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DESIGN SERVICES

THE **DO'S AND DON'TS** IN INTERIOR DESIGN

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ABOUT THE **AUTHOR**



Jacqueline Brathwaite-West is an expert, an accomplished interior designer and internationally published author who has brought her flair for color, innate elegance and eye for detail to some of the metropolitan area most beautiful home, medical facilities and commercial spaces. Working in a variety of styles – modern, contemporary, traditional, urban, glamorous and transitional - Jacqueline has transformed environments into impactful, functional and timeless spaces.

Jacqueline's ease and expertise in all facets of the design process - from floor plans, space planning, lighting, accessorizing, window treatments, colors schemes, furniture selection, home staging, construction and project management allows her to be ready for any size job and to conquer any challenge. Jacqueline values the relationships she's created and maintained within the interior design trade among artisans, architects, contractors, manufactures and others.

A graduate of Parsons School of Design - The New School in Interior Design in New York City, she has been featured in the NJ.com, dgiWire, Market Watch, Village Voice, The Courier News, New Jersey House & Home, Design NJ, The Record Home Scape, New Jersey Home and Style, NJBIZ, Inside Central New Jersey, The Princeton Packet and other publications. She appeared as a guest on the radio show "Decorate and Design America" with host Art the Builder. Jacqueline holds a Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Systems and Masters of Business Administration in Marketing.

Jacqueline enjoys spending time with her husband, two sons and entertaining with family and friends. A seasoned traveler, she is on a perpetual quest to bring new and exciting design ideas to her clients to create a comfortable and beautiful environment. She published her first book Outstanding RESULTS! Out Of The Box Thinking For Business and Life. She received awards for Best of Houzz, Arts and Community Service, Business Woman of the Year and Leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Whether you live in a city apartment, residential home or farm cottage, you want to make your living space as comfy and appealing as possible. But achieving that drop dead gorgeous look that appears on design shows isn't always easy – and yet they make it look so effortless.

Here's a secret: those show hosts are professional decorators, the hard work and planning of the space is done before the show is aired. We are just individual who are prone to designing mistakes, but that is no reason to give up and be contempt with your mismatched settings and not-too-comfortable environment. Designing or decorating a space without a strategy is pretty much the same as driving without some kind of direction.

So, to save you some time and money, I've compiled some of the most well-known dos and don'ts when it comes to interior designing.

1. Don't push all the furniture against the walls

Furniture placement is not a Tetris game. Your furniture needs breathing space to make your room seem like a much more interesting zone.

Even if it's only a few inches away from the walls, allowing the furniture to “float” can help to create a conversation grouping, for example, in your living room.

2. Don't pick your paint color first

Deciding which tones to splash on your walls should be one of your last decisions. You have an entire rainbow of colors to choose from, and seeing what furniture pieces and decorative items are placed in a room can help you pick out the perfect color.

Besides, it is much harder to find upholstery or accessories that perfectly fit with your wall colors than vice versa.

3. Don't mix up your colors too much

You want your home to have a cohesive feel, and therefore you do not need to paint every room in a different color.

Choose three main colors to use throughout your house to make it much easier on yourself. Then opt for different hues of those main colors for a fresh look that is still consistent (for example, arctic blue differs considerably from cobalt blue).

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4. Do use dramatic color in a small space

Small spaces that you pass through can show off a color in a striking way. While it's true that dramatic colors can make a room feel heavy or dark, painting your pantry or hallway in a dark tone is a different matter. Opting for dramatic hues in small spaces makes the entire house feel colorful and bigger, because it turns a tiny area you might not notice into a striking spot that grabs your attention.

5. Do make the most of your lighting

Lighting should always be planned into your budget – never as an afterthought. A well-chosen light fixture can transform the look and feel of a room considerably.

Don't be afraid to show off your personality with a statement piece. And remember: a dimmer switch gives you the ability to create the perfect mood whenever you please.



INTRODUCTION

6. Don't be selfish with seating

There's truth in the "less is more" saying, but don't expect your guests to keep standing while you entertain. For the living room, you will need the sort of chairs that people can pull up and space together to allow for a flowing conversation.

