Better Homes and Gardens
REAL ESTATE



DESIGN 101

A GUIDE TO TRANSFORMING YOUR HOUSE INTO A WELL-STYLED HOME



THE IDEA OF DECORATING YOUR NEW HOME

may seem fun at first, but as you start to unpack and settle into your space, it may get a little daunting. And that's okay! There's a lot to think about. Just remember to take your time with decorating as your style or preferences may evolve over time.

Start your interior design journey by considering your preferences—are you excited about bold colors and a modern theme? Or do you prefer a farmhouse style with neutral tones? The best way to learn what you like is by gathering design inspiration from magazines, stores, or your personal travels. Collect paint chips, fabric swatches, and other samples to start identifying common themes and characteristics that you like.

Throughout this brochure, we share tips for decorating an entire house, mixing patterns, finding your furniture feng shui, and playing with colors. You'll get the inside scoop on pulling together a look that you'll love and, most importantly, a look that's completely yours. Remember, inspiration strikes when you least expect it. Let's dive in.

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5 TIPS FOR

Decorating a Whole House

Decorating your house can be a lot of fun, but it's also a daunting task. How do you maintain personal style without everything looking thrown together or mismatched? Making each room flow into the next might seem difficult, but these interior design secrets will help you achieve the house of your dreams. And yes, you can make a home's overall design cohesive without every room being identical; we'll show you how.

1 CHOOSE A THEME

An easy way to make your home design unified is to have a common theme throughout. Is it modern or traditional? Earthy or industrial? Do you love nature motifs? Vintage accessories? The look of farmhouse style? What about nautical pieces? This room perfectly captures a nautical vibe with ocean blue accents, weathered wood accents, and coral decor without going (dare we say it) overboard. Pick a look you love and repeat elements of it throughout each room of your house.

2 MATCH MATERIALS

When shopping for furniture and accessories, consider the materials of the items you're buying.







Use similar materials in each room—wicker, glass, or wood, for example—to unite the spaces. Vary the textures and finishes of these items so the effect is subtle rather than overly matchy or forced. Baskets make for easy tuck-away storage in any room, but you could also repeat their texture in other ways—as wicker furniture or a rattan rug, for example.

3 PICK A SIGNATURE COLOR

What colors are you drawn to? Find a color you really love (and a color you can live with) and weave it into each room's design. Mix light and dark shades, and change up the amount of color in each room, too. Think beyond just painting the walls—a burst of color can take the form of curtains, rugs, art prints, accent pillows, or even the color of your bathroom towels. For instance, orange provides bright accents in an otherwise neutral bedroom, but it can be used in more subtle shades in other rooms.

4 COORDINATE WALL COLORS

For maximum visual connectedness, use the same paint color in open spaces. Matching wall colors make separate spaces look as though they were intended to be joined. Here's a helpful tip: If you can close the door to a room, you can paint it a different color.

5 INCORPORATE FOCAL FEATURES

After all this talk about repetition and unity, let's return to the most important part of your house: you. Infuse your style into each room by including a surprise element or a conversation piece, such as a distinct framed print above your bed or a unique chandelier in your kitchen.

As you begin to decorate your house, remember it's okay to take your time. Start by considering themes, materials, colors, and features and go from there. Something may inspire you along the way that takes you in a new direction, and that's where the fun begins!

NO-FAIL TRICKS FOR

Arranging Furniture

IN EVERY ROOM

Arranging furniture can be a daunting design decision, but the layout is crucial to a room's comfort and function. These common scenarios will teach you the basics of furniture arranging so you can maximize every space. Learn how to arrange furniture in living rooms, bedrooms, dining areas, and more with these tricks.





LIVING ROOM

Furniture Arrangement Focal Point

If you're not sure how to arrange furniture in a living room, orient seating so it takes advantage of whatever view your room has to offer, whether that's a TV or a bank of windows. To create your own focal point, hang a large piece of art on a wall or create a vignette of favorite objects on a console or bookshelf. If you can't decide between arranging the furniture around the fireplace or the TV, choose both and mount the TV above the fireplace.

Family Room Furniture Arrangements with Storage

Family rooms are often storage hubs, so a good furniture arrangement makes room for cabinets, drop zones, and drawers. Consider freestanding pieces in a smaller room and wall-to-wall built-ins in a larger room. Include some storage near the TV for media items.

