

Introducing our first-ever compendium of tips, tricks, and tactics for designing a home you love. From surprising stylist staples (fishing sinkers!) to paint colors that have us over the moon, this practical guide will prepare you for stylish days ahead. FORECAST: A WHOLE LOT OF PRETTY.



THE TIME-TESTED TOOL KIT

After untold hours in the field with *Country Living* stylists, these handy items have earned our stamp of approval.

- 1. VINTAGE BOOKS**
The prop of choice for instant character. booksbythefoot.com
- 2. SMALL STEAMER**
A powerful and portable wrinkle-reducer. \$18; hsn.com
- 3. FLAT EXTENSION CORD**
Keeps unsightly bumps at bay. \$40; amazon.com
- 4. GARDENING GLOVES**
Like a magnet for pet hair.
- 5. PAINTER'S TAPE**
Use it to cheat a fabric hem or mark where furniture goes.
- 6. HINGED RULER**
More versatile than its not-so-bendy counterparts.
- 7. METALLIC SPRAY PAINT**
Krylon is the gold standard for a glossy, gilded finish. \$5; lowes.com
- 8. SEEDED EUCALYPTUS**
It's fragrant, hardy, and available at grocery stores.
- 9. TOOTHPASTE**
Dab it on a picture frame hook and place the frame against the wall. The paste mark will tell you where to put the nail.
- 10. DENTURE TABLETS**
Drop one in a dingy vase, add water, and let the fizz work its residue-lifting magic.
- 11. WALNUTS**
Rub on hardwood scuffs; the oils conceal marks.
- 12. FISHING SINKERS**
A *ree!* smart alternative to drapery weights.
- 13. CLOTHESPINS**
Holds a nail in place while hammering.
- 14. VANILLA EXTRACT**
Add a drop to a paint gallon to temper fumes.
- 15. FRESH LEMONS**
Kitchens just look better with a happy bowl of yellow.
- 16. KRAFT PAPER**
For book covers, table runners, gift wrap...
- 17. SEAMSTRESS MAGNET**
Attracts loose pins and nails (or valuables accidentally sucked up by a vacuum!).
- 18. MAYONNAISE**
Remove furniture rings by applying a thin layer.
- 19. PINK LIGHTBULBS**
More flattering than the standard ones.
- 20. MATCHBOOK**
Fix wobbly furniture (particularly out-of-sight hind legs).



A PENNY SAVED...
Get the look of linen with window treatments made from hardware store drop cloths.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LESLEE MITCHELL.

RULES OF THUMB

1/ LET THERE BE LOW-HUNG LIGHT.

Your dining room table and chandelier should be closer than you may think. Hang fixtures 32 to 38 inches from top of table. If your light source takes up less than 1/4 the width of the table, opt for two identical fixtures splitting the center of the table.

2/ KEEP CENTERPIECES AT ARM'S LENGTH.

Place your elbow on a table. A centerpiece should be no taller than the distance from your elbow to your wrist so that guests can look one another in the eye. Here, a wide and low arrangement of peonies and ranunculuses in a fluted bowl fills the bill.

3/ SET BOUNDARIES.

There should be 6 to 8 inches between the back of the chair legs and an area rug's edge. (For the record, an 8' x 10' rug is usually right on scale for a six-person rectangular dining table.)

4/ PLAY IN THE PUDDLES.

When it comes to draperies, you're better off erring on the side of too much puddle than "high-water" hangings. The sweet spot: Curtains that gather between 1 to 3 inches. (This look is also forgiving if you live in a home with uneven floors.)

5/ FORGO MATCHING FURNITURE.

Just as assorted plates create a casually sophisticated vibe, a mismatched dining table and chairs evokes a cozy, come-as-you-are feel. Here, a stately white oak piece is surrounded by antique walnut chairs with textured rush seating and striped wingbacks. Speaking of the latter: Before you introduce an unexpected upholstered perch at the head of the table, make sure the seat height is a dining table-appropriate 18 inches.

DECORATING WISDOM FOR YOUR
DINING ROOM & KITCHEN

FOOLPROOF KITCHEN FORMULAS

Hardware, cabinet, and countertop combos for a smartly charted cook space.



Chalkboard paint transforms a cabinet door into a message center (*benjamin moore .com*).



