



A Useful Guide To Designing Your Home

Designing interior spaces can be challenging and as it is project that is only done every 5 years or so, its important to get things right.

We have put together this handy guide to help you make better decisions when it comes to decorating your home.

Although there is plenty of information that we could cover and advice that we can share with you, in this book we have focused on 4 aspects to creating wonderful interior spaces.

About Katy Ellis Designs

Founded in 2006 Katy Ellis Interiors is a London based Interior Design practise that has built a reputation for creating interiors of distinction.

Katy and her team are driven by a commitment to delivering creative excellence with an eye for detail and tremendous flair, meeting the requirements of her clients.

Collaborating with local architects and craftsmen, Katy has developed into an accomplished and successful interior designer, becoming a leader in her field in London.

Leaving Florence in 1997 Katy moved to Pimlico in Central London where her passion for design led her to study at Chelsea University of Arts and Design. Katy began working for private clients in the Kensington and Chelsea area of London and created Katy Ellis Interiors Ltd.

Working on both Commercial and Private projects in the UK and Internationally Katy and her team aim to provide an excellent service helping clients to achieve their vision with a unique and niche style.

Frequently Asked Questions, Answered

Decorating can be a challenge. To help you, here are the answers to the eight most frequently asked interior design questions.

1. How do you make a small room look bigger?

Start by eliminating clutter. Go for a simple, streamlined look. Use cool light colours, such as pale blues and greens. Avoid contrasting colours, fabrics, or styles, as these can make a room look cramped. Add a few large but simple accents, such as a nice lamp in a clean design.



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2. How do I choose a dining-room chandelier?

Find a style that matches your room's colour and furnishing style. Measure the narrowest side of the dining table, and select a chandelier that's 6 to 12 inches smaller. Make sure it won't hang closer to the table than 30 inches above its surface.

3. How do I choose a dining room rug?

You want something 3 feet larger than table on each side (6 feet longer than the table's length, and 6 feet wider than the width). Choose a vividly patterned rug if the room has no pattern. If your upholstery shows a print or geometric design, avoid carpet with a competing pattern.

4. How do I create a gallery wall?

Find an architecturally isolated space, such the wall on a staircase. Choose objects in a variety of sizes, shapes, colours, and frame styles. Group them to emphasize variety (not all the blue ones together, for example). Use one distinctive piece as a central or off-centre focal point.

5. How do I decorate a bookshelf?

Organize your books by topic, by title, or by author, but never by colour. Consider following the old standby of putting only books on your bookshelf, perhaps flanked by decorative bookends. Or group books together and add accessories such as figurines, framed art, houseplants, or lamps.

6. What do I put on my coffee table?

A nice set of coasters is a must for a coffee table—especially if it's made of wood. Other options include a small stack of books or magazines with lots of illustrations, a vase and fresh flowers, some framed family photos, or a bowl of fruit, nuts, or other snacks.

7. How do I choose a lampshade?

Use this rule of thumb for table lamps: the shade should be 40% of the overall height. Match the shade with the lamp: drum shades are for modern lamps and flared-at-the-bottom shades are for more traditional styles.

8. How do I light my bedroom?

Use low-watt bulbs in ceiling lights, and higher watts (60 to 100) in bedside table lamps, especially if someone likes to read in bed. Don't be afraid to install a chandelier over the bed or a pendant at each side.



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Make Your Open Kitchen Feel Welcoming & Extra-Cosy

Open kitchens are all the rage. Want to make your cooking space feel welcoming and extra-cosy? Here are some tips from leading designers.

1. Add an Eye-Catching “Hearth”

In an open kitchen, the area above the stove can become a striking focal point. Plus, because it’s small, it’s a great spot to splurge without exceeding your budget. Try a fireplace-style chimneypiece or a curved proscenium arch like you see above the stage in a historic theatre. Cover the back wall in tiles that you love: consider hand-painted ones, or those with an unusual pattern or finish. Then do the rest of the kitchen in matching or complementary colours, and in a material that’s less expensive. The result will be eye-catching and gorgeous!

2. Install Stunning Lighting

“Pendant-style” hanging lights are like jewellery for a cooking area. Hung over a counter or central island, they create beautiful centres of attention where eyes will linger as they scan the kitchen area. Don’t be timid when choosing light fixtures—be colourful or dramatic! That way, your pendant lights will also have the fortunate side effect of acting as a decoy, drawing eyes up and away from countertop clutter. Arrange pendant lights in odd numbers—groups of three are perfect.

3. Create a Conversation Nook

A large kitchen with an open floor plan isn’t just for cooking and cleaning up. Take advantage of that extra space. Look for a spot where you can arrange stools or benches—or even upholstered chairs and a small sofa—on an attractive carpet. This will make a great place for guests or family members to read, relax, enjoy drinks and snacks, or converse with the cook and with each other. Make it inviting with warm colours, soft fabrics, leafy plants, and personal touches such as photos or unique wall hangings.