Symmetrical Living Room Furniture Arrangement

When arranging living room furniture, be sure to leave room for traffic and an entry drop spot. For a symmetrical layout, position key seating pieces near the fireplace and arrange them facing each other. Use end tables as landing spaces on both ends of the sofa. Pair chairs to balance the visual weight of the sofa and to maximize seating. The living room furniture arrangement provides plenty of space for guests but still feels cozy when it's only your family.

Floating Furniture Arrangement

If you have no free walls and a centered fireplace, float seating in the center of a room. Face chairs and the sofa toward each other to encourage conversation. Anchor the furniture grouping with a rug and a large coffee table. Frame the space with additional seating and cabinets for storage, positioned

around the perimeter of the room. Arranging furniture around a fireplace, especially in the winter, makes your living room feel inviting and cozy.

Living Room Furniture Arrangement for Conversation

A furniture arrangement that encourages conversation is ideal for rooms where you frequently entertain or relax with friends and family. For face-to-face chats, place seating no more than eight feet apart. In a large living room, use furniture to create comfortable islands. Face two sofas in the center of a room, and place a group of chairs and side tables at one end to create a separate conversation area.

Furniture Arrangement Details For Accent Tables

The key to a good furniture arrangement is in details like side tables and coffee tables. Consider your room size and furniture arrangement when choosing the right coffee table. Use round pedestal tables as side tables between chairs and sofas. The curves of round tables make them easier to navigate around. When space is tight, use nesting tables for flexible use when needed.

Dimensions for Living Room Furniture Arrangements

One of the secrets to learning how to arrange furniture is making sure you leave enough space between pieces. Allow 30 inches between furniture that you need to be able to walk around, and maintain 14 to 18 inches between a coffee table and sofa so drinks are within reaching distance. This rule still applies when planning a large living room furniture arrangement, because if a piece of furniture is too far away, it might look like it's floating in the room without purpose.

How to Arrange Living Room Furniture Around Lighting

A key factor in the overall mood of your room, lighting plays a big part when planning how to arrange living room furniture. Windows let in ample natural light, while chandeliers, sconces, and lamps keep the room bright at night. Arrange living room furniture near light sources to allow ample brightness for reading, conversation, and more. Improve lighting by installing in-floor electrical outlets to service floating furniture arrangements.

Furniture Arranging Ideas for Irregular Rooms

In an irregular room with one wide traffic lane, consider using the perimeter of the room for a computer desk and storage console. Choose chairs with casters so they're easy to move. Float the furniture to focus on the fireplace and the television. Ensure that the living room furniture is arranged near both the corner fireplace and television.

TV Room Furniture Arrangements

When deciding how to arrange living room furniture with a TV, prioritize comfort and accessibility. Place the television so the screen faces away from the sunlight. The viewing distance for a standard TV is 8 to 12 feet, and the best viewing angle is not more than 30 degrees. For traffic flow, create paths that flow behind viewers and not between them and the screen.



BEDROOM

Bedroom Furniture Arranging Tips

When planning a furniture arrangement for the bedroom, consider the size of your bed. Allow at least two feet on either side to allow for space to make the bed. Avoid placing the bed within three feet of the door; otherwise, the bed becomes a roadblock.

Furniture Arranging Ideas for Bed

It's possible to use a larger bed when arranging a small bedroom if you don't need a lot of storage furniture. Beyond the bed's placement, you should also consider the visual weight of your headboard. If the bed is slightly large for the room, opt for a visually lighter headboard, such as one that features metal scrollwork. A solid headboard consumes more visual space, and taller, heavier headboards work best in bigger bedrooms or bedrooms with tall ceilings.

Comfortable Bedroom Furniture Arrangement

To arrange a small bedroom with big furniture, you'll have to share a little. For an extra cozy space, place a bench at the foot of the bed or a small-scale armchair in a corner for bedroom seating. Consider placing a chair next to a bedside table, which can be shared by the chair and bed. If there isn't room next to the nightstand, pair the chair with a small garden stool, which will serve as a small table without occupying much space.

Bedroom Furniture Arrangement with Windows

When arranging bedroom furniture in a long and narrow space,



face the bed toward the window to make the most of the view. Include a desk or dressing table, chair, and mirror opposite the doorway. Place a bench or a pair of stools at the end of the bed for seating. Flank the bed with nightstands or nestle the bed into a built-in storage unit that includes two cabinet towers and a cabinet that bridges the head of the bed to create an alcove.

