

DECORATING BASICS FOR MEN ONLY

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Blue Sage Press

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Introduction

DECORATING BASICS FOR MEN ONLY!

Whether single, divorced or widowed, there are millions of men who live alone, and, like everyone else, they want their homes to be comfortable, functional and attractive.

Our homes should be a place where we can relax and surround ourselves with the things we enjoy. This takes a bit of planning and, well, decorating. The term “decorating” is downright scary to most men because it sounds complicated and restrictive—no fun intended nor implied.

But take heart, guys, this book is a no-frills, down-to-basics manual that offers helpful tips for clearing out the clutter, practical advice for making your rooms more functional, and a step-by-step guide for creating an attractive, comfortable living space that you will be proud to show off to friends and family.

An added bonus—you’ll score extra points with the ladies. Women like men who have attractive, organized homes.

In just a few easy steps, your home can go from “Blah” to “Wow!”

For the most part, men and women prefer different styles when it comes to decorating. Men are generally drawn toward:

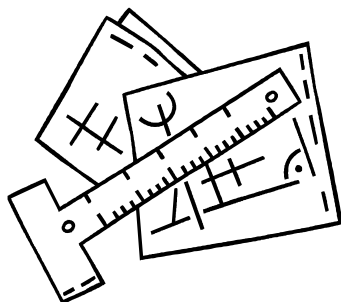
- Decorating styles that are bold and uncluttered by accessories such as throw pillows and decorative objects.
- Color schemes that include black, brown, dark greens, red or navy.
- Fabric pattern choices like plaids and stripes.
- Upholstery choices like leather, nubby textures and sturdy weaves.
- Larger-scale furniture, which is more comfortable for them.
- Sturdy wooden furniture with clean lines and darker finishes.
- Furniture finishes and fabrics that are low maintenance and easy to keep clean.

Men's decorating tastes, however, can vary as widely as women's, so it's important that you choose a style that you find the most appealing and comfortable.

Make sure the room you're decorating reflects your own interests and personality. Are you a sports fan or a fishing fanatic? Are you outgoing or more reserved? Do you enjoy hanging out with a crowd or spending quiet evenings alone? Your home should be a reflection of who you are and the things you like

By following the practical tips and helpful suggestions in this decorating guide, you'll be able to create a space that is both comfortable and attractive—a place where you'll enjoy spending more time.

Start with a Plan



Before starting any new decorating project, take the time to decide how you need your space to function.

This task isn't complicated. It just takes some thought. If you plan to re-decorate the living room, take a few moments to decide what activities you'll be doing in the space. Will you be watching television? Do you need a comfortable conversation area for entertaining friends? How many people will you need to accommodate for seating?

Do you have enough space to include a game table or computer desk in the room, as well? Creating rooms with multiple functions is a great way to make more efficient use of your space.

Follow this same process for designing a dining room. Think about your entertainment needs for dinner guests or a "guys only" poker night. How many people are involved? How often do you hold each type of gathering?

What about the other rooms in your home? Do you want to use one of your bedrooms for a home office? Would the office also need to function as a guest bedroom?

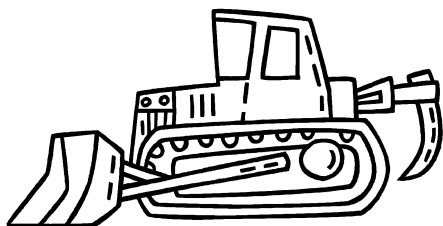
Taking the time to consider the functional needs for your design project will help you decide what furniture pieces and lighting you'll need. Make a list of these items. Then, simply remove any pieces of furniture that don't meet your needs and replace them with ones that work.

Most of us have limited space in our homes, so it's important to use the space we have efficiently. Don't just "make do" with the current condition of your living areas. Take the time to figure out how you need your rooms to function and make them "work" for you.

Helpful Hints:

- If you want to add a new piece of furniture to your room, be sure to measure the space where you plan to place it to make certain it will fit. AND don't forget to measure the doors into your house and project room to make sure you can get the piece inside. If you plan to purchase a tall piece of furniture, measure the ceiling height in your room, as well.
- If your home office is small and needs to function as both an office and a guest bedroom, consider getting a daybed with a pull-out trundle bed underneath. It will provide sleeping space for two people and takes up less space than a sofa bed.
- If you have a formal dining room that's rarely ever used, consider making it a multi-functional room. With the appropriate storage units, it can also be a home office or hobby room. The dining table can be your desk or hobby table and a buffet or hutch can hide your computer, printer or hobby supplies.