Porcelain Knob in White; *signature hardware.com*



Mushroom Knob; *rockymountain hardware.com*



Cayman in White; *innermost cabinets.com*



Capistrano in Rustic Maple; *schuler cabinetry.com*



Midcentury Knob in Bronze; *houseof antique hardware.com*



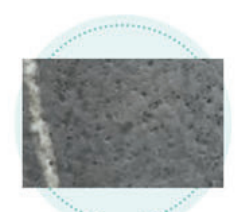
Harmony in Custom Blue; *decora cabinets.com*



Kolams Quartz; *wilsonart.com* (It looks just like marble!)



Williamsburg Butcher Block; *lumber liquidators.com*



Old Dominion Soapstone; *alberene soapstone.com*

BACK TO BASICS: CHAIRS

Sit tight with one of these classic country styles gathered around your table.



WINDSOR



BENTWOOD



MISSION



LADDERBACK



X-BACK



1 A PENNY SAVED...
Cover a plain wooden cable spool with fabric for an affordable side table. (Home-improvement stores often give them away for free.)

RULES OF THUMB

1 / MASTER THE GALLERY WALL.

The key to a perfect arrangement? Imperfections. Swear off the precisely gridded layout in favor of a looser, it-can-evolve-over-time arrangement. Hang the lowest frames 5 to 7 inches above the back of the sofa (or other furniture) and work up and out from there, spacing frames 2 to 4 inches apart. Keep at least one element (here, the yellow frames) consistent.

2 / MIX PATTERNS LIKE A PRO.

Try our no-fail formula: one small-scale print (the grasscloth wallpaper), one large-scale print (buffalo check pillow), one print with movement (the swirly striped table skirt), and one print with a nature motif (the floral pillow). And while on the subject of mixing, rooms look most layered when they have something wooden, something woven, and something "wow" (as in something mirrored, reflective, or glossy).

3 / PICK THE RIGHT-SIZE COFFEE TABLE...

Ensure visual balance with one that's $\frac{2}{3}$ the length of your sofa. When it comes to height, the top of the table should hit at the middle of the sofa seat cushion.

4 / ...AND STYLE IT UP PROPERLY.

Every coffee table needs three things: books (to play with scale and height), a basket (to add texture and corral wayward items, like remotes), and decorative items to spark conversation. (And don't ask us why, but three tchotchkes always looks better than two.)

5 / ADD A DOG!

Because every country space looks more fetching with a canine curled up in it. (Right, Piper?)

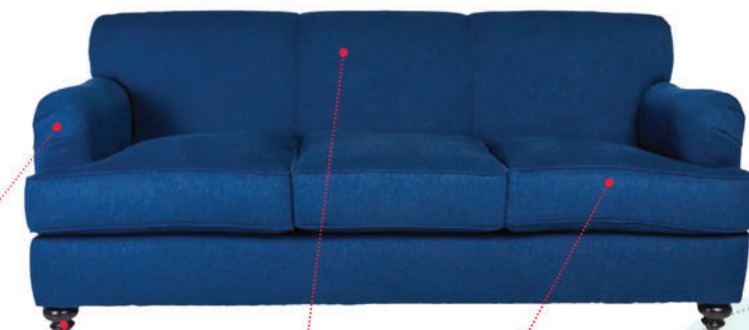
PHOTOGRAPH BY LESLEE MITCHELL.

DECORATING WISDOM FOR YOUR

LIVING ROOM

HOW TO SPOT A NO-REGRETS SOFA

This one's made in America and comes in 19 colors!



TWILL UPHOLSTERY
Stains are less noticeable on the ribbed surface. Navy blue gets our vote for an especially spill-forgiving neutral.

EXPOSED LEGS
Adds a designer finish without inflating the price.

TIGHT BACK
Won't lose its shape or look slouchy over time.

THREE SEAT CUSHIONS
Maximizes seating. Also desirable: a the-more-the-merrier bench seat.

GRAMERCY SOFA
in Navy Twill, \$1,200; shopsociety.com **CL Deal!** 10% off with code **MadeinNC**

YARDAGE FORECASTER

From sofas to sink skirts, this upholstery guide has you covered.