Square Bedroom Furniture Arrangement Ideas

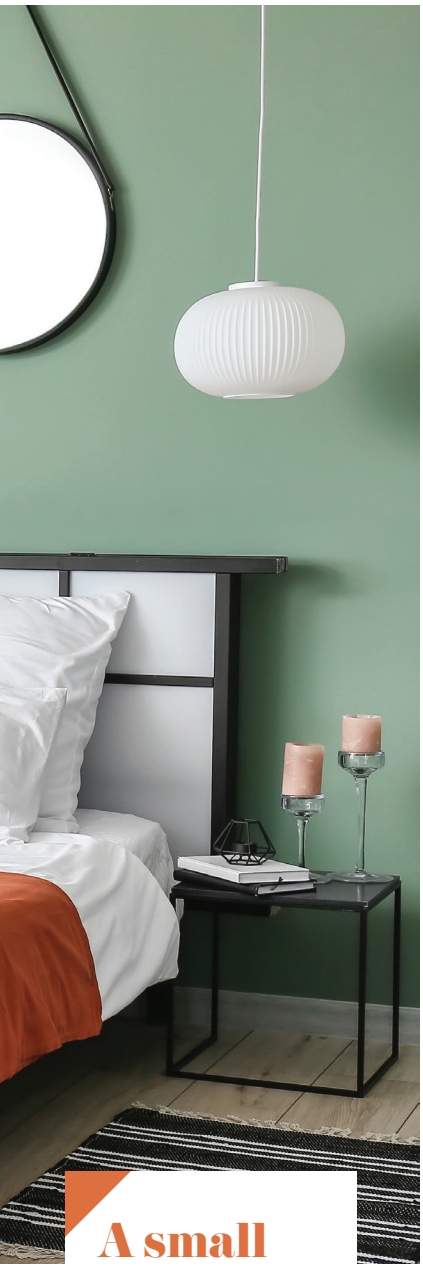
In a square bedroom, designate the bed as the focal point so the room feels grounded. Stretch storage up the wall with a freestanding armoire. Pair matching small-scale dressers to use as nightstands. Position the bed on an oversize rug that extends at least two feet on either side and at the foot of the bed.

Creative Bedroom Furniture Arranging Ideas

Don't be afraid to give your bed a slightly unusual placement, such as in front of a window, if it will help you maximize space. Every space is different, so it's important to play around with arranging bedroom furniture until you find the optimal layout.

Small Bedroom Furniture Arrangement

In a small bedroom, use fewer furniture pieces of a slightly larger scale to maximize floor space. Opt for tall pieces, such as an armoire, that add volume in a smaller footprint. A small bedroom furniture arrangement should be planned with the essentials in mind first, and then add extras, such as a bench or desk, as they fit.



A small bedroom should be planned with the essentials in mind first.

DINING ROOM

How to Arrange Dining Room Furniture

Consider how you use your dining room, such as for family-style meals or buffet-style serving, to determine the ideal furniture arrangement. Make furniture choices that support your needs, and place furniture in a room-appropriate layout. If you prefer buffet-style serving, a dining room furniture arrangement with plenty of walking space in-between the chairs and the buffet table is necessary.

Furniture Arranging Ideas for Dining Tables

Circular tables with pedestal bases let diners easily see everyone at the table and are suitable for tight dining spaces or square rooms. Rectangular tables limit seating, but they work well in rectangular dining rooms and come in a variety of lengths and widths. Oval tables with added leaves also work well in rectangular dining rooms and offer flexibility by adapting to small or large gatherings.

Furniture Arranging Ideas for a Rectangular Dining Room

In a rectangular dining space with no free walls, mix furniture pieces like chairs, benches, and settees for an eclectic look. For the best dining room furniture arrangement, duplicate the room shape with the shape of the table to maximize seating. Include storage, such as cabinets or bookcases, on the perimeter. Define the dining space with a rug that contrasts with the flooring.





Large Dining Room Furniture Arrangement

In an oversized dining space, opt for a table that preserves open space for other uses.

Add storage that will accommodate all the activities that take place in the room. When choosing chairs, select models that can also easily be brought up to the table for extra dining seating. Anchor the secondary seating areas with lamps and occasional tables. A good living room/dining room combo furniture arrangement looks natural and allows for meals and entertainment to coexist seamlessly.

Functional Dining Room Furniture Arrangement

Make the most of your dining room furniture arrangement with a wall of shelves that can provide multi-purpose storage. Store essentials for the dining room's alternative uses, such as office supplies, games, and crafts, or dining extras such as china, linens, and barware. If you don't want the contents of the cubbies showing, string a curtain across the front of the shelving system.

