

HOUSE RULES

Episode 29: 6 Simple Ways to Hush the House for Summer

I'm Myquillyn Smith and this is House Rules.
Welcome to Episode 29.

Summer is right around the corner.

Have you ever gone to a great vacation home and it felt so relaxing and inviting? There were probably just the essentials, the decor was simple, it was a great setting for you to experience rest and have a wonderful vacation.

Wouldn't it be lovely if we all had a second summer home?

My summer home would be gloriously simple. The surfaces would be cleared off, the fabrics would be light, the feeling would be airy and full of possibility. I'd have a few vases of something green sitting around and, of course, a big bowl of fruit and veg from the farmers market. It would be all I'd need for decor in the kitchen. The sun would stream in through the windows, maybe a table would be covered in a wrinkly, relaxed linen tablecloth – I want to go there so bad right now!

By the end of today's episode you'll have three ideas of how to create your own summer home from the home you already have.

+++

For a few years, Chad and I had a dream of owning multiple hosting homes – one in the mountains that would be all quirky and layered with a big stone fireplace and snugly plaid throws everywhere.

One in the city that would support small groups and gatherings and craft days and projects and be close to great shopping.

And one at the beach that would be the most simple, with light whimsical fabrics, natural items and beautiful surroundings.

We never actually followed through with that but it was fun to think about. And the truth is, I can create the feeling of each of those seasonal homes right in the comfort of my own home without needing to purchase multiple properties.

The easiest way I know to create a simple summer home is to start by hushing the house.

We touched on this idea back in January, but today I'm gonna walk you through how to hush your house.

First, I want you to imagine that everything that sits out in your home has a voice.

As we add more stuff to our homes, those visual voices, if you will, are getting louder and louder and eventually, they are screaming at us. How do we quiet the voices?

Well, we hush the house.

House Hushing is a method I came up with years ago when I was trying to declutter without first making a bunch of uninformed decisions. We all know decision fatigue is real, especially this time of year. What if you could first enjoy the benefit of a quieted, decluttered house without having to hold each item, or thanking it and asking it if you should keep it? House Hushing is backwards decluttering because you don't have to start with making a bunch of exhausting decisions. But you still get the reward of a quieted space while still creating a beautiful home. So you can have pretty stuff, it's not about not having anything. House Hushing is the first step to creating a simple home.

This is not about rigid minimalism, this is about Cozy Minimalism: getting the most amount of style – your personal style – with the least amount of stuff, especially during summer when life is supposed to be easy and breezy.

If you're ready to quiet the voices of all the stuff in your home in the most gentle and simple way possible, here's how to start:

1. One room at a time. Even though we call it house hushing, we work one room at a time, and truthfully, I often do this when I know I'm going to clean that particular room anyway. Just yesterday I did this in my foyer. I ended up mopping and dusting, and then I hushed the foyer as well.
2. Choose a place to pile stuff knowing it's just going to be for a few hours. For me, that's usually the dining room table. I just pile stuff on there.
3. Remove the small things from the room you're focusing on and piling it in the place you chose to put stuff. In my foyer, I removed our guest book and some vases. If you were

doing your family room, you're going to get your surface decor, pillows, throws, stacks of books, baskets, extra plants, anything like that.

4. Simply enjoy your room for a little bit. I like to give it an hour. If it's in the family room, sometimes I'll eat lunch there – the idea is to get over the feeling of weirdness with it being empty. And then that's the time where I usually vacuum and dust, or just clean up a little bit. You know it just makes me feel better and it's more enjoyable and easier to clean the room when it's emptied out.
5. Your room is emptied, maybe you've tidied it up a little or dusted and it's starting to not feel super weird. Hopefully you're looking around and thinking, "Oh, it feels a little bit nice." So now, you're going to go back to that pile of stuff you took out and I want you to only bring in what you need for the summer. I want you to BE PICKY, and ask yourself what if you let it be more empty for the summer season. Usually the summer is when I want the least amount of stuff out in my house. We are busy, coming in and out more, my kids are home and I just like my house to be quieter and feel like a vacation home. One way to do that is to not have as much decor out. So I'm really picky about what I bring back in.
6. Address the stuff that is still in your holding place. Sometimes it's a mix. Actually, all the time it's a mix. Sometimes I realize, you know, that basket has seen better days. I need to trash it, or maybe I'm done with it and need to give it away. And there are things that maybe feel more spring or wintery or like the fall, and I know that I'm going to use them again. I'm going to pack them away for a few months. Some things like that would be maybe heavier fabrics or I have some throw rugs that are really shaggy and they feel wintery. I know during the summer I don't want them out, but I'm going to use them again. I have a place in my basement that I store stuff like that. It's not bins and bins and bins full, but it's got one or two bins or a shelf that is used for stuff that I'll switch out about halfway through the year. And then I bring the summer and fall team up and that stays out for half the year. However that works for you. It's all about evaluating what you have and thinking about what you want your summer home to feel like. If you're like me, you probably want it to be a little more simple.

