

Homes

COMMON DESIGN MISTAKES

Interior designers offer solutions

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This is the first in a two-part series. Next week: Discover tips on how to create a stylish home.

If your furniture is matchy-matchy or area rugs that are too small for the space, you're guilty of some of the most common design mistakes that make interior designers cringe.

We asked a couple of trusted interior designers to share some of their biggest pet peeves and their solutions. Here's what they had to say:

OVERLOOKING SCALE. Scale is an understanding of how the size of one item in a space relates to the size of another item in the same space as well as the space itself, explains Aman Than, founder and principal designer of Aman Than Interiors in Brampton.

Examples of poor scale include oversized furniture forced into a small living room or a single small piece of art on a large wall. "I always recommend paying close attention to scale when designing your room," she says.

That's not the only problem with overlooking scale, says Eugenia Triandos, principal designer at Montreal-based Hibou Design & Co. "Ill-fitting furniture not only disrupts the spatial harmony but often blocks off the flow of rooms. Make sure that when purchasing furniture that you're considering all entry points of your room and pay meticulous attention to proportionality," she says. "Try not to be overcrowded."

POOR FURNITURE PLACEMENT. Well-placed furniture is one of the

differences between a carefully thought-out room and one that's poorly planned, Than maintains. "In my experience, most people like to push their furniture against the wall thinking it makes their room look spacious.

In fact, it does the opposite" and makes the room look "uninviting and cold." The solution: pull furniture away from the walls and add something like a sofa table behind it to frame the room. "This placement instantly makes the room cozy and welcoming, and you don't have to yell to have a conversation."

OVERLOOKING FUNCTIONALITY. Catering to an aesthetic appeal is great — so long as you've considered a space's functionality. "Remember to consider your needs and what your furniture's primary function is meant to serve," Triandos says. "If you have a very bustling household with younger ones running around, maybe opt for some darker furniture pieces or ones that clean easily."

BARE WINDOWS. Clients always ask Than if they need drapes. Her answer is a resounding, 'Yes.' "I believe drapes are essential in the overall design of any space. Window treatments add softness to any space, and can be ideal for adding pattern and colour, and emphasize tall ceilings," she says.

But hanging drapes immediately above the window frame will visually shorten the height of a room. Than recommends hanging drapes as close to the ceiling as possible. Doing so frames the window, completes the look and gives the room a luxurious feel, she explains.



A matching sofa, loveseat and chair lacks creativity, believes interior designer Aman Than. She recommends buying one piece at a time. PHOTOS MIKE CHAJECKI



Eugenia Triandos, principal designer at Hibou Design & Co.



Aman Than, founder and principal designer of Aman Than Interiors.

FLOATING RUGS. "One