And if space is an issue, make sure you have a couple of sexy dining chairs that can be pulled into the living area.

7. Do use different textures

Texture adds dimension and interest to a room. It appeals to our visual and tactile senses when we perceive a space that makes use of smooths, roughs, shines, and dulls – just not in an overkill fashion.

Add some texture with a rug, a piece of wall art, a scatter cushion on the couch, or an interesting coffee table.

8. Don't tease your walls

What I mean by that is don't opt for small pieces of art or mirrors on large, bare walls. That big empty space will swallow them whole. Either go big, or go another route.

Modular shelves add charming character to a wall, and so does busy wallpaper. Or share in the hot trend of wall decal words to spice up that big wall.

9. Do pay attention to your hallway

Your hallway is a fantastic opportunity for you to make a statement about your style. And yet it doesn't have to be anything grand – any statement is better than none at all.

Use paint or patterned wallpaper to add color and personality, and perhaps hang a beautiful mirror or painting. A mirror is especially clever, as it reflects light and creates the illusion of more space.

Use a table to place mail, keys, and other small items when you enter your house.

10. Don't use tiny potted plants

Like everything in your home, the plants should make a statement – or else leave them outside. And although small planters were fabulous in the 1970s, modern interior style has moved on.

Rather opt for one large tree or plant in a pot. A series of itty-bitty indoor plants will just make your space seem cluttered.

11. Do use accent pieces

A few accent items to incorporate the look you want without being overwhelming.

If you have a love for beach houses, for example, display a stylish collection of seashells or coral on a side table or on your bookshelf. This is going to look far more sophisticated than designing an entire beach-style room.

INTRODUCTION

12. Don't let everything match

Interior catalogues are designed to sell furniture, not to show you how you should be living. Nobody lives that way, so don't try so hard to match that look.

Rather create a lived-in look by making your room's design eclectic, not a showroom. Use different pieces and accents that catch the eye and add interest to your space.

13. Don't buy small, cheap throw pillows with solid forms. Pillows should be generous, overstuffed and formable. Use soft, plush, down-filled pillows that can take a shape. There are great synthetic fill options, too. Use the classic "designer's chop" to determine if they will shape up: a quick karate chop to the top edge to break up the pillow's blockiness.

Get rid of any dead pillows that sit like a lump. Say goodbye to postage-stamp-size pillows and matchy-matchy ones that came with the furniture. Instead, overstuff an 18-inch pillow cover with a 20-inch insert for a professional look.

BEDROOM DO'S AND DON'TS

The Do's and Don'ts of Decorating a Small Bedroom

Dreaming your tiny bedroom had space for more than a bed?
Or your guest room was more than a dumping ground? Then read on



Small bedrooms can be tricky to decorate. They often end up as unloved spaces with little personality because we're worried that too much stuff will "shrink" them visually. Conversely, small spare rooms can end up as dumping grounds for old fitness equipment, packaging or clothes-drying racks.

While a typical master bedroom is usually large enough to accommodate cabinets and chests of drawers, a second or third bedroom may be big enough only for a bed and little else. How can you make the most of every square inch, and ensure that a small bedroom is both stylish and functional? Here are some do's and don'ts for making a small bedroom look good and work hard.

Don't assume it's too tiny for two. Even small guest rooms can often accommodate two single beds; consider extra-narrow designs if necessary.

This chic room doesn't compromise on style, with painted brickwork and a graphic rug adding industrial attitude. Wall lights are a terrific space-saving solution, but if they're not an option, try reading lights that clip on headboards.

If conventional bedside tables aren't possible, repurpose something else. For example: two logs can do the job.

Do add a feature wall. Painting all four walls the same color can exaggerate the boxy feel of a small square room. Instead, create a focal point by adding a wall of luxe paper, textured paneling or an interesting paint effect.

BEDROOM DO'S AND DON'TS

Next to the white walls, the darker shades and ombré effect on the back wall lead the eye to it, creating a depth of field. This room may be compact, but it's far from a featureless box.

