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Posted on Fri, Aug. 24, 2007

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# Room by room, a healthier house

Transforming your house into a healthier home can be a fast, inexpensive fix. Here are some room-by-room suggestions:

**Entryways.** Use doormats outside and inside, and have people remove their shoes upon entering.

"Keep the door between the garage and the kitchen or mudroom closed . . . and make sure the weather-stripping is tight," says designer Lili Wright. "You don't want car exhaust or fumes from toxins kept in the garage to get into the house."

**Living room.** Toss natural-fiber throw rugs over petroleum-based carpeting to limit the discharge of gases, Kimberly Rider advises.

"Anti-stain treatments and fire retardants that are applied to fabrics contain chemicals that can be toxic to humans," she says. The same thing applies to the shades and blinds on your windows, especially when the sun heats up the fabric.

**Kitchen.** Purge all the nasty stuff under your sink and get back to basics. Baking soda, borax, vinegar and water are effective and safe cleaners. And microfiber cloths eliminate the need for solvents.

Wright's favorite trick: polishing silver with toothpaste - "I use Tom's of Maine," she says - especially to give silver jewelry a quick shine. Works on candlesticks and small accessories too.

**Bedroom.** Polyester/cotton-blend sheets touted as wrinkle-free are usually made that way with formaldehyde. One hundred percent cotton sheets, even if the cotton is not organic, are better for you.

Make sure the room you sleep in is the cleanest in the house since you're in there, breathing deeply, for hours at a time, says Rider.

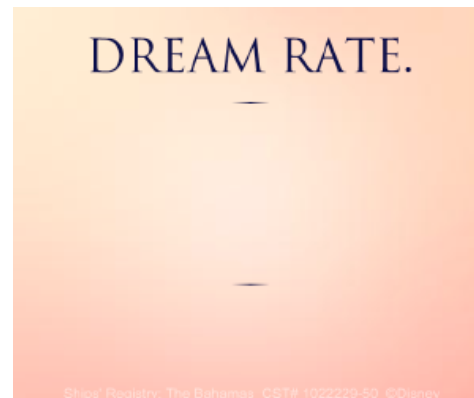
**Bathroom.** Switch to bamboo towels. They're super-soft, absorbent and have antibacterial properties, says Wright.

Run the exhaust fan during your shower and for 20 to 30 minutes afterward. Preventing mold means you won't need to clean it with another problem substance: bleach.

Contact Lili Wright at Wright Design, 20 E. Sunset Ave., Philadelphia; 215-242-3149; [www.wright-design.net](http://www.wright-design.net).

For more information about Kimberly Rider, go to [www.atmospherahome.com](http://www.atmospherahome.com).

- T.M. Ciesinski



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