4. Be Careful when Choosing Appliances

There’s nothing worse than appliances that scream out and attract too much attention. Fortunately, today’s panel-ready versions will help you make fridges and dishwashers blend in instead of standing out. Choose front panels that match the design and finish of your cabinets. When possible, situate small appliances such as microwaves and toaster ovens behind cabinet doors—but be careful about putting them below countertop level, as they’ll be hard to use.



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Choosing The Right Lighting For Each Room

Choosing lighting can be a challenge, but you can bring out the best in each of your rooms with these lighting tips from top decorators.

Living Room

Lighting choices range from dramatic to relaxed, depending on whether the room is formal or casual, urban or rural. Be sure fixtures match the decor—be careful pairing modern with vintage, for example. Consider track lighting to spotlight items such as valued artwork. Table lamps are always a good choice; if table space is limited, consider wall lamps.

Dining Room

This is a great place to create a lighting focal point. Choose a fixture that complements the room's style. Make sure a chandelier or pendant is 6 to 12 inches smaller than the narrowest side of the dining table, and that the bottom is 30 inches above the surface. In a dining room, 200 to 400 watts is sufficient. If you want more light, try recessed bulbs or wall sconces.

Study

Proper lighting reduces eyestrain and increases task effectiveness. Provide a well-lit space but avoid glare. Try desk and floor lamps that adjust, with pivoting heads or moveable shades to customize the direction of light. Use the correct intensity: 40 to 60 watts for reading/writing, 60 watts for computer work, and 80-100 watts for attention to detail.

Kitchen

Hanging pendants are great above dinettes; mount these at least 18 inches over surfaces. For task areas such as countertops, use 80 to 100 watts. Under-cabinet lights eliminate shadows and add illumination, as do recessed bulbs over the sink. Consider ceiling-mounted track lights aimed at food preparation and presentation areas.

Bathroom

A bathroom should be brightly lit. Wall lights on either side of the mirror eliminate shadows and create a pleasing look. If you can't manage this, consider a lighted shaving and/or makeup mirror. Use a warm white light and not the harsh cold white of traditional fluorescents. For additional illumination, install recessed bulbs or track lights.



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Bedrooms

For kid's rooms, create bright spaces that are welcoming for playtime and studying. Position lights to avoid glare on computers and tables. Include a nightlight or low-light settings to comfort little ones at bedtime. For adults, don't be afraid to take a chance and create drama with a chandelier or pendant; this is especially nice in large bedrooms. For guestrooms, make sure all areas are well-lit and welcoming, and consider a whimsical touch with fixtures in unusual shapes, colours, or patterns.

Lighting creates the mood and enhances the function of each room. If you follow these tips, your home will delight both your family and your guests.

Common Painting Mistakes To Avoid

The colour of a room sets its mood and affects the eye-appeal of your furniture and accessories. Professional decorators advise against the following mistakes:

1. "Matchy-Matchy"

Nothing's duller than a room with walls that match the upholstery that match the carpet. Boring harmony is worse than no harmony at all. Instead, look for complementary colours, and don't be afraid of contrasting elements.

2. A White Ceiling

This one surprises most people. The problem is that white paint has a hint of grey, which can make the whole room look dreary. Instead, choose an off-white shade such as ivory or cream.

3. Too Much Of A Good Thing

Bright or dramatic colours can make a room exciting. But don't overdo it. You need to strike a balance between vivid colours and neutrals such as ecru, grey, or white.

4. Forgetting About Finishes

The finish of paint—whether matte, semi-gloss, gloss, or high-lustre—can change the way the colour looks. Shiny surfaces reflect light in a single direction; flat surfaces reflect light in all directions. This means colours can appear different in matte versus high-lustre finishes.



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5. Forgetting About Lighting

Our perception of colour is affected by changes in lighting. Outdoor and indoor light can make a colour appear differently. So buy small samples of paint, test them where you intend to use them, and look at them under both daylight and artificial light.

6. Making Each Room An Island

Think of rooms as parts of a whole. You don't want one area to be ultra modern with metallics, the next to be formal with pastels, and the third to be nautical with bright colours. Interior design from room to room shouldn't give the impression of multiple homes. Instead, think of the whole house as one unit.

7. Making Each Room The Same

This is the opposite of mistake #4. You want variety from one room to the next. Otherwise the overall decor will seem monotonous and stiff. Don't reject the notion of unity for the house as a whole, but also don't think each room has to be a variation on the same theme.

8. Looking For "Paint-Colour-Nirvana"

As you look at one paint colour after another, anxiety can build up. You may start to feel you have to find the perfect colour, the one you want to live with forever. Don't be afraid to allow yourself to make mistakes. Remember, paint colour is easy to change. So don't get caught up in the search for the perfect hue. Instead, relax and have fun!

What's The Next Step?

We hope this has been useful to you and that you will have fun designing and creating your home. However the process can be a daunting and time consuming, especially if you are a busy professional or just don't see yourself as a creative. Sometimes people prefer to seek out the advice and services of an interior designer.

Interior designers like us save you time and provide advice and options, which you may not have thought about, as well as remove the headache of dealing with various trades by managing the project for you.

If you think that you would benefit from having a conversation with us about your home, please do get in touch.