Do go dual-purpose. Multifunctional furniture is your friend in a small bedroom. A bookcase works as a headboard, bedside table and home for books all in one. Stylistically, a piece like this also helps transform a plain white cell into a Zen-like getaway.

Ceiling-mounted spotlights are another smart move in rooms with low ceilings.

Don't underdecorate. The temptation in a small space can be to pare back. But that can end up looking dull and undesigned. Don't be scared to accommodate some of the elements you might find in a larger room, including pictures, rugs and decorative lighting. The result is a "proper" room — a cozy retreat to which you'll enjoy escaping.

Don't choose closets with fussy handles. In this snug sleep space, the cabinet almost disappears, thanks to its minimal, hardware-free doors. A glossy finish also bounces light around the room.

A bed with a simple frame is another trick for a small room since it appears to take up less space.

Do think laterally. Is it a bed, is it a desk ... or perhaps it's a "besk"? Our homes are getting smaller, so in the future, all bedrooms might look like this one. The smart integrated bureau is a good idea for an older child's room, providing a place to catch up on social media or do homework, while the pullout bed underneath is just the ticket for sleepovers with friends.

In general, going custom may be the answer to suit your exact needs and dimensions, so talk to an interior designer, carpenter or builder about the possibilities.

Do use mirrors. It's the oldest trick in the book, but a wall of mirrored closet doors will help a small room feel larger. Ensure that the room is just as chic, simple and tidy — reflected clutter and "floordrobes" can look twice as bad!

Do copy houseboat style. A lot of inspiration for small-space living can be gained from houseboats. A low unit around the edge of the room provides storage and a bedside table without taking up an entire wall, as a closet would.

BATHROOM DO'S AND DON'TS

Don't skip the design plan: The layout and functionality for your new bathroom should be determined by who will be using it the most.

Kids' bathroom: Consider a double sink for a faster morning and bedtime routine; add a built-in, pull out, step stool to help little ones reach the sink; and no-slip tile to avoid any bath time accidents.

Guest bath: Make guests feel at home by incorporating extra shelving so they have a place to store their items without feeling intrusive. Consider built-in shelving both in the wall and the shower.

Master en suite: If you're looking to incorporate spa-like features into your home, this is the place to do so. Consider adding a heated marble floor (the small space will keep the cost down), a walk-in shower and plenty of natural light.



Do assess your skill set: While you may have the vision, do you have the plumbing, flooring and general contracting experience to successfully complete your remodeling project? If you could use a professional hand, visit a site such as [Porch.com](https://www.porch.com) or [Angie's List](https://www.angieslist.com) to find remodeling professionals in your area.

Do select appropriate finishes: Bathrooms can become dated in as little as five years. If you go trendy, consider looking into low cost fixtures and materials to keep your investment to a minimum. If you are looking for a timeless look, consult a professional designer to help select neutral, high-end finishes.

BATHROOM DO'S AND DON'TS

Don't move the plumbing and ventilation: Two of the most important functional features of a bathroom are the plumbing and the ventilation. Surprise plumbing incidents can be costly, so base all renovations around the existing plumbing.

Avoid blocking the main ventilation source (typically a vent fan or window). If your bathroom doesn't currently have a source of ventilation, this should be at the top of your remodeling to-do list, to be proactive about preventing mold.

Do maximize storage capabilities: Does your home have adequate linen or hall closet space, or is your bathroom the primary storage hub for towels, linens, toiletries and cleaning supplies? Consider built-in wall shelves, or wall-to-wall ceiling storage with built-in recessed light

LIVINGROOM DO'S AND DON'TS

The living room is arguably the most important room in the house when it comes to decorating. It's the room where you entertain guests and loved ones, if you do not have a family room, and it's where families tend to spend the bulk of their at-home time together (after the kitchen). In order to make sure it looks its best be sure to follow these living room do's and don'ts.



DO choose your most expensive or favorite item and decorate around it.

DON'T use an area rug that is too small. This is the number one mistake people make when decorating living rooms.

DO make sure that all the pieces of furniture fit on the rug. Ideally all four legs of major pieces should be on it, but if this simply isn't possible make sure to fit at least the front legs on the rug (the back legs can be off). All the legs of smaller pieces should be on the rug whenever possible.

