't live in those picture-perfect rooms we see in magazines with the white furniture and the do-no-touch gee-gaws. And Debbie Wiener, designer and author of "Slob Proof! Real-Life Design Solutions" (Penguin/Alpha Books, \$19.95) knows it. Created for the cleaning-impaired and decorating-challenged among us, her advice shuns showhouse style in favor of durable décor and down-to-earth design tips for homes that are resilient, fuss-free and full of style. "Real-life design isn't art, it's smart," she says. A five-section guide is filled with before and after pictures and expert advice on selecting slob-proof furniture, flooring, lighting and more. Here are five of her tips

on designing spaces that don't cost a fortune:

Inexpensive uplights from bed and bath stores (try lamps plus.com) add drama without the dramatic price tag.

These little coffee can-style lights sit on the floor and illuminate empty corners behind furniture and potted plants.

Make color your best friend and add it with paint – the least expensive way to change your room. Who says your ceiling and trim has to be white? In one weekend, you can add color around fireplaces, crown molding and your ceiling to inject personality to your room.

Organize your life. Look to kids' catalogs, like Pottery Barn Teens and local home stores for wall shelving, baskets and under-bed boxes. Raise your bed with inexpensive risers sold in bedding stores to get more room underneath.

Soften your space with a little fabric to add color, pattern and texture to small dorm rooms and large lofts. Use pillows, throws, blankets, even panels suspended from a ceiling.

Put your money into the things you sit and stand on. Focus on flooring and seating for lasting comfort and durability. Spend less on everything else.