	Three-Cushion Sofa	Two-Cushion Love Seat	Club Chair	Chaise Longue	
	18-22 YARDS	14-17 YARDS	9-11 YARDS	11-13 YARDS	
Tufted Chesterfield Sofa	Camelback Sofa	Wingback Chair	Bergère Chair	Skirted Parsons Chair	Dining Chair Cushion
15-19 YARDS	12-15 YARDS	5-7 YARDS	5-6 YARDS	4-5 YARDS	1/2-1 YARD
Queen Headboard	Tufted Queen Headboard	Bolster Pillow	Flanged Euro Sham	Throw Pillow	Standard Sham
5-7 YARDS	6-8 YARDS	3/4-1 YARD	2-3 YARDS	1/2-1 YARD	1 1/2-2 YARDS
Shower Curtain	Sink Skirt	Table Skirt	Porch Swing Cushion	Bench	Hammock
5-6 YARDS	1-2 YARDS	5-6 YARDS	1 1/2-2 YARDS	2-3 YARDS	5-6 YARDS
Play Teepee	Dog Bed	X-Bench	Table Lamp Shade	Chandelier Shades	Tufted Ottoman
6-8 YARDS	2-3 YARDS	3-3 3/4 YARDS	1/2-3/4 YARD	1 YARD FOR 6	5-5 1/2 YARDS



A PENNY SAVED...
 Look for 400-thread count sheets. Anything higher than that isn't usually worth the extra expense.

PHOTOGRAPH BY VICTORIA PEARSON.

RULES OF THUMB

1 / TRY A BEDDING TRIO.

For a bed that's crisply made (yet possible to replicate on a daily basis), try our simple tactic of using three covers—a neutral coverlet, a patterned duvet, and a colorful quilt—layering one atop the other. Starting at the base of the pillow shams, leave roughly a third of each exposed.

2 / REIN IN THE PILLOWS.

This handsome arrangement puts the focus on a single graphic Euro sham (which gives you license to splurge on one you love). Generally speaking, limit yourself to five pillows on a queen bed and six on a king. (Feel free to have more fun with a guest bed because you don't have to make it every day.)

3 / OPT FOR SCONCES.

Conserve precious bedside real estate by skipping table lamps in favor of space-saving wall-mounts. Hang them approximately a foot above your head when seated in bed and, for ideal reading light, go no higher than 40 watts in fixtures with an exposed bulb (like the one shown).

4 / HANG ART LOWER THAN YOU THINK.

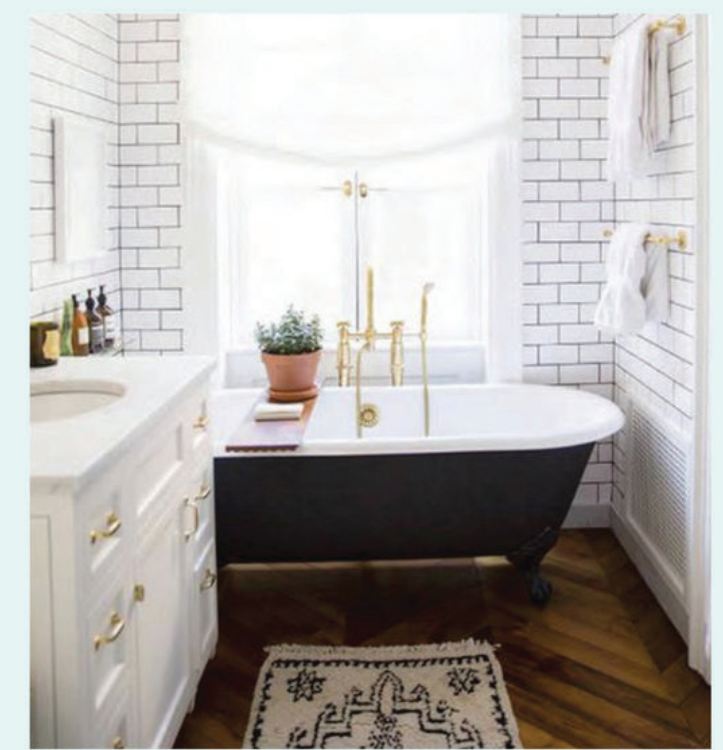
Most people tend to hang items too high, and this applies to above the bed too. Mount your prized piece at least 3 inches lower than you think you should, and you'll likely be right on target.

5 / INSIST ON DRAWERS.

A side table with at least one drawer can make all the difference between a pretty bedside vignette and an unsightly tangle of lip gloss, reading glasses, and phone chargers.

DECORATING WISDOM FOR YOUR

BEDROOM & BATHROOM



PERENNIAL FAVORITE: SUBWAY TILE

The affordable bathroom staple is far more versatile than you think. Here, nine ways to arrange it.

RUNNING BOND (SHOWN ABOVE)	STACKED BOND	VERTICAL STACKED BOND
STACKED RUNNING BOND	SINGLE BASKET WEAVE	DOUBLE BASKET WEAVE
DIAGONAL RUNNING BOND	90-DEGREE HERRINGBONE	45-DEGREE HERRINGBONE

AWASH IN STYLE

These finds guarantee a 100% chance of better-looking showers and baths.