DO pull the furniture away from the walls when possible in order to create intimate conversation areas.

DON'T hang artwork too high. People have a tendency to hang art closer to the ceiling than it should be. This goes for every room in the house.

LIVINGROOM DO'S AND DON'TS

DO hang artwork at eye-level. Obviously this varies from person to person, so use your judgment.

But it's better to err on the side of lower rather than higher.

DON'T ignore the importance of dimmer switches. Each and every light in a living room should have a dimmer switch on it.

DO have a mix of overhead, ambient and task lighting. Use table lamps, floor lamps, sconces – whatever you like. Just be sure to use a mix.

It will provide more light as well as make the room and everyone in it look better.

DON'T use too many throw pillows. Throw pillows are great decorative accents but don't use so many that you have to move them all off the couch before you sit down.

DO use pillows thoughtfully. Choose a few that enhance the piece of furniture and overall look of the room. And don't be afraid to invest in some high-quality pillows. They're small but they have a big impact.

DON'T be afraid to mix high items with low. There are a lot of great ways to save, and there are some times when you should splurge.

DO buy the best quality sofa you can afford. A sofa is a big investment and you want it to last. Remember, a sofa of average quality should last at least 10 years while a high-end sofa should last up to 25.

DON'T be afraid to decorate with patterns. They add life and character to a space.

DO follow the basic rules of decorating with patterns. The ideal number to use in a single room is three. Mix the scale using one large, one medium, and one small (or some other combination of the three).

DON'T let anyone else tell you how you should or shouldn't decorate. It's your home and it needs to be right for you.

DO follow the basic rules and mathematics of decorating. They exist not to control how your home looks, but to guide you into creating a space that's pleasing to the eye.

LIVINGROOM DO'S AND DON'TS

THE 5

MOST COMMON LIVING ROOM MISTAKES

I've been to enough houses to know what I do and don't like in other people's living rooms. While some have good taste, there are a few design mistakes folks make again and again.

Here's a list of the eight most egregious blunders and what you can do to fix them.

MISTAKE 1: Not Using Color

We know, we know: You're going for minimalist. But without any color, your sleek, modern space can quickly turn boring and sterile.

SOLUTION 1: Baby Steps

Look, you don't have to paint the whole house magenta. But pops of color here and there (a throw pillow! an accent table! an artfully hued floating fireplace!) will give a room personality and liveliness.

MISTAKE 2: Matchy-Matchy Furniture

Hey, guess what? Jennifer Convertibles totally wants to sell you a Price Is Right-style matching living-room set. Guess what else? You should just step away from the Price Is Right-style matching living-room set.

SOLUTION 2: Mix It Up

Texture, size, historical era: Go for an eclectic mix that shows off your unique style. As long as the proportions are right and there are some unifying aesthetics, it's totally fine to have mismatched furniture.

MISTAKE 3: Relying Exclusively on Overhead Lighting

You know that icky fluorescent glow you get some retail dressing rooms. That's what your houseguests feel every time they come over.

SOLUTION 3: Area Lights

Play around with table and floor lamps, as well as overhead lights on dimmers. Lighting sources at different heights and levels of brightness will yield a warm, flattering glow and ambience.

LIVINGROOM DO'S AND DON'TS

MISTAKE 4: Forgetting End Tables

You should never balance a glass of Malbec on a couch cushion. Never

SOLUTION 4: Get an end table.

MISTAKE 5: Buying Furniture You'll Never Use

Yes, an antique writing desk would make you look so bookish and cool. But be honest with yourself. Are you ever going to use an antique writing desk? (Or a retro church pew? Or a giant farmhouse table if you haven't entertained since the Clinton administration?) Don't decorate for the person you want to be—decorate for the person you are.

SOLUTION 5: Get to the Stuff You Do Need (and Design Around It)

Maybe you watch a lot of Netflix. There's no shame in making the (sleekly hung) TV the focal point of your living room. Maybe your 4-year-old has lots of Tonka trucks. Totally fine to build toy chests into your decor. If you make design choices that suit your lifestyle, I promise you won't be disappointed.