Here's the Scoop



An organized, clutter-free home promotes a feeling of order and peace—a valuable commodity in today’s chaotic world. Clutter has a way of sneaking up on us gradually until we feel overwhelmed and helpless in its wake.

It’s important to get rid of the clutter in your home and keep only the items you need and enjoy. That’s why every decorating make-over starts off by clearing everything out of the space, so you can start with a clean slate. You are less likely to bring the clutter back in to your newly decorated room.

Clearing out the clutter in your home and getting organized not only saves you time and money, it can help relieve some of the stress in your daily life and provide a more comfortable, relaxing environment.

So sort through all your stuff and get rid of everything but your “absolute must haves”, then find creative ways to store or display them. This sounds like a daunting task, but it can actually be fun if you take a creative approach.

One way to make the most efficient use of your storage space is to buy containers or furniture units that will satisfy your storage needs and decorate your home at the same time.

The following is a list of some creative storage ideas for your home.

Living Room:

- Baskets are inexpensive but effective storage containers that can also add to your décor. They can hold magazines beside your favorite reading chair or a pile of logs on the fireplace hearth. Hang them on the wall to hold magazines, mail or keys.
- If you're planning to buy an ottoman, get a storage ottoman that can double as a coffee table and extra seating, as well.
- Bookcases can hold decorative boxes for storing small items in addition to books.
- If you need to buy bookcases, get the tallest ones your ceiling height will accommodate to get the maximum amount of storage for the least amount of floor space.
- Consider adding a narrow shelf around the entire perimeter of the room at door height to store books, decorative items and attractive storage containers.

Kitchen:

- Use a pot rack hung from the ceiling or wall to hold bulky items such as pots, colanders, ladles, and molds to free up space in cabinets and drawers.
- Store attractive dishes in a wall-mounted plate rack to decorate your kitchen and keep the dishes within easy reach.
- Hang mugs or cups from a peg rack on the counter backsplash or from cup hooks underneath the wall cabinets.

- Store dried staples (pasta, beans, sugar, etc.) in covered glass containers on the countertop to decorate the kitchen and free up space in the pantry.
- Use an attractive container on the counter to hold cooking utensils instead of storing them in a drawer.
- Store infrequently used items in baskets on top of the wall cabinets.
- Hang a small shelf for spices on the counter backsplash.
- Use recessed cabinets or shelves inside the space between the wall studs of interior walls. If you like, cover the opening with a framed print that is hinged on one side to act as a door.

Bedroom:

- Remove all clutter from underneath your bed. Save this space for under-bed storage containers.
- Get rid of the clutter on top of your dresser. Store jewelry in a jewelry box. Put loose change in an attractive dish.
- Clear out your closet. Donate or sell clothes, shoes or accessories that no longer fit, are out of style, or are in disrepair. Keep only the clothes you like and wear frequently.
- Use double racks in at least one section of the closet (one up high and one down low) to hang short items such as shirts and pants.
- Choose stackable containers for the closet to place either on the floor underneath hanging clothes or on the shelf above the clothing racks.
- Consider adding another shelf up high to store infrequently used items.

- Instead of a bench at the foot of the bed, choose a sturdy chest of drawers that can double as a bench as well as storage.
- Instead of bedside tables use small chests of drawers for more storage.

Miscellaneous Clutter:

- Home Office: Clear off the top of your desk. Store office supplies in your desk drawers, in a home office closet or in containers on a shelf. File paperwork in a filing cabinet. Clear off the clutter in your computer area. Store CD's in a CD holder. Hang shelves for manuals, directories and catalogs.
- Mementos: It's fine to hang on to a few very meaningful things, but if you have more than one or two boxes of these treasures, you may be going a bit overboard. Go through these items and weed out the things that are no longer important to you.
- Furniture: Is your home overcrowded with furniture you never use? Perhaps it was passed down from a relative, or maybe you recently made a move to a smaller place. If your furniture is not functional or you don't have the space for it, get rid of it. Imagine all the free space you'll have when it's gone.

Clear out the clutter in your home and invest in creative storage solutions that will help keep you organized and enhance the décor of your home at the same time.

Getting the Point



When planning your design project, make an effort to highlight an architectural feature in the room or create an attractive art arrangement on one of the walls that can serve as the room's focal point. You'll impress your guests with your decorating savvy and make the time you spend there more enjoyable.

