

double duty

When purse strings are tight, your home is often the first to show it. Take the pinch as your cue and transform neglected items into nifty home perks. The result? A new look for your home and a second wind for your budget. After all, necessity is the mother of invention.



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gilt-edged frame

OLD USE: Framing a not-so-original work of art.

NEW USE: A notice board that will make you, erm, take notice of those daily labours of love: your chores.

HOW TO: Paint the smooth side of a piece of chipboard with blackboard paint and nail it to the frame. Then chalk away.

shoe lasts (opposite)

OLD USE: Making sure the shoe fits.

NEW USE: Coat hooks. Hang your hat here, and your bag, and...

HOW TO: Salvage lasts from junk shops or cobblers who are about to throw them out. Hang from the natural hollows in the moulds and keep them firmly in place with double-sided tape.

printer's tray

OLD USE: Sorting the p's from the q's so that the press can keep running.

NEW USE: A repository for your treasures and trinkets.

HOW TO: Cut photographs to size and use stray Scrabble letters to express yourself. Add cherished souvenirs and hang securely on two sturdy hooks.



wooden crate

OLD USE: Storing fruit for the enjoyment of the export market.

NEW USE: Storage for the kids' toys. And because it's been around, you won't mind if your three-year-old decides his crate is a cart for ferrying Fido around. In fact, you may want one, too, for a mobile filing system.

HOW TO: Screw in some castors and you're good to go.



denim pocket

OLD USE: A pouch for all the coins you need to fork out during the day.

NEW USE: A practical holdall to attach to outdoor place mats. Now guests will always know exactly where to find their utensils, even on the most blustery of days.

HOW TO: Stitch pockets on or secure them with fabric glue.



old winter clothes

OLD USE: Keeping you warm all through the chilly season.

NEW USE: Cosy covers for scatter cushions so you can continue to snuggle into your favourite jerseys and jeans.

HOW TO: If you're all thumbs when it comes to sewing, ask your tailor to make fitted slipcovers with zips. Buttons are pretty but the buttonholes tend to tear.



louvre doors

OLD USE: Shielding your home from the harsh rays of the sun.

NEW USE: A striking headboard as a backdrop for sweet dreams or a dramatic focal point in the lounge or dining room.

HOW TO: Don't fuss with removing old latches and hinges; they acknowledge the tests of time. If necessary, attach rubber doorstops at the back to keep screws from scratching the wall.



cable reel

OLD USE: Storing the cables that keep your long-distance friendships going.

NEW USE: A coffee table that's also a talking point.

HOW TO: Simply sand away the splinters and rough sections. If you like the distressed look shown here, paint it with white emulsion paint, using as little as possible, so that the imperfections in the wood show through.

SEE PAGE 110 FOR STOCKISTS