TOILET PAPER HOLDER
 Smartly equipped with a shelf. \$78; anthropologie.com



WATER CLOSET SIGN
 Hang this vintage-y find on the door or lean it on a wall. \$15; housefolk.com



SOAP DISH
 Elevate inexpensive drugstore bars with a brass splash of quirk. \$36; shopterrain.com



BATH MAT
 Woven from thick cotton yarn for comfort underfoot. \$68; coyuchi.com

AT-A-GLANCE PAINT GUIDE

These no-fail wall-ceiling-trim combos have us over the moon.

WALLS

CEILING

TRIM



SWISS COFFEE



MONTPELIER MADISON WHITE



WOODLAWN COLONIAL GRAY

CRISP
Start with a creamy white wall, add contrast with a handsome trim, and then split the tonal difference on the ceiling. (All colors from Valspar.)



BLUE DAISY



HARBOR HAZE



WHITE ICE

CLASSIC
Consider this traditional-yet-casual ensemble the room equivalent of jeans and a T-shirt. (All colors from Benjamin Moore.)



WARM AUTUMN



TIPPY TAUPE



SEASIDE VILLAGE

COZY
Just like a pink lightbulb casts a flattering glow (see page 61), this wall-ceiling pairing makes anyone look better. And just trust us on the trim. (All colors from Glidden.)



EAVES GREEN



CARRIAGE BLUE



ANGLER GREEN

COLORFUL
A bold Granny Smith green stays grounded with a mossy trim, and a sky blue ceiling keeps the space feeling airy. (All colors from Ralph Lauren Paint.)

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID HILLEGAS.

THE DECORATING TREND-OMETER

Here's a look at what's on the rise with those in the know. (All editor-approved.)

HOTTEST!



POM-POM DETAILING
Anything with pom-poms can't be taken too seriously. (And that's a good thing.) Place mats, \$59/four; ballard designs.com



PINEAPPLE MOTIFS
The iconic symbol of hospitality is right at home on an entry wall. Wallcovering, \$175/roll; hyggeandwest.com



CANED FURNITURE
Step aside, wicker. This intricate weave is having a moment. Side chair, \$499; cb2.com



PHILODENDRON
The ubiquitous fiddle-leaf fig tree is about to get green with envy. Potted plant, \$17; homedepot.com



CEMENT FLOOR TILES
Because #IHaveThisThingWithFloors is a 150,000-strong Instagram tag. \$7/tile, cementtileshop.com

HOT

HOTTER

AND FINALLY... PAINT, PRODUCTS and other MISCELLANY

MADE IN AMERICA

Fresh favorites from this year's crop of stateside-crafted wares.



ART
SAN DIEGO, CA
Screenprinted maps of national parks framed with reclaimed wood. \$49; muir-way.com



FURNITURE
ARLINGTON, VA
Two-step stools handwaxed for a durable finish. \$75; circlecreekhome.com



POTTERY
AUSTIN, TX
Rustic clay mugs emblazoned with wildlife images. \$32; rhynoclayworks.etsy.com



LIGHTING
ROCK HILL, SC
Geostone-inspired lamps made from walnut, maple, or sapele wood. \$109; worleyslighting.com



TEXTILES
BROOKLYN, NY
Minimalist designs meet heirloom quilting techniques. From \$140; ginarockenwagner.com

WHEN TO SPLURGE AND SAVE

Your high-low guide to home shopping.

SPLURGE ON THIS



SHELF BRACKETS
Scrolling ironwork makes a statement. \$16; signaturehardware.com



LAMP SHADE
Invest in the spot your eye will focus on. \$81; emilybucknell.etsy.com



USHAK RUG
Use it as an accent. \$407 for 4' x 6'; luluandgeorgia.com



WATER GOBLETS
Go for fine detailing on the things close at hand. \$32 each; yvonne-estelles.com

SAVE ON THIS



SHELF LEDGE
The sturdiest option (rough-hewn wood) is also the most economical. (Try your local lumberyard for similar styles.)



LAMP BASE
Keep it simple to avoid competing with the shade. \$29; worldmarket.com



SISAL RUG
Layer underneath the Oushak. \$125 for 5' x 8'; overstock.com



DINNER PLATES
Let the meal, not the dish, be the star. \$4 each; ikea.com