KITCHEN DESIGN **DO'S AND DON'TS**

It's a functional space,
so you want to make sure your kitchen works.

Follow these tips and you'll be cooking in bliss.



Don't: Ignore the layout rules

There are certain rules when designing a kitchen which relate to flow and ergonomics, and ultimately make sense, no matter what size or style of kitchen you have. The all important kitchen 'triangle' is a guideline to incorporate the major activities in the kitchen, which revolve around firstly the sink, followed closely in use by the fridge and the cooking area.

In today's open plan kitchen, the classic island bench is the perfect layout for the triangle, but if you are keeping all your services along one wall then ensure your sink is central to the fridge and cook. Keeping major traffic patterns away from the intersecting triangle lines is the best option, so avoid where possible kitchen layouts which create thoroughfares.

KITCHEN DESIGN **DO'S AND DON'TS**

Do: Embrace negative space

A great kitchen is a balance between function and aesthetics, so don't sacrifice one for the other. Not every wall needs cabinetry, and leaving some breathing room can prevent the room feeling overdone or contrived. If you are concerned about storage space, research clever products which create and save space, such as drawer dividers. Think about the details, right down to your appliance choices and bench thickness.

Consider the lines and finishes of the cabinetry, and how they relate different elements of the room. Mismatched cabinet, appliances and rangehoods can create visual chaos, whereas a more integrated cabinet solution can also help streamline the room's design. In areas where appliances are highly visible, you could also consider bespoke appliance finishes such as matte black, or vintage white, to avoid overuse of stainless steel finishes.

Don't: Be boring

Kitchens are the hub of the home, so create a design that reflects your personal aesthetic. If you are concerned about resale, or over styling, then keep the design streamline and simple, adding colorful and quirky accents through lighting, bar stools and kitchen accessories. The best kitchens are those with warmth and soul, not those that are magazine ready. Design your kitchen for living, and make sure you consider not only how the kitchen looks, but how it will perform with everyday tasks, such as cleaning, cooking and storage.

Do: Engage professionals

We live in a DIY culture, and being able and willing to keep costs down is admirable – especially as kitchen installation costs can run into the tens of thousands. But knowing when to engage professional help is the key to balancing kitchen design costs. If you feel confident with the look of your kitchen, but unsure of the cost structures, working with a kitchen designer will help maximize your budget. Putting together a workbook of ideas. – images, layout sketches and details such as tiling options, can help you communicate your ideas to tradies and design professionals.

FAMILY ROOM DESIGN IDEAS

For a peaceful home, it's essential that the family room works for all the family. Consider what changes you could make to the style, layout and practicality of your family room to ensure that everyone in the family finds this room an inviting space to relax in.

The family room is the most sociable room in the house, so make sure it provides enough seating for the whole family, plus a few guests. If you don't have the space for extra chairs, an upholstered or leather pouffe or ottoman will do the job and can be used as a footstool when not needed as a seat. If you're looking to buy a new armchair, check whether you have room to upgrade to a loveseat that can seat two people who are happy to snuggle up together.



Above all, your family room needs to offer comfort. If your room leaves you feeling cold, make it feel more cozy simply by adding soft texture. Plush carpet or a rug can transform the look of a room, instantly making it feel more welcoming. Deep sofas with plump seats adorned with a line of squashy pillow will entice the whole family to settle in and spend the evening together, rather than in separate rooms. Wool or linen throws folded over sofa arms will visually soften the room as well as providing warmth when needed.

If you have children, incorporate a play area into your family room. A low-level table that can double up as a desk for drawing will be useful for everyone, and bean bags or knitted pouffes will serve as comfy seats for little ones. Choose hard-wearing flooring and loose-covered sofas with removable and washable covers that can stand up to a few spills. Family rooms require plenty of storage, so make sure everyone in the family has an assigned bookshelf, drawer or trunk to hide their books, consoles or toys inside.

FAMILY ROOM DESIGN IDEAS

A large sofa is a must in a family living room to ensure everybody has somewhere to get comfy. A soft palette of grey and neutrals will set a calm backdrop that can be jazzed up with a host of colorful pillows.

