

THE ART OF ACCESSORIZING YOUR HOME

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Accessories are the finishing touch of a well-decorated home. Knowing how to use them to finish the design is something you can learn, even without being an HGTV star.

A room that is well-designed has multiple layers. This is not an official principle of interior design, but the best designers make it a regular practice. It is seen in fashion: layering a sweater, scarf, or jewelry completes a basic outfit and takes it from functional to fabulous.



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In design, the same principles apply; a room does not feel complete with only functional pieces. However, this foundation layer needs to be complete in order to properly accessorize, which should be the final step. The following is an example of how to complete a living room:

1. The first layer includes the background of the room: wall coverings such as paint and/or wallpaper.
2. Flooring, such as wood, carpet, or tile, will build upon the wall coverings. Although separate, the first two layers go hand in hand.
3. The foundational pieces are comprised of large-scale furnishings such as the sofa, chairs, and media console and begin to build out the room.
4. Accent furniture includes the coffee table, side tables, sofa tables, ottomans, area rugs, and drink stands. These items fill in the space between the foundational pieces.
5. Lighting is its own layer. Each room should have multiple layers of lighting, including overhead, table, and ambient or accent lights.
6. Wall hangings include art, photos, mirrors, and other textural items to display on the walls of the room.
7. Textiles bring softness to the space through pillows, blankets, and layered area rugs.
8. Decorative items include plants, flowers, coffee table books, collections, and general knick-knacks.



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Accessorizing your home is an art that design professionals make look effortless. This skill is not something most of them are born with, but rather what they have learned along the way (*mostly by studying magazines and through trial and error*). This art is something that is not reserved for professionals on television but can be implemented at home with just a little effort.

Generally, the accessorizing of a room is considered layers six through eight.

HERE ARE SOME GUIDELINES:

1. Find Your Inspiration

Search magazines, Instagram, Pinterest, and other platforms that have interior design images, and narrow down a style that inspires you. Bookmark or tear out the pages and consolidate for future reference. This is your guide as you make selections for your own home.

2. Color Scheme

You might be inspired by a variety of images, but you do not need to copy them exactly. Include the same vibe, but in a different color palette. Begin by deciding the color palette in your space. Unless you are embarking on an overall re-design, do not forget to work around your existing furnishings, wall colors, and other layers in the room.

3. Empty the Room

It is easier to envision a fresh look when all the previous accessories are out of sight. Leaving the furnishings in place may also provide you with a new perspective of the room and inspiration to rearrange before filling in the details. Are you including art? Regardless of whether you are replacing the art, remove it from the walls and start with a fairly blank slate.

4. Start with What You Have

But only if you love it and it is cohesive with the style inspiration guide you created. If you have items you love because there is a memory associated, consider placing them in a secondary room. They still live with you but are not front and center in the space you are accessorizing. Or, create an accessory closet that you can use to change out your details seasonally and include your sentimental items in that category.

“Shop” the other areas in your home. Maybe the art in one room can swap with the room you are working on. Perhaps a decorative item on your bedside table would be ideal as an object grouped with others on your coffee table.

5. Consider Scale

When it comes to accessorizing, less is more. Using larger accessories will decrease the look of clutter and add visual impact. A rule of thumb decorators use is that the item should be no smaller than a cantaloupe or soccer ball.

6. The Power of Numbers

The rule of three is a tenet the professionals use, which is a great foundation for creating groupings. If you have a collection, grouping them all in one locale will make a big impact.

7. Layer It

Layer groupings of accessories (whether decorating with photos, candlesticks, fresh flowers, or other items) to create depth, breadth, and visual interest.

8. Vary the Heights

Choose accessories with various heights to group and layer together. This practice encourages the eye to move up and down, in addition to backward and forward.

9. Add Small Art

Do not forget the artwork behind a vignette and keep it in mind when arranging your accessories.

10. Mix Your Textures

Textures and finishes play a large role in keeping a neutral palette interesting. Mixing nubby or knitted fabrics with velvets or linens or placing a smooth wooden item next to a spiky metallic object can create an intriguing display.

11. Do Not Forget Plants

Bringing the outside in is a beautiful finish to any space. Plants help purify the air, too. If you were not born with a green thumb, there are stunning silk options on the market. Some are so realistic that you have to touch them to determine if they are real or faux. Of course, fresh flowers are always in season at your local grocery and add a beautiful living touch to any room.

WHAT TO AVOID

If old items are sentimental, pack them away and bring them out for reminiscing. Your dorm room poster, no matter how cool, will not embody the adult space you are creating and currently inhabiting.

Avoid shopping for everything at once. Collecting various pieces that make you happy (or as Marie Kondo often says, “sparks joy”) will not only lift your spirits every time you enter the room, but it will also create a more collected, natural look.

Do not match everything. Pillows, artwork, and colored vases on the coffee table will make your room look like a showroom instead of a home. A pair of identical throw pillows are acceptable but, to add interest, add another pair that are not the same.

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