Dining Room Furniture Arranging with Lights

Choose and place lighting that adapts to the room's functions. For example, hang the chandelier with extra cord length so it can be adjusted for homework or dining. Use dimmer switches, lamps, and sconces to set the mood for the occasion.

Dining Room Furniture Arranging Tips

For an optimal dining room furniture arrangement, be sure to allow a minimum of 36 inches from the table to the wall on all sides. Position the table so traffic flows smoothly around it and chairs have plenty of space to slide out. If space allows, you can even slip a sofa along a wall in your dining room for more casual conversation post-dinner.

Measurements for Dining Room Furniture Arrangements

When determining how many chairs you can fit around your table, allow for a width of 20 to 24 inches and a depth of 15 inches per place setting. You should also plan to leave at least six inches between chairs. This furniture arranging tip will keep guests comfortable and not too close.

As you arrange furniture in your home, keep in mind functionality, measurements, and style to maximize your space.

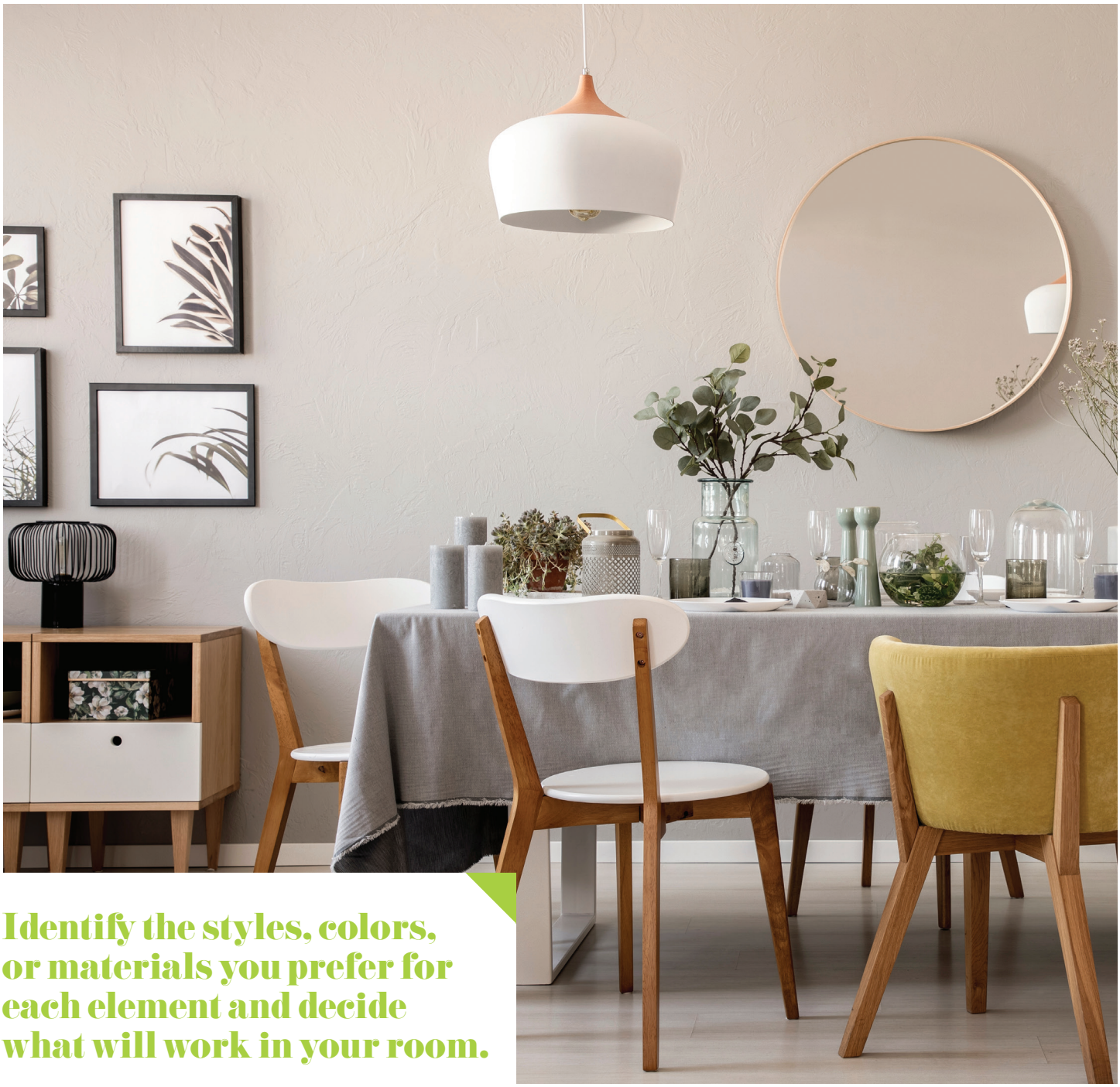
15 DECORATING TIPS TO

Expertly Pull a Look Together

Decorating can be challenging when there are so many elements to consider. To make the process easier and more enjoyable, there are a few strategies that might help simplify your decorating decisions. Here's how to pull together a look you'll love.

1 GET STARTED
Before starting any decorating project, consider your own preferences. Think about what patterns, colors, and styles grab your attention. For example, determine whether you tend to gravitate towards bright, bold colors or subtle, neutral tones. You might not be able to pinpoint exactly why you like something but hang on to the idea if it catches your eye.





Identify the styles, colors, or materials you prefer for each element and decide what will work in your room.

2 GATHER INSPIRATION

You can find decorating inspiration nearly anywhere, but honing in on a few key areas can help make gathering ideas easier. Look to your wardrobe, tear out pages of magazines, save images you find online, and take pictures of the scenery around you. You can also collect paint chips, fabric swatches, and other samples that stand out to you. Lay it all out and start identifying common themes and characteristics in the items you've gathered.

3 PLAN AROUND EXISTING ELEMENTS

If you're redecorating a room that already has a few foundational elements in place, such as major furniture pieces or stand-out architectural features, plan your decorating scheme around these existing components. Seek out new decor that will mix well while also adding a fresh perspective. Incorporating older features into your design plan, rather than ignoring them, will help you create a more cohesive result.

4 PLAN YOUR INVESTMENTS