If you have young children, you'll want to keep an eye on them, so pop a child's desk in your family room so they can entertain themselves with coloring while you relax with a cup of tea or coffee

Make your family room inviting for adults and kids alike by painting the walls bold blue – or another bold color of your choice children will love the vibrant shade, yet it's sophisticated enough for adult tastes. The bookcase makes a great feature, too.

Storage is key in a family room to hide away your family's essentials so, if you've space, pop a sideboard or dresser against one wall and use to hide clutter and display your favourite things. Extra seating is always a bonus in a family room, so squeeze in an armchair if possible.

If you're lucky enough to have a woodburner, make it the focal point of your family room by surrounding it with a sofa, smart leather armchair and a footstool. Then cozy up with your family on cold winter evenings.

Having a family doesn't mean you can't express yourself through your family room decor and accessories. Choose a durable leather sofa for an easy-to-clean option, then put up a funky ceiling light – it'll be well out of the way of little fingers!

Personalize your family room with an arrangement of favorite family photographs. A bare expanse of wall above the sofa or a sideboard makes the ideal spot. Choose frames that are identical in size and colour, and arrange in a grid formation to make a visual impact.

Create a media-friendly arrangement in a family room. Choose low units that won't overwhelm the room and keep the wall space above feeling open by putting up simple floating shelves. Go for a pale colour scheme for walls and furniture to give a unified look and hide all TV-related gadgetry in wicker baskets.

Create an eye-catching display of artwork and box shelves filled with family pictures on the wall above the sofa. Position similar sized frames in a rectangular arrangement around one larger picture in the center. Pick artwork or photographs that share the same colours for a coordinated look.

YOUR ENTRYWAY AND **MUDROOM**

Your entryway is the first and last room both you and your guests see, so creating a memorable and inspirational space is key. Whether you have a grand foyer or a no-frills mudroom, entryway designs should reflect your home's overall style and personality. As you look through entryway ideas and browse entryway pictures, consider functionality as well as aesthetics to achieve a stylish, organized entry space that's sure to wow visitors.

Front entries almost always become a drop zone for stuff, which can make decorating seem like a lost cause. However, as you contemplate various entryway decorating ideas, you'll notice that the decor often doubles as an organizational system. Instead of letting the clutter win, embrace it by adding entryway storage for keys, purses, coats and shoes. Giving each item a designated space will help keep you sane when coming and going, as well as help everyone focus on the entryway decor, not the accumulation of stuff. If you have multiple people in your home, give everyone their own drop spot and include a little extra space for guests.

The little details are where you can really have fun with your entryway design — hooks, bowls and bins don't have to be boring! The most versatile and unique entryway decorating ideas consist of bringing together different materials, colors and textures, such as wood tones and metallics, to turn a bland area into a stylish space. If you have open wall space, hang artwork or photographs that make you happy or have conversation-starting potential — the most successful entryway ideas incorporate personalized touches as well as functional pieces. Additionally, fresh flowers on a table always make for an interesting and elegant entryway design.

HOW DO I MAKE MY FRONT ENTRANCE STAND OUT?

If you're in the market for heavy-duty entryway remodeling and revamping, you have a lot of options open to you — you'd be surprised by the huge range of entry remodeling ideas on Houzz and Pinterest alone! As you browse entryway photos and contemplate entryway design ideas, you'll notice that a successful entry design all starts with the front door. So to start your entryway remodel off right, pick out a front door that is style appropriate yet interesting and unique. Think about what works best with your home — an all-glass door is pretty contemporary, while an ornate wood door is elegant and traditional. An entryway remodel is all about livening and enhancing your space, so don't be afraid to take creative chances and experiment with door sizes and shapes. An arched door works well for Mediterranean-style homes, and a double door is a great way to make a dramatic statement.

YOUR ENTRYWAY AND **MUDROOM**

If your front entrance is set back from the facade of your home, try using a lighter or brighter color palette, and adding potted plants and a welcome mat to make it stand out. Don't forget about proper lighting — wall sconces or hanging lights will not only help guide visitors in the dark, but will showcase your door and decor. To give your current front door a quick and cost-effective update, try painting it a bright color or adding new hardware for a fresh new look.

