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Decorating Dos and Don'ts



Sometimes the rooms of your home don't feel quite right. There's something out of place, something doesn't quite match, or something doesn't belong. Or maybe the room feels stale and uninspired, and you're looking to start it over again. You might know what you want, but you don't know how to get there. If you're finding yourself with these troubles, you just might need the help of an interior decorator.

An interior decorator can help you find what you want

out of the rooms of your home, or help you correct the nagging problems you can't put your finger on. The key to interior decoration is making the rooms reflect you. An interior decorator can do that while keeping your living spaces tasteful and aesthetically pleasing.

No matter the room, scale is the most common issue people need help to understand, says Chantelle Butterfield, owner and operator of Funktional Space. "When you're looking

at a picture above a couch, what size should it be? Most people do it too small. They don't have enough art, enough presence. Or they add too much – so it's eliminating some things."

Finding one's vision for a room can be difficult. Diane Weber of Diane Weber Interiors explains how to determine the look people are trying to achieve. "Most of the time," she says, "just looking around their living space and asking what their favourite pieces are gives me

good insight to what their tastes are and the direction we should go."

For kitchen design, it helps if clients have an idea what they want, says Tennille Burlack, interior design consultant with Appl Custom Woodworks. "If they bring in a magazine photo, or go on our website and see what they like or don't like – that kind of gives me a direction from that point." 

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COMMON MYTHS ABOUT INTERIOR DECORATING

Chantelle Butterfield, owner and operator of Funktional Space, dispels the following common myths about interior decorating:

1. You can never have too much stuff on the floor and walls – “Each space needs empty or negative space, to honour what you do have.”
2. Don’t purchase some things on a whim – “If you don’t make that purchase, you will be sad if it’s not there tomorrow. It will make you think of a good time, space, or feeling. If you love it, it will fit in your life and space.”
3. You can’t have something unique in a room because it doesn’t go with the room – “You can, because that unique item means something to the owner. It can also be a conversation piece, or it can be something that sparks a feeling or emotion for the owner.”
4. You can’t break the rules – “The rules of interior decorating can be as solid as a rock, or open to interpretation. I believe that learning the rules is the first step towards freely breaking them when necessary.”
5. Interior decorating is not easy and fun – “Remember there are pros that do this everyday, so they can tell you in an hour or two what you need, where to find it, and where to place it.”




Decorating Dos


For some, redecorating the home can seem a daunting task. For those who still like the do-it-yourself approach, there are a few good principles to adhere to, regardless of the desired end result.

One good idea is to always have a plan in mind. Diane Weber offers the following common steps: "First, determine your budget. Next, determine what you're going to need to add to the room to make it what you want as far as furnishings, accents, etc. What is the function of the room, and what will it be used for? Think about colours and textures."



Another good idea is for homeowners to leave some of the big things for later. While homeowners may be tempted to get



that messy painting done before moving the furniture in, Chantelle Butterfield suggests deciding on all the other options first. "The problem with painting first is that it's almost impossible to match the walls to a fabric. There are only a few couches, upholstered chairs, comforters, curtains, that you will find and like, but there are thousands of paint colours. If you can't find a paint that goes, you can always have it custom matched."


Tennille Burlack advises clients to really consider what they want out of their rooms. "Think about what you like about your space, and what you don't like about your space. Keep an idea if a renovation in one room will escalate into another room." Doing so will help keep projects on time and running smoothly. 




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INTERIOR DECORATING TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Diane Weber of Diane Weber Interiors offers the following terms and concepts for anyone wanting to understand a little bit more about interior decorating:

COLOUR HUES

"Colour hues are what a colour can do for a room. I always suggest to clients to go get a print or picture that you love; it will always tell what your tastes and colours are. Once you start from that picture, everything else will balance off of it."

MUTED TONES

"Muted tones are colours that don't have any brightness to them. I always suggest muted tones when using a darker colour. They appear deeper and serve as a great backdrop for everything in the room – it just gives a nice matte finish. But some colours can be tricky because of their undertones. It can be a problem when people don't understand or can't visually see these undertones when picking out colours, because it's too late once the paint is on the wall."

HARMONY

"Harmony is when you walk into a room and know that everything flows, from the way the furniture is arranged to how all the colours work together. Sometimes the homeowner knows something is wrong with the room, but doesn't know what. It is usually something that is affecting the harmony like a misplaced furnishing, pictures hung too high or too low, or colours that don't suit the furnishings."





Decorating Don'ts


Just as there are a few ways to start off a retooling of an old room, there are a few things people can easily get wrong. To keep the decorating process enjoyable, keep in mind the following strategies to mitigate or sidestep some common problems that face homeowners.

A big problem is trying to do too much at once. Says Diane Weber, "This can be daunting. Their entire space is filled with furniture, making it very difficult to manoeuvre." Her advice to get around this is simple. "I always suggest picking one room and focus on that room only. It gives the client a sense of control and helps them to not get overwhelmed."

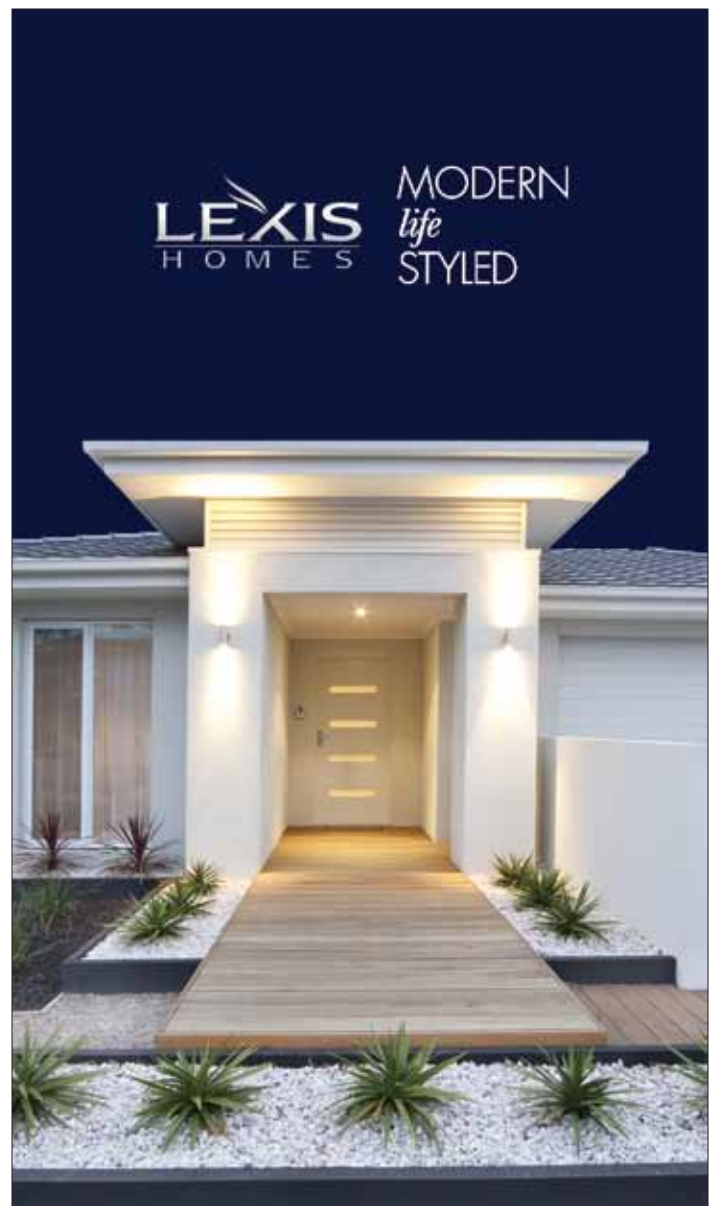
It's also possible to end up dating your home unnecessarily. Chantelle Butterfield advises against buying the bones of a room (the chairs, tables, couches, and so forth) solely because they're trendy. "They're

expensive and a pain to replace when you tire of them. You can tell when somebody built or renovated a house from the colour of the cabinets, countertops, and flooring. I want clients to go with something that won't be pegged to an era, something that they have always loved." Such things are often gifts, or hold sentimental value, something Butterfield calls the signature piece of a room. A signature piece is important. Says Butterfield, "They love it, it represents them, and they will never get rid of it!"

Final Thoughts

Remember, above all, the key to interior decoration is that the results should reflect you. Find what you treasure most in your rooms and what you want to get out of them. As Diane Weber says, "Clients know what they want and just need guidance to get there. This is their space and it needs to be a reflection of their tastes." 

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