styleathome

DECORATING & DESIGN

MAR 21, 2025

7 DECORATING MISTAKES THAT MAKE A ROOM LOOK SMALLER

By: Style At Home

Photography by Patrick Biller (left);
Janet Kimber (right)

A small but mighty design can make your room appear more spacious than it actually is.

While truly making a room bigger is a costly and time-consuming project, leveraging the right design techniques can give it the illusion of being more spacious. On the other hand, certain decor and styling can easily make your room appear smaller.

> **READ ALSO :**
> *Living Room Lighting We Want To Copy*

Here are the mistakes to avoid when planning out **your small space**.

1. DARK COLOURS

Photography by Marc Olivier Becotte

We're all for a dark and **moody palette**. Rich blues, eggplants, and even espresso browns create warm spaces that are perfect to cozy up in. But for a dark palette to be successful, it needs to have balance with light.

In this **sunroom**, for instance, the moody walls are brightened up by an airy chandelier and sunlight streaming in through the windows. A strong contrast—such as black kitchen cabinets with marbled quartz countertops—brings both shades to life.

2. PUSHING FURNITURE AGAINST THE WALLS

Photography by Eymeric Widling / Design by Louis Duncan-He

One of the most common **interior design mistakes** is pushing all of your furniture up against the walls, especially in living rooms. While you might instinctively think it'll open up the space, it tends to have the opposite effect.

Leaving a few inches between your couch or other furniture and the walls gives the illusion of a large room, no matter how spacious it actually is.

3. USING TOO MUCH OVERHEAD LIGHTING

Photography by Patrick Biller / Design by Tommy Smythe & Colin Baird

An interior designer's favourite trick is always layering, and for good reason. Overhead chandeliers and fixtures can be beautiful, but they can be too harsh or too dim, leaving you with lighting that just looks off.

Layer **table lamps**, floor lamps, and candles throughout a space for soft, natural lighting coming from different angles. Just take a look at **these well-lit rooms**.

4. AVOIDING—OR MIS-STYLING—MIRRORS

Photography by Janet Kimber / Design by Rebekah Higgs

A mirror is a sleek and easy way to make a room appear bigger, but it all rides on where you place it. When close to a window, it reflects light back into a room. Alternatively, hanging a mirror on a wall will highlight the length of the room and give the illusion of more space.

5. TOO MUCH BUSY WALLPAPER

Photography by Stacey Brandford / Design by Sappho Griffin

We love floral wallpaper as much as the next person, but there is such thing as too much. A room covered in a busy pattern can be distracting to the eye. If you want to **add wallpaper into your design**, we suggest sticking to one focal wall and being intentional about the type of space you're putting it in.

6. SHORT CURTAINS

Photography by Marc Olivier Becotte / Design by Luke Havekes

By either hanging your curtain rods too low or choosing the wrong size curtains, you can make your walls look short. Hanging your **curtains** about halfway between the windows and the ceiling elongates your walls, making them appear taller than they actually are.

7. UNDERSIZED RUG

Photography by Alex Lukey / Design by Rachel Deeks

When choosing a rug, you want to select one that's wider than your couch and seating area. It should cover most of the floor around your furniture. If you really want to style a smaller rug, consider layering it on top of a larger option to optimize space and style.

Here's everything you need to know before buying a rug.

RECOMMENDED

5 LIVING ROOM TRENDS THAT MAKE YOUR HOME LOOK CHEAP

BY: STYLE AT HOME

RECOMMENDED

9 BEAUTIFUL BASEMENTS THAT PROVE YOURS DOESN'T HAVE TO FEEL LIKE A DUNGEON

BY: STYLE AT HOME

TORONTO HOUSE TOUR

Step Inside This Beautifully Balanced Toronto Home