The focal point can be a fireplace with attractive decorations hung above the mantel, a window with a nice view, artwork arranged over a sofa, or even an entertainment center, if the main function of the room is watching television instead of conversation.

If you have a nice view to the outside, make it the focal point of your room. Arrange the furniture to draw attention toward it. You might frame the window with drapery panels and place a tall plant on either side of the window to help make it stand out.

If the fireplace is a prominent feature in your living room, orient your furniture toward it. In the furniture layout in Figure 1 on page 10, the sofa is facing the fireplace, with two upholstered chairs across from it, creating a comfortable conversation area.

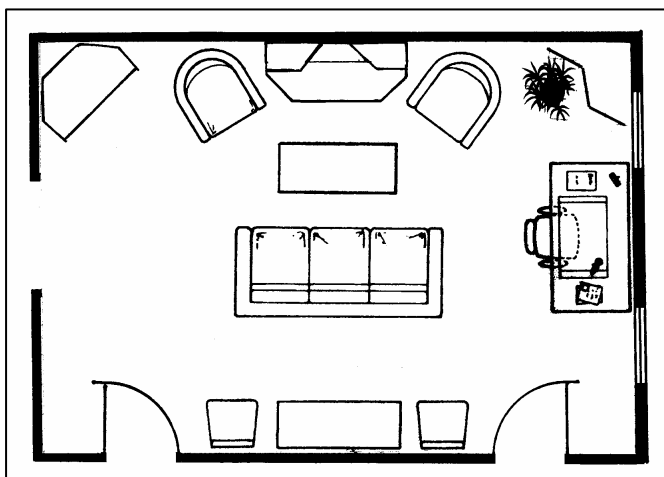


Figure 1

The focal point of any room should create sufficient impact to draw your attention. When using the fireplace as the focal point, arrange a group of accessories, such as framed mirrors or paintings, vases, candlesticks or other objects on or over the mantle shelf in order to create a pleasing composition to make your focal point stand out.

Try to make the grouping large enough in scale and extended high enough on the wall above the mantel to establish its importance. How do you know if your arrangement works? Just stand back and observe. Does the composition appear pleasing and relatively balanced? Does it create enough of an impact to draw your attention? As long as you're happy with the results and you've taken the time to check the overall impact, then go with it!

A good example for an arrangement above a fireplace mantle is a large painting hung above the mantel shelf, in the center, and two identical candlesticks or vases placed on either side of the painting. See Figure 2 on page 11.

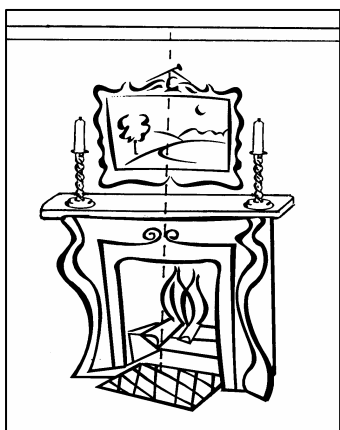


Figure 2

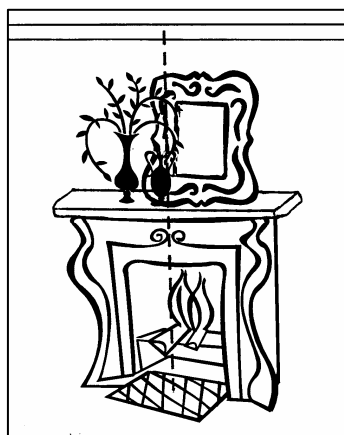


Figure 3

You don't need to use a perfectly symmetrical arrangement of accessories over your fireplace mantel (called "formal balance") as shown in Figure 2. This type of composition creates a formal, traditional look. You can also create a more casual arrangement (informal balance) from a group of objects of varying sizes and shapes. With this type of arrangement, you'll need to do some experimenting with different combinations of objects until you feel the balance looks right.

An example of informal balance is a large framed mirror placed on the mantel shelf, slightly off center, which is balanced by a vase filled with tall branches. See Figure 3.

Painting an accent wall in a darker or more vibrant color is another way to make your focal point stand out. For example, if your focal point is a fireplace with white wood trim and mantel shelf, and your room is painted a neutral beige color, then painting the wall that the fireplace is on with a darker shade of beige (or one of your accent colors in the room, such as blue) will draw the eye to that wall.