

ROOM LAYOUTS

Changing the placement of existing furniture can enhance a home's appearance and flow better than any other design choice.

Your lifestyle should be considered when you decide to make changes:

- > In which rooms do you spend the majority of your time?;
- > When you are in these rooms, what is your major activity? (*Watching TV, reading, listening to or playing music, enjoying a view, entertaining, cooking etc.*).
- > What are the climate influences on the room? (*Does the sun stream through the windows in the morning or afternoon? Is it a cold room in the winter?*)
- > Are you achieving the maximum benefit from your living spaces? (*Has the existing furniture taken over the room making it unusable?*)
- > By moving some of the furniture – could a room have an alternative or more practical use? (*Some redundant family rooms can be transformed into an office/study or formal dining room*)
- > How often do you use your formal dining room? (*Could you take out the extensions on the table, remove the surplus dining chairs and increase the flow or spacious appearance of the room?*)

If you rush in and completely revamp a room layout without taking into consideration these factors, you will be wasting your time if the ultimate result does not fit in with your particular needs.

Redecorating provides a perfect chance to make changes to furniture arrangement – like an artist with a blank canvas – you can carefully consider what pieces should be returned to a room.

Seasonal room layouts are a way to freshen up living areas. Move the furniture close to the fireplace or TV in the winter, and place it further back or position it towards a view in the summer.

Planning the Space

Good furniture arrangement begins with analysing the space and the contents of the room – how many people use the room, how does the traffic flow, and how it is used. Determine the focal point of the room and find the main element that draws your immediate attention. If the room has an attractive feature (such as a fireplace or picture window), centre the furniture arrangement around it. If it doesn't have a focal point, endeavour to create one with furnishings. Interesting window treatments, a nice display of artwork, or an elegantly styled bed can help define a space.

Balance

Balanced rooms are more pleasing to the eye and make more effective use of the available space.

Tall or heavy pieces should not all be in the same area of the room. Mix larger and smaller pieces throughout the room, keep in mind the scale of the items you put side by side. Don't place a dainty round table by an oversized armchair. A big chair will require a larger end table. Grouping smaller items can balance out a heavier item. Two small armchairs and a table balance a larger lounge suite.

Make sure the colours and patterns balance throughout the room.

Try to avoid leaving pieces of furniture sitting alone. Connect the pieces by placing tables or lamps nearby (if the lounge suite is in the middle of a room facing the fireplace, anchor it by placing a table behind it).

Small rooms do not benefit from angled furniture – for every lounge chair you place on an angle you could lose around 1sqm of floor space (unless you can utilise the dead space behind the piece).

If the room is curved or has a large bay window, a round or semicircular furniture arrangement may be suitable.

Rooms are more attractive if they are not overfilled with furniture. If there is a piece that

throws out the balance of the room or is seldom used, you should consider moving it to another room, storing or disposing of it.

Furniture Placement

Think about the traffic flow. The paths need to be around 50 – 60cm. Try to ensure the major traffic path does not cause disruption to user's of the room (*if everyone leaving the room has to walk in front of the TV or step around furnishings it will soon become very irritating*).

- > Arrange the major pieces of furniture in a room first.
- > Allow around 35cm – 45cm between a coffee table and the front of the lounge suite.
- > When creating conversation areas, keep furniture pieces within 2.5m of each other so people can talk comfortably when seated. Remember to keep pieces facing each other when possible, instead of side by side. You may need to include side tables beside the seating so people will have a place for food and drinks.
- > Allow sufficient space in front of chests to allow doors and drawers to open easily.
- > It is recommended that the distance between a television and the seating should be three times the size of the screen. In other words, to comfortably watch TV on a 32" screen, you should sit about 2.4m away from it.
- > If seating is used for reading, allow for an appropriate light.
- > A dining area requires plenty of space to move freely. Allow 60cm between the back of the chair and any other piece of furniture or wall. Measure the distance assuming someone is seated in the chair.
- > In bedrooms, the minimum clearance between the edge of the bed and the wall should be around 60cm. Allow around 1m between the edge of a bed and any door that opens into the room. If there are twin beds, allow at least ½m between them. ■



Lounge before.



Lounge after.

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