



DECORATING TIPS

TOP 10 DECORATING MISTAKES

- 1) Losing sight of scale and proportion.** Don't place a tiny side table with a huge overstuffed armchair, or a vertical, narrow mirror over a long sideboard. If your scale and proportions work, the room will maintain its flow even when the elements have a very different feel. Acquiring a good sense of this can be difficult, and my best advice is to look professional examples of what is right, either in books or high-end stores.
- 2) Cluttering your composition.** Don't overdo it! The number of elements should not overwhelm the available space. The space you leave empty is just as important as the space you fill to the overall composition of a room—remember, less is more! Also, the most interesting way to group items is in odd numbers—decorating in pairs can look stuffy and contrived.
- 3) Using a design style that doesn't go with your home.** You should take into consideration the age and architecture of the house, as well as your family's lifestyle. Have kids? Don't have a white living room. Spanish-style architecture? That Louis XIV settee probably isn't right for your foyer.
- 4) Lacking contrast.** With decorating, it's a good rule of thumb to try to include something dark, something light, something shiny, and something dull. This rule forces you to be creative in your decorating. The contrast also helps to balance and showcase the other elements. Also, remember that a little black in every room helps to "ground" it.
- 5) Matching everything.** (Too much of a good thing). Instead, try for a healthy blend. And don't be afraid to mix printed fabrics—just stay true to your theme or color story. Patterns and prints should be used to support your main and secondary color or to draw attention to your accent color. And don't "color inside the lines"—have fun with your decorating! Add interest to a classic look by choosing fun and different accessories. Place garden statuary in the foyer, a lantern on the breakfast table, a funky rug hung behind the master bed. Let your table or mantel arrangement flow over the edge.
- 6) Getting swept up in trends.** Following every furnishing fad you see in the magazines could come back to haunt you in no time. Select pieces that will keep their freshness over time. More importantly, use things that you love. When you do try a trend, go with less-expensive, easily changed details like wall color and fabric; for big-ticket items like tables and couches, stick with classic lines.

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- 7) **Hanging art too high and curtains too low.** Art should be hung where the eye of the viewer looks into the main area of interest—in living and dining areas, the viewer is usually seated, and in hallways and foyers, the viewer is standing. The bottom edge of wall art should be at the same height. When hanging window treatments, don't feel confined by the dimensions of the window. How you hang them can have a dramatic effect on how the window, and the room, appears—the higher the curtains, the taller your room will look; hang them at ceiling height for maximum elegance.
- 8) **Keeping the same look year-round.** Try swapping out your accessories seasonally. This will freshen your house and change the mood of your environment. It could be as dramatic as a new wall color, or as subtle as changing your bed coverlet and couch throw pillows. This is also a great way to get use out of all your accessories without having everything out at the same time, cluttering your space.
- 9) **Ignoring the entry.** Your foyer or entrance hall should be welcoming and inviting, and immediately cue in guests to the style of the rest of your home. If there's space, try to include seating and a place for guests to put their coat, purse, or umbrella. Fresh flowers are also a welcoming touch.
- 10) **Buying without a plan.** Start by prioritizing and setting a budget. Then, whenever possible, purchase in this order: floor covering, window treatments, couch, chairs, accessories. If you have a plan, you're more likely to make a smart purchase. An item of quality can always be refinished or reupholstered as your taste and décor change.