When planning a larger decorating makeover, ask yourself where you're willing to invest some money. If your sofa needs upgrading, for example, shop around for a new one and then decorate the room around the piece. A major element such as a sofa, dining room table, or area rug often sets the tone for your room's style and can be the reference point for other decorating decisions.

5 MAKE LISTS AND MEASUREMENTS

Take stock of all the possible elements a room will need, including furniture, rugs, lighting, accessories, wall decor, window treatments, and paint. Identify the styles, colors, or materials you prefer for each element and what will work in your room. Take measurements and make a rough sketch of the room to help you plan the space and decide what will fit when you're out shopping.

6 BRUSH UP ON BASICS

Before you begin designing a room, familiarize yourself with some of the basics of decorating, such as color theory, scale, texture, pattern mixing, and furniture arranging. For extra help, professional interior designers can be valuable resources that bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to your decorating project. But if hiring a pro is outside the scope of your budget, consider working with a designer on a consultation basis, which will give you some guidance for a smaller price. Some home furnishings companies even offer free design consultations to help you get started.





Identifying a color scheme will help guide the rest of your decorating decisions.



7 CHOOSE A COLOR SCHEME

Identifying a color scheme will help guide the rest of your decorating decisions, including choosing furniture, accessories, and paint colors. Go into a decorating project with a few key colors in mind, but allow for some flexibility if needed. For example, you might find a blue rug with green accents that you love, but you had planned to use yellow as your accent hue. Because the rug will likely be a major component of the room, you might consider altering your original color palette idea.

8 SELECT A DECORATING STYLE

Having an initial idea of what style you want to decorate with will make the project easier and help your final look flow better. But keep in mind that you don't have to stick with just one. Mixing and matching styles can create a more interesting, layered look. Whether you prefer modern glam, rustic farmhouse, or another combination, knowing what styles you're going for will help you identify items to buy.



9 CONSIDER FUNCTION

Think about how you'll use the room as you make decorating decisions. In a dining room, for example, consider whether you'll use the space mostly for entertaining or casual, everyday meals. You should also determine what items you'll need to store in the room so you can incorporate storage into your decorating plans.

10 DECORATE WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

Take stock of what you already have and decide what to keep and what to replace. Consider bringing in pieces from other areas of your home, such as an accent chair from your bedroom that would work better in the living room. Redecorate in a way that brings the relocated piece into the fold of its new home.