HOW DO I TURN MY ENTRY ROOM INTO A MUDROOM?

For larger families, a mudroom is the ideal storage space for shoes, lunch bags, sports equipment and pet essentials. This area also does not have to be a strictly utilitarian space — you can take your creative entryway ideas and apply them to your mudroom! Although this space is often near the back door or garage, you don't need an entire room to reap the benefits — a narrow hall or partial wall will do just fine. In the end, a mudroom is all about the storage. Hall trees, counters, tables and benches can collect and organize day-to-day items, while built-in lockers or cubbies will give individual family members their own space. You can further organize your built-ins by adding smaller storage solutions, such as baskets, bins and trays.

HOW TO PICK A COLOR PALETTE FOR YOUR WHOLE HOUSE

After looking at ways to work through paint-color procrastination and how to find color inspiration all around you, we are ready to tackle the last, and possibly most challenging, part of our color series: the whole-house paint palette.

If picking one paint color is tricky, how on earth do you find colors for an entire house? How can you know they will go together? Where do you even begin? Join us as we navigate the process of selecting colors for a whole house, and gather inspiration (and maybe a little courage) to tackle your own walls.



Note which rooms are visible to one another. Walk through your house and note which spaces you can see from each room. Use a floor plan (a rough sketch is fine) to keep track.

Adjoining rooms are part of this, but you may be able to see quite a bit farther — down a hall and into the kitchen, for instance. These notes will form the basis of your whole-house color plan, so keep them close at hand.

Start by picking a color for the biggest, most centrally located room. This will most likely be your living room or kitchen, and it's a great place to start working on your whole-house palette.

If picking colors has been stressing you out, choosing a soft, neutral hue for the main room will make picking the other colors easier.

Or start with the room you want to paint the boldest color. If you love color and have a certain hue in mind for a specific room, you can start there instead. Looking out from the bold-hued room, choose a softer, more subdued color for the next rooms. You can, of course, put bold colors next to each other, but that does carry more risk — painter, beware!

HOW TO PICK A COLOR PALETTE FOR YOUR WHOLE HOUSE

Build your palette with shades of the same hue. Once you have a paint color picked for your first room, one simple way to move on is to choose shades of the same hue for adjacent rooms or walls. You can choose a hue from a nearby paint chip, pick the next color up or down on the same paint chip, or even have the same color mixed at the paint store with white added to make a lighter version.

The beauty of this method is that, while it will give your home interest and depth, you also can rest assured that the colors will go well together.

Have a strategy when picking colors for an open space. When much of the house is visible at once, picking colors that work together is especially important. Using shades or tints (shades are darker; tints are lighter) of the same hue can work well in this type of space.

Another approach is to use an environment as inspiration for the whole space —using the beach as an example. The colors that go well together in nature will also work as paint colors.

Work on upstairs and downstairs spaces separately. If there is a true separation between floors, you can easily create a different mood in the upstairs versus downstairs, rooted in the colors you choose. Plus, focusing on one floor at a time can help keep the task feeling more manageable.

Consider keeping connecting spaces neutral. White, beige, greige and the like are fairly foolproof choices for halls and landings, and they give the eye a place to rest between areas of more saturated color.

On the other hand, if you have decided to stick with white or soft neutrals in your rooms, the halls and landings can be a great place to experiment with a richer hue. It doesn't need to be a big departure from the other colors you are using — just a shade or two darker is enough to make an impact.

See a model home designed for color flow

Test your potential palette. As you narrow down your color choices and think you may have some winners, bring home test cans of paint. Sample cards, even the big ones, can be deceptive.

Painting your own swatches will allow you to assess each color in the room it's meant for and check that the colors in visually linked spaces work together.

HOW TO GET THE BASICS OF **YOUR LIGHTING PLAN RIGHT**

Picture it: you're mid-renovation and your electrician calls. At what height do you want the pendant over your dining table hung? Um, eye height? No, then people can't talk. Head height? No, then it's not creating an intimate space like they're always talking about.

