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Healthy Room Makeover: Paint, Carpets, Flooring

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Does this Back to School season have you thinking about freshening up your interiors? Today's guest blogger introduces us to makeover experts in Colorado Springs for solutions on materials & finishes that make any room a great place to learn and create – at home, at school at work.

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When I was asked to write an article about interior makeovers for Practically Green! immediately knew I wanted to talk to Allyson Buck and Sarah Heinbaugh of Interlife Sustainable Interiors.

Just think about the rooms where kids spend most of their time. Many of the design choices we make can have very serious health implications, so it's really important to choose nontoxic products. Paint, carpets and flooring can offgas dangerous chemicals that you do not want to breathe. Luckily, there are healthier options, so you can create a great interior without compromising anyone's health.

Since times are tough economically I asked Allyson which 3 areas would be cheapest, easiest and have the greatest impact. All of her are amazing for both the design and the health of your interior space — and can be completed without hiring expensive professionals!



Paint – Paint is cheap, easy and covers the largest surface area. It is *the* most impactful change you can make to a room. It's the first thing people notice when they enter – both the way it looks and the way it smells when it's new. If you only buy one nontoxic product for your makeover project, this is the one to make.

Allyson recommends using Mythic Paint. Mythic is a No-VOC premium paint with No-VOC pigments. People are often concerned that Mythic costs more than paint from, say, Home Depot. However, Allyson says to make sure you are comparing paints of equal quality. Yes, Home Depot paints are about 1/2 the price of Mythic. But Home Depot paints aren't premium paints and they aren't No-VOC. They aren't going to last as long as Mythic. They aren't going to hold up to crayon drawings on the walls, the rocking chair hitting the wall and all the rest of the wear and tear young children put on a wall.

If you compare the price of Mythic to a premium paint such as Benjamin Moore (still not No-VOC) Mythic is actually cheaper. And, you get the added benefit of it not releasing toxic fumes. Who can put a price tag on that!

Mythic paint is so safe you can touch it up while your baby is sleeping in the same room with no fear of toxic fumes. A few years ago you could only get No-VOC paint in a limited pallet of earth tones. Now Mythic comes in a wide selection of colors and it can be color-matched to your favorite color from another brand or your décor.

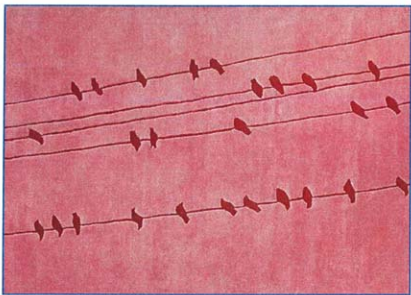
Flooring – The next easiest thing to change is your flooring. Carpeting holds dust, allergens, heavy metals and anything else you track into your home. Even the best vacuum can't remove everything from carpet. Babies crawl around, play and lay down right next to the particles in the carpet. They put their hands and all their toys in their mouths exposing them to anything that's in your carpet. Experts often recommend hard flooring, especially with young children around.



Allyson says if you use floating, snap together Marmoleum tiles you can change the entire look of your floor very easily and with minimal tools. They come in a wide selection of colors giving you many options. And, when your baby grows up and wants something more grown up you can just pull them up and donate them to your local [Habitat for Humanity ReStore](#) or sell them on [Craigslist](#) so they can be used again on someone else's project.

Marmoleum is true linoleum, made from linseed oil. It is certified asthma and allergy friendly. The top layer of the tiles is Marmoleum and the bottom is cork. In the middle is MDF which is free of added urea formaldehyde, which is a carcinogen.

Wool area rugs – Allyson says the next easiest & most affordable way to have a big green impact upon your room is by adding 100% wool area rugs. The rugs they carry and recommend are made by INDI B and have a cotton backing and are naturally dyed. Wool rugs are very durable and these come in a wide selection of colors and designs. When you are done with them they are easy to get rid of. You can sell them on [Craigslist](#) or donate them to a store like [Habitat for Humanity ReStore](#).



We love this 5 x 7 rug from IndiB!

Going nontoxic in these 3 areas can have a huge impact upon the design of your nursery without negatively harming your baby's health. Allyson says no matter what green design products you use remember that there are no products that are perfect ecologically or socially. Try not to get caught up in looking for perfection. Find the best product you can that meets your design needs, lifestyle and budget.

If you are in Colorado you can visit [Interlife's](#) store in Colorado Springs for each of these products and more. For other parts of the country go to the individual websites for a list of distributors or to purchase online.



Danika Carter is the beauty editor for [Greenwala](#).

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2 Comments to 'Healthy Room Makeover: Paint, Carpets, Flooring'

Thank you for sharing this information. I appreciate how you have highlighted the importance of thinking through the products used in redecorating. Improper decisions can impact the health of the home (and the occupants) for quite a long time, much longer than people expect. As asthma in children is on the rise, helpful tips like this will hopefully find their way into many homes.

Julie DuBrow

September 11, 2011

I prefer American Clay earth plaster for walls...greener option, changes the feel of the room, absorbs sound, moderates the temperature (that's what clay does!), and totally sensual touch. Lovely lovely colors too.

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