



Welcome to my WORKROOM

YouTube videos and a can-do attitude allow HILDIE WESTENHAVER to discover hidden decorating skills. And her cheery craft room is the beneficiary. Hildie doesn't shy away from the DIY challenges of anything from tiling to feature walls. By Janai Velez

It all started with a little research. "I laid the yellow and white vinyl composite floor tiles myself. I had never done this before, but several videos assured me it would be easy. What nobody mentioned was how crazy sticky the tile adhesive is! By the end of the day, I had pieces of tile stuck all over my clothes. When I went to take a shower, I couldn't get my clothes off because my hands and feet were covered with glue. I felt like a cartoon character, trying to jump out of my pants without them sticking to me. I managed to get the shower curtain stuck to myself, too. I nearly had to bathe in acetone."

Texas-based Hildie Westenhaver's philosophy is: Why buy when you can DIY? The root of her proactive attitude is from growing up in a handy but artsy family, where she learnt the value of thrift. "When I bought my first pair of curtains, I almost fainted at the price (that much money for two fabric rectangles?!). I knew I'd better learn how to sew better," Hildie says. But along the way, she found out that there can be hidden costs associated with DIYing. "A lot of times, I'll see something online and think, 'I could make that!' So instead of just buying it for \$20, I'll spend \$150 on books and supplies to teach me how," she says.





During Hildie's bedroom-to-craft-room conversion, there were many opportunities to DIY, discover new talents, operate foreign tools and shop at Ikea. "I settled on Ikea Alex cabinets as the foundation for my work table, but the short style was too short and the tall style was too tall. So I had the brilliant thought, 'I'll just buy the tall cabinets and cut them shorter!' This ended up being a much larger project than I had anticipated (which is almost always the case when I think, 'How hard could it be?'). But I managed it without wrecking anything too badly. It was a boost to my self-esteem, to see what I could do when I put my mind to it. And now I'm only slightly afraid of table saws," she reveals.

Before she had her own room, Hildie's crafting took place on the kitchen table, and supplies were stored in cupboards and closets throughout the house. "There's nothing as annoying as laying out new fabric to cut and having it slide into a blob of jam left over from breakfast!" she says. Now she has a designated room on the main floor of the house, right off the kitchen and family room. "I can sew or work on a project and still be in the heart of the house. And I can pop something in the oven and be close enough to hear the timer," says Hildie.

It was important that her craft room had plenty of drawers. Hildie likes all supplies to be organised according to hobby (jewellery

A FEW OF MY FAVOURITE THINGS

EMBROIDERY-THREAD HANGING SPOOLS – I came up with this system after spending two hours untangling my complete mess of embroidery threads one day. I knew I needed a system to keep things properly organised, but also something that was easy to see and access. Every time I see my multiple threads hanging neatly in rainbow order, I get a little thrill up my spine. This was one of the cheapest organisational things I did in my studio, but one of the most effective.

CANVAS PICTURE OF TEXAS – I love where I live and I thought some Texas artwork would be a great touch. I had no idea what I was doing when I made this artwork from a plain canvas, spray paint and a bunch of paper scraps. But it was one of those projects that magically came together with no mishaps and turned out even better than I had imagined.

YELLOW-AND-WHITE FEATURE WALL – I knew I wanted something white and yellow for the feature wall in my craft studio. I searched for the perfect wallpaper. But wallpaper is expensive, and my walls are heavily textured, so wallpaper doesn't stick well anyway. So I ended up making a cardboard template of an oval and tracing it in pencil. Then I painted around the ovals freehand. It sure was a pain, but I absolutely love, love, love the way it looked in the end.

GREEN OFFICE CHAIR – Because my budget was so limited, there were very few tall, rolling chairs I could afford for my desk. I picked the cheapest one I could find online, but it only came in beige. Yuck! But my philosophy is that there's nothing a little imagination and a staple gun can't fix! I found some oilcloth on clearance and set to work reupholstering my cheapo chair. It was all done in just a couple of hours.

BOLTS OF CLOTH – I had my entire cloth stash folded up in huge plastic bins. I never used anything because it was so hard to access. So I decided to wrap each piece of fabric around a piece of cardboard. Originally, I was planning on storing them vertically, like at a fabric shop, but the shelves I bought didn't have sides and the bolts wouldn't stand up. So I ended up laying them horizontally, in order of colour, and I just love how it looks.



making, knitting, etc) and loves items arranged in their colourways. As for the "uglier" craft supplies, they get stored in the closet, where she removed the clothing rods and added shelves. "Everything finally has a place, which makes it a breeze to clean up," she says.

Hildie has included a guest chair in her craft room, ready for friends who visit for sewing lessons and for her homeworking children. But she says it's hard to get work done when all your children are chatterboxes. "I've occasionally thought about buying a nice soft chair but I don't

know if I want to encourage people to stay very long!" Hildie says.

The clean, white surfaces and soft, citrus colours used in the room make her feel happy, inspired and energised from the moment she walks in. Hildie has a love of vintage pieces and antiques and has decorated most of her house this way, but with her craft room, she wanted something a little cleaner and clearer. "There is nothing sentimental in this room. And that's kind of refreshing for me. I put so much thought and feeling into every item in the rest of my house. Everything is infused with



love. When I walk in my craft room, I feel a lightness that just isn't there in my other rooms."

If she could change one thing, it would be to add a sink, as she's currently creating a line of skincare and bath products, which is messy work. She also sews, knits, crochets, paints ... "Some people need to exercise every day to keep the crazy away; I have to make stuff!"

Find out more about Hildie Westenhaver, of Hive and Nest, by visiting her site, www.hiveandnest.com and following her on Instagram, @hiveandnest.