The truth is, there's no 100 percent right answer – you need to work out the lighting plan that works for you and your space. Yes, different light fixtures have a range of how high or low they should hang depending on where they are being placed, but it's not 100 percent, that's why there is a range. Here are a few things to watch out for in the process.

DO make a plan as a whole, especially in an open plan space. It'll help with the way the light travels between the spaces, but also with your sparky bill!

DON'T think that all your lights need to match. Bedside table lamps can be different for an eclectic look. As far as pendants go, those that you can see within the same space might just need a common factor to create cohesion.



PAINTING DO'S AND DON'TS

DO buy a quart first instead of a large quantity in case you're not committed to the color. Paint a piece of white foam board and move it around the room to see how the light affects the color at different times of the day.

DO take the time to prep the area. Gather artwork and accessories in one box and place out of the way. Move furniture to the center of the space (or into another room altogether), wipe down walls and tape off molding. Cover the floor with a drop cloth, because plastic sheets can be slippery and messy.

DO remove all of the hardware — switchplates, doorknobs, drapery hardware, etc. — and place the parts in a plastic bag.

Painting Prep

DO gather everything you'll need to get the job done and set up a “paint station” in or near the room. Include a paint tray, painters' tape, brushes, rollers, stir sticks, a paint can opener, rags, paint thinner, a screwdriver, hammer and ladder.

DO purchase one good paint tray and line it with inexpensive disposable plastic tray forms. Aluminum foil works well in a pinch.

Paint Roller and Tray

DO calculate how much paint you'll need. It's always best to get it mixed at one time.

DO choose the appropriate rollers and brushes. Specific rollers are required depending on the paint's viscosity (i.e. how well it rolls onto the surface) and the wall's texture. Brushes with angled tips are best for painting on and around trim.

DO wear appropriate clothing (you will get paint on you somewhere) and slip-on shoes for easy access in and out of the room.

DO prime the walls if going from one extreme color to another. For instance, if the walls are red and you want deep green, paint first with a primer tinted to match your intended top coat to ensure you'll end up with the true color.

PAINTING DO'S AND DON'TS

Prime the Walls

DO expect to apply at least three coats when painting walls red — one coat of primer and two coats of paint.

DO keep a stash of paint for touch-ups in a small plastic cup or glass jar, like margarine containers or baby food jars (thoroughly cleaned, of course). Be sure to label each container with the color and brand name.

DO keep inexpensive foam and artists' brushes (dollar-store variety) on hand for touch-ups on trim and hard-to-reach spots.

DON'TS

DON'T rush. You'll achieve the best results if you practice a little patience. Plan on making it a full-day affair and you won't get frustrated.

DON'T pour the paint from the can until you notch holes into the paint can rim. Simply hammer holes around the metal rim with a nail to create holes for the paint to drip back down into the can.

DON'T paint out of order — start with the ceiling, then walls, doors and woodwork and finish with the floor.

Painting a Ceiling

DON'T apply latex on an oil finish and vice versa without first sanding the walls (remember to wear a mask) and wiping away the dust particles with a tack cloth. Apply a primer of the same composition (oil or latex) of the intended topcoat.

Sanding Walls

DON'T paint directly over wallpaper. If possible, remove it all with a steamer or paper-removing solution and prime. If it's old and not coming off, remove the loose pieces (repair with joint compound to smooth out the surface), sand and wipe with a tack cloth, then prime.

DON'T close off the room. Keep doors and windows open to allow for proper ventilation.

PAINTING **DO'S AND DON'TS**

DON'T underestimate how long it'll take you to get the job done. Allow at least 24 hours to dry before bringing everything back into the room. Allow two weeks to 30 days to cure before washing or wiping.

Cleaning Paint Brushes

DON'T put off cleaning your brush and rollers if you plan to use them again.

DON'T dispose of paint irresponsibly. Check your area for local hazardous waste recycling centers.

DON'T reattach the lid without cleaning the rim of the can. Also, to further prevent inadvertent splatters, place a paper towel or rag on top of the lid, then hammer to secure.



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