11 UPDATE EXISTING DECOR

Repurposing or refreshing items you already own can help minimize the budget for your decorating project. Slipcover an old sofa, reupholster a tattered chair or paint a piece of furniture to give an old item a whole new look. Then layer in less expensive updates, such as throw pillows or lamps, for an all-around update.

12 KNOW WHERE TO SHOP

While you're out and about, make a note of things you see in stores that you like (or bookmark pages when browsing online). That way, you'll know where to go when you're ready to make purchases. It's also a good idea to snap a few photos of your space beforehand for reference while shopping.



13 TRY NEW TRENDS

If you're looking for something new, don't be afraid to experiment with new decorating trends. Try a bold paint color you saw in a magazine or track down a trendy light fixture you keep seeing on Instagram. A simple, relatively inexpensive update is often the best way to try out current trends because you can easily switch it up again if you decide it isn't for you.

14 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Decorating often happens slowly as you gather new items over time. With each purchase, think about how the item will fit into the overall look of the room. Keep track of receipts and tags so you can easily make returns and exchanges if needed.

15 EDIT, EDIT, EDIT

Don't be afraid to change things up and move/remove items as you decorate. Play around with different furniture arrangements and accessory placements until you find a look you like. If you're not sure whether a certain arrangement works, live with it for a few days before rearranging again if needed.

Take your time as you decorate. Allowing your look to change and evolve over time will create a room that has personality and depth, rather than a space that looks like it was thrown together in a weekend. As you travel or visit new stores, you'll continue to find new pieces and decorating inspiration. Over time, you'll become even more in tune with what you like and how to create a room you love.



HOW TO

Mix Patterns

Mixing patterns is easy but making the end product look good can be a challenge. Follow these easy tips to give your home an effortlessly stylish look.

START BASIC

Consider the 60/30/10 approach. Stick to 60 percent of a favorite pattern, 30 percent of a second pattern, and 10 percent of a third as an accent. Try three patterns in a range of scales, such as a narrow stripe, a midsize geometric, and a bold floral. Include solids in supporting roles on a sofa or the floor.

REPEAT COLORS IN PATTERNS

Repeating colors from pattern to pattern can help even disparate patterns seem like first cousins. Accentuate underplayed shared colors in



the patterns. If you use one pattern, such as a stripe, repeat it somewhere else in the room, even if the color and scale change.

PLAY PATTERN MATCHER

A large-scale print can be too big for a pillow or small room, and a complicated pattern might disappear in the folds of drapery. Bring home fabric, wallpaper, rug, and curtain samples to test the look. A neutral ground, like the solid background color on which a pattern is printed, pulls colorful patterns together to create visual interest without taxing a space with too much of a good thing.

GO BEYOND FABRICS

Repeat motifs beyond fabrics and soft goods. An X-pattern in a rug can be reinterpreted in an X-base table, or the stripe of wainscoting can appear on a striped pillow.

PLAY WITH PATTERN SIZE

Select the largest pattern first to serve as a jumping-off point for other patterns, colors, and accessories.

CLEVER COORDINATION

Coordinate patterns by matching less prominent colors, such as a blue-gray in the floral pillow that's repeated as a blue-gray print on the seat cushion.

DECORATING A HOME, WHETHER

it's arranging furniture, coordinating wall colors, matching materials, or sticking with a theme—is an exciting time for you and your family. You get to design a space that's truly yours and makes you happy. Over time, your look or style may change, which will add more depth and personality to each room as you continue to live in your home.

As you start to think about decorating (or redecorating) your home, consider these expert tips on pulling together your perfect look. Understanding the basics of decorating and interior design is a great start, but when it comes down to it, it's all about creating a space where you feel comfortable and happy. And only you know the answer to that.





The wallpaper pattern should have a scale all its own.

WORK WITH WALLPAPER

When mixing patterns in a wallpapered room, using all the mixing rules is very important. Start with scale. The wallpaper pattern should have a scale all its own. Whether large, medium, or small, other patterns in the room should not match its scale.

SUBTLE PATTERN

Pattern doesn't have to mean a cacophony of color, but it is still vital, even if you are going for a subtle look. Use tone-on-tone patterns and low-contrast patterns so a subdued palette doesn't fall flat.

TAKE A PATTERN BREAK

Don't forget the solids, especially in a room with a bold color palette or strong features. Fabulous patterns shine brighter in a room where the eye has a place to rest, such as on a neutral wall or a solid sofa.

As you're decorating your home, consider using patterns to create an edge in your style. Play with different patterns and fabrics to see what fits with your vision. You never know—something may surprise you!

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