

A Thrifty **Living Room** *Glow-Up*

Flea-market finds and clever DIYs refresh this cozy space for less.

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STYLED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY ASHLEY WILSON





WHEN ASHLEY WILSON AND HER FAMILY moved into their 1905 Utah home eight years ago, the living room felt “very vanilla,” she recalls. But thanks to incredible ingenuity, patience, careful budgeting and elbow grease, she and her husband have transformed their entire home.

The living room, where the young family spends much of their time, was top priority for upgrades, and bit by bit, it’s now the cozy space they envisioned.

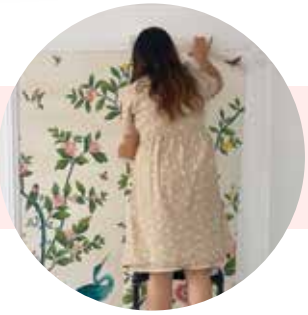
FIRST THINGS FIRST

A bulky black wood-burning stove dominated one corner, filling the space with smoke and taking up far too much room, so it was one of the first things to go.

Bringing more light into the living room was also top priority for Ashley, but knocking down walls wasn’t part of the plan. Instead, the family sourced a vintage storm door from a salvage yard and installed it in an interior wall, adding character, charm, and much-needed light.

The doorway leading from the living room to the staircase was originally quite low, making the transition feel cramped. By raising the opening and adding oversized corbels at the ceiling line, Ashley created a dramatic, light-filled passageway that now beautifully frames the staircase.

To introduce a sense of elegance, ornate trim was added to the walls and filled with striking wallpaper murals. Framing the wallpaper not only elevates the design but also helps control costs and prevents the space from feeling overwhelmed by pattern.







And the pièce de résistance? The floors. Tired of the once-gray-painted wood flooring, Ashley envisioned a classic Cottagecore gingham pattern created entirely with paint. The project required careful planning, precise measuring, and plenty of patience, but after a week of dedicated work, the result was well worth the effort. The most recent pink upgrade has been the wood coffered ceiling detail, painted pink!

With so many layers: architectural details, full drapes, whimsical artwork, a gorgeous ceiling medallion, a stunning rug and thoughtfully painted doors, the Wilsons have transformed an ordinary room into a personalized masterpiece, one thoughtful detail at a time.



To see more of Ashley's incredible creative projects

VISIT @ATHOMEWITHASHLEY ON INSTAGRAM AND ATHOMEWITHASHLEY.COM.

How to Paint Gingham Floors

If you've been embracing the Cottagecore trend, you'll know gingham is one of the signature patterns. It's sweet, nostalgic, and full of charm. Ashley shares how to paint gingham floors step by step so you can try this affordable upgrade in your own home.

WRITTEN BY ASHLEY WILSON

HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

1. Select a light, medium, and dark shade of your chosen color. I recommend choosing a color you like and then picking colors next to them on the fan deck so they'll all flow nicely together. For example, the color I chose is Frosted Sage which has a code of N400-2. Then I chose the colors N400-3 (Flagstaff Green) and N400-4 (Forest Path) to get colors next to each other.
2. Stick with a neutral background: white, cream, or light gray works best.
3. Sample jars are perfect for the mid and darkest tones to save money. I needed 2 sample jars for each color for my large room.
4. If you already have a gallon of paint on hand for your lightest tone like I did, even better, that makes this project budget-friendly!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Paint in three shades of the same color (light- Frosted Sage, medium- Flagstaff Green, and dark- Forest Path)
- Floor paint for durability (I used the color Studio Clay in Behr's Porch and Patio Floor Paint)
- Paint brushes and a roller with an extension pole
- Painter's tape (delicate surface tape works best)
- Ruler
- Vacuum and mop
- Optional: sander and primer if your floors aren't already painted



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WHAT YOU'LL DO:

Step 1: Move Furniture and Clean:

I moved most of the living room furniture to one side and a few pieces into another room. I planned to paint the floors in two phases because there's just too much heavy furniture to completely empty the space. Once the room was cleared, we vacuumed and mopped thoroughly. Good prep is key for a smooth finish. My floors were already painted, so I skipped sanding and priming, but if yours aren't, it's smart to lightly sand, clean, and prime before painting.

Step 2: Paint the Base Layer:

Usually, a gingham floor starts with a white background, but since this is a high-traffic space, I went with a beige instead to make it easier to clean. My color is Studio Clay by Behr. I'm using the Porch and Patio Floor paint for as much durability as possible. Choose your paint color and at the paint supply desk ask for it to be mixed in the floor paint. Pretty simple. I cut in around the perimeter with a paint brush, then poured paint directly onto the floor and used a roller with an extension arm for quick coverage. Instant improvement! Honestly, I wish I'd done this years ago!

Wait at least 4 hours for the first coat of paint to dry. Apply a second coat of paint to the floors for full coverage.

Step 3: Paint the Medium Stripes:

Next, it's time to start building that gingham pattern! I used my lightest color, Frosted Sage, and painted stripes following the original wood boards in my 1905 home- every other board was painted mint. For this, I just used a paint brush and slowly went along the edge of the board. I didn't use painters' tape, though you could if that'll make it easier for you.

If you're not working with floorboards as a guide, just tape off even stripes using your desired width (mine are 5 1/4 inches wide). Apply a second coat of paint to the stripes on the floors for full coverage. Let dry.



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*Why am I not using painter's tape? Because it adds to the cost. Then it adds a lot of time to apply the tape perfectly. And it makes for a lot of waste when it's removed. Plus, if something goes wrong with the tape then you have drips or the tape pulls off the base layer creating more work. So, I'd rather see what I'm dealing with while I work.



Step 4: Add the Light Stripes: Next, take a long ruler and a pencil and draw lines on the floor. I went perpendicular to the stripes I just painted and drew lines from one side of the room to the other every 5-1/4 inches. Use the same width measurement as the stripes so your pattern stays even. Then use your mid-tone color, I used Flagstaff Green, and paint in the squares you just drew on. Paint between the stripes on top of the base color.

You'll be painting over the base color only, not the stripes. This is where your gingham pattern really starts to appear!

Note, this is a slow process. It took me three hours to complete half the room. Put on an audio book, grab knee pads for kneeling on, and keep going!

Step 5: Fill in the Darkest Squares: Where the light and medium stripes intersect, paint those squares with your darkest shade- mine is Forest Path.

Tip: If you're using painters' tape to get crisp lines, make sure to use delicate painters' tape so the fresh paint doesn't peel when removed. I used a paint brush and carefully painted inside the pencil line box to get a perfect box. Again, this was slow. At least 3 hours to paint the squares for half the room.

Between each step, I waited at least two hours for paint to dry and kept a fan running to speed up the process. We walked carefully on the floors in socks only as needed, giving it plenty of drying time.

Once one side of the room was done, I let it cure 24 hours before moving furniture over and painting the other half.

After everything dried, I stood back and smiled-our new gingham floors are gorgeous!