Now, that's the way I hush the house room by room. So, like I said, yesterday I did the foyer. Today I am probably going to do our family room. I usually just attack one room at a time over a couple of days. It just makes the house feel fresher and lighter and like it's welcoming summer.

Sometimes instead of hushing the house room by room, I'll hush the house item by item. So here's what I mean:

I think of certain types of items and I walk around every room of the house with a bin or basket and focus on removing one type of thing for the summer to help quiet the house.

Examples of the types of things that I remove:

Hush the Pattern: If you read the House Rules book, you might remember House Rule #85: Pattern Fills a Room. So when you remove a pattern from a room, it instantly expands the room and makes it feel just a little bit bigger, like you have more space. So, if you're looking for more space, removing patterns can be a great, quick fix for that. Of course it doesn't mean I remove the pattern forever, sometimes I just like to do this for a month or two or three during the summer, and then for the fall I want my cozy pattern back.

Hush the Color: In the summer I like a neutral, naturalized color, more of an earthy feel. So I might just walk room to room and look for any colors that just don't feel right for the summer. If it's a pillow cover, I might wash it and pack it away. Maybe it's a stack of books, and I might just put them back in the bookshelf. So it's more about just pulling things forward to a more visible area or a room that's more public. And then other things I might put back on the shelf, maybe still visible, but they aren't front and center.

Simplify the Smalls: I'll walk around my house and give anything smaller than a pineapple the summer off. I'll grab a bin, bag or basket and walk around the house filling it up. I know that I'm going to come back to it and in the fall I will probably pull more of my favorite things out. I'm just trying to quiet my house for the summer. 9:47-9:50

Depart from the Art: I usually have more wall sabbaths, more margin on my walls during the summer. I might put a few photo frames away, sometimes I just have art hanging in interesting places over a window or a bookshelf. And a lot of times in the summer, I just pull that down just to quiet the room a little bit.

Unscatter the Scatter Rugs: If you have scatter rugs around your home, a lot of times you need those in the fall and winter to keep your toes warm. But in the summer, you might not need that as much and so you might unscatter your scatter rugs. They visually chop up a room. I love rugs, but rugless feel does seem a little bit summery, and this could be a chance for you to wash your rugs or just evaluate if they need to be replaced.

Pillows with Purpose: I also like to make sure my pillows all have a purpose. I love decorative pillows, I'm sure you do, too. In the summer, I only like to have out the decorative pillows that are actually functional – the ones we lay on the sofa and take a nap with or that we truly use. Everything else gets put away for the summer.

Alright, Hushing the House one room at a time was the first idea. Hushing the House one type of item at a time was the second idea. And the third way I summerize my home is to think of three words that I want to describe it and then to make sure my house feels that way.

If you were here around Christmas, you might remember the three words I use to guide me for Christmas decorating are always simplicity, comfort and joy.

I also have three words that guide me in the summer. I am going to tell you what those are, but before I do, I want you to think about and consider how you want your home to feel this summer. You can totally adapt and adopt my words if you want, but I want you to think about your own words as well. Ok, my words for summer are cool, calm and collected. Of course you can choose your own three words, but consider the words that you want to explain how you want your house to feel over the next three months. I hope your summer home feels exactly how you hope to feel if you actually rented out a home at the coast for the summer.

+++

This week in the Cozy Community we're diving into what it means to have a cool, calm and collected home for summer. And I'll also share my tip for if your space is feeling heavy or dark. When that happens, we always try to add a crisper. This summer in the cozy community we'll be doing our summer book club AND once again members can send in their problem or tricky rooms for me to do some mockups with suggestions. We'd love to have you join us for lighthearted summer encouragement in your home. We'll put the link in the show notes if you'd like to join us.