

DECORATING & DESIGN

APR 23, 2025

10 INTERIOR DESIGN RULES YOU SHOULD BREAK

By: canadianliving.com



Photography by Décor Imprimé

Calling all rebels! We're turning the tables on these dated interior design rules.

1. RULE: HANG FRAMES AT EYE LEVEL



Photo by Vibrant Vintage Prints, Etsy

READ ALSO :

6 Quick & Cheap Upgrades For Your Home

When you limit hanging pieces to just eye level, you miss out on the gorgeous potential of a gallery wall. A great way to feature a collection of your favourite pieces, gallery walls maximize wall space to make a statement and personalize your room. Plus, the varying heights create dimension that draws the eye.

2. RULE: CURTAINS SHOULD BE A NEUTRAL COLOUR



Photo by Anthropologie

Neutral curtains in solid shades of white, beige, brown and black are undoubtedly classic and easy to style, but don't discount the benefits of more colourful patterned options. These colourways can inject fun and lightness into your space or be used to drive home a particular design theme, like a set of pastel floral curtains in a rustic farmhouse kitchen.

3. RULE: DON'T MIX LIGHTING STYLES IN A ROOM



Photography by CB2

The juxtaposition of two or more lighting styles in a room can create a unique vibe that's all your own. A sculptural pendant light on the ceiling can easily coexist with a minimalist table lamp or sconce, especially when the two share a similarity, like colour or material. When playing with different options, ensure that the light they emit is the same temperature, which will keep the look harmonious and intentional.

4. RULE: DON'T MIX PATTERNS



Photography by Décor Imprimé

Many steer clear of mixing different patterns for fear that their room will look cluttered, messy or overwhelming. But when chosen well, multiple prints can add personality and visual interest to a space. The key is to choose colour palettes that work well together. For example, the geometric rug and pillows in this room have a similar neutral colour scheme that plays well with the hues in the bold floral wallpaper for a look that's cohesive rather than competitive.

5. RULE: PLACE ALL FURNITURE AGAINST A WALL



Photography by Ikea

Often suggested for smaller spaces, this rule works to maximize floor space, but can be at the expense of function and comfort. Moving couches and chairs closer together, rather than at opposite walls, creates a living space that's made for real living—chatting, sharing snacks, playing games. Arrange your pieces to create a path to navigate the room and now you have a space that's conducive to both foot traffic and socializing.

6. RULE: DON'T MIX DESIGN STYLES



Photography by Ikea

Combining distinct design styles can inject character into your room without sacrificing connectedness. Saying goodbye to rigid style constraints also makes it easier to update your space over time with trends and individual taste. This living room combines Art Deco, bohemian and classic elements to create an aesthetic that allows new pieces to be easily incorporated.

7. RULE: DON'T PUT ANYTHING IN FRONT OF A WINDOW



Photography by Article

In an effort to keep the view unobstructed, it's common to be told that nothing should sit in front of your windows. While we wouldn't recommend installing a tall bookcase or shelf in front of them, a low piece of furniture can actually make windows stunning focal points. A bench or couch in that space encourages you to spend more time there and take advantage of the natural light and view, making the window area a useful gathering spot.

8. RULE: STICK TO GROUPS OF THREE



Photography by Simons

The rule of three is a design principle that advocates grouping items in odd numbers, especially threes, to create balance that's pleasing to the eye. Although this rule is aesthetically effective, it's not the only way to achieve a harmonious space. Minimal or symmetrical compositions can be equally beautiful and are a great way to cultivate a calm atmosphere. Experiment with single items, plus even and odd collections to see what works best for your space.

9. RULE: DON'T WALLPAPER EVERY WALL



Photography by Décor Imprimé

Wallpaper can transform a room, whether you go with a subtle or bold style. When you use it on all of a room's walls, it creates an immersive atmosphere that sets the tone with ease. Think dark intricate patterns to create warmth and richness, or light minimal styles to invoke freshness and whimsy. A single wallpapered accent wall is also beautiful, but to make a serious style statement, don't be afraid to take a chance and go all in.

10. RULE: KEEP PAINT LIGHT ON WALLS AND CEILING



Photography by Sico

A common misconception is that a coat of dark paint on the ceiling or walls will immediately visually “shrink” the room. However, there are ways to use dark colours to expand the space instead. Try a matte finish that blurs the edges and corners to make the room feel bigger. Painting the walls, trim and ceiling the same hue also does the trick. If you’re not ready to drench your room in a dark hue, try painting an accent wall that gives a cozy vibe without a big commitment.

RECOMMENDED



HOW MUCH DOES HIRING AN INTERIOR DESIGNER COST?

BY: SARA ROMANO

RECOMMENDED



HOW TO ENHANCE YOUR SPRING CURB APPEAL,
ACCORDING TO A BROKER

BY: STYLE AT HOME

5 CANADIAN FURNITURE STORES WE LOVE



*5 Canadian Furniture Stores
We Love*