

How to convert dirty digs into serene study sanctuaries

Submitted by: Kin Communications2

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- Half of all UK students rent accommodation from a private landlord.
- 31% of students find their studies affected as a result of their living arrangements.
- BBC Presenter, DIY Expert and National Home Improvement Month Ambassador Georgina Burnett gives her top tip on how students can transform their dirty digs into a study sanctuary.

Student housing is notoriously known for beer bottle lawns, mismatching interior design and unhygienic conditions. A 2018 survey by the National Student Accommodation established that half of all UK university students live in the private rental sector, making it the most popular form of student accommodation. With studies highlighting the importance of having a comfortable and welcoming studying environment in order to achieve good grades, many students are keen to adapt their house into a serene study sanctuary but complicated tenancy rules and regulations are major home improvement deterrents.

National Home Improvement Month research has revealed that more than 1 in 10 18-24 year olds in the UK feel ashamed and claustrophobic in their own home and with the average student age demographic between 18 and 24 many of these attitudes are the reflection of students.

The survey further uncovered that 18-24 year olds have relatively undeveloped DIY skills ,with 33% feeling uncomfortable to even hang up a photo, 52% being unsure of how to put together flat pack furniture and the majority of 18-24 leaving DIY tasks to a more competent family member. Expense and inexperience were also found to be the main reasons students were reluctant to make home improvements.

For Student tenants that scroll through social media for interior design inspiration and are desperate to dust off their parents tool kit, Rose Jinks, the Spokesperson for 5 Star rated Landlord Insurance provider Just Landlords, explains how student tenants should go about making improvements to their rental accommodation: "The type of DIY that you can and cannot complete in your rental property should be stipulated in your tenancy agreement; there will usually be a clause stating the improvements you are or aren't permitted to make.

"If you are unsure of specific DIY tasks that you'd like to undertake, then you should put your request in writing to your landlord or letting agent. Make sure that you get any permission from them in writing, too. If you conduct DIY tasks to your property without permission, then you may face deductions from your tenancy deposit when you move out – even if you think you've improved the home. Regarding energy efficiency improvements to a property, tenants are permitted to request consent to make changes to the home, which the landlord cannot unreasonably refuse."

For students anxious about the looming exam season , BBC presenter, DIY expert and National Home Improvement Month ambassador Georgina Burnett provides her cost cutting and simple DIY tips to help maximise grades.

"Whether you're swatting for exams or laboring over a dissertation, there are enough distractions as a student without your home hindering you as well. For students, and just about anyone, the environment you sleep, relax and work in will very much shape your experience and results. If a room is calming you will be able to switch off and give your brain that all-important down time. If your home makes you happy, you will feel more motivated to tackle your agenda. Studying is stressful enough without the added

impact of depressing digs. So making sure you have uplifting colours around you, limited clutter, good light (even if this has to come from specialist light bulbs) and a clean looking environment is crucial. To help you achieve your aspirational grades follow my top tips to make your dirty digs into a serene study sanctuary:"

1. Scrub Up Before Study.

First things first, my experience of student housing was that it never really felt clean, even from day one. This should be your first task and you and your housemates could make it fun by doing it all together, with some loud music and maybe a few drinks. If you give the place a thorough scrub you will be more likely to keep it clean whilst you're living there.

2. Clear Away Clutter and Stock up on Storage

Clutter can be distracting when you're trying to study and it doesn't have to cost a fortune to add some storage solutions. You can pick up some items of furniture for as little as a fiver from a charity shop and upcycle them to modernise and add your own stamp.

3. Paint for Perfect Grades

If the walls are really grubby and depressing you should ask the landlord to have them repainted and if they aren't keen you could offer to do it yourself. Shades of green are known to improve concentration due to the colours low wave length creating a calming atmosphere. While tones of orange are mood lifters that promote neural functioning. Just make sure you do a thorough job so you don't lose your deposit!

4. Cover Controversial Carpet

If you have brown swirly carpets it might be worth investing in some plain throws from charity shops to put on the floor as this will at least cover the eye-sore and enhance the room. The same goes for 90's floral sofas. Then when they get grubby you can just bung them in the washing machine. You might even find your local charity shop helps you to replace tired curtains for next to nothing.

5. Personalize and Plant

The best way to add character to a room is via the walls and with peel-away wallpaper and stickers you can do this in a quick, easy and affordable way without losing your deposit.

Plants can make a big difference to the look and feel of a home and you can take them with you to the next pad. If you don't trust yourself to keep them alive its worth investing in faux flowers and plants, which you will probably still be using way past your days of studying! It's a good idea to have some live greenery though as it's known to improve your mood and air quality.

For more information on making one change to your home this April visit the National Home Improvement Month website at: www.homeimprovementmonth.co.uk/

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For further information, images or a copy of the full research, please contact Thomas Gabbidon on Thomas@kincomms.com or Amy Boreham on 020 3958 7195 Amy@kincomms.com

NOTES FOR EDITORS

National Home Improvement Month is supported by the British Home Enhancement Trade Association (BHETA), the leading UK trade association for manufacturers, suppliers and distributors in the home enhancement market, including home improvement (DIY), garden, housewares and small electricals.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

The research was carried out online from 15-19 November 2018 by Vital Research on behalf of BHETA. The research sample comprised 2,001 UK home owners. All research conducted adheres to the UK Market Research Society (MRS) code of conduct (2014) and all research processes comply with the DPA (1998).

OFFICIAL AMBASSADORS

More information on the official ambassadors is available via the respective websites for Julia Kendell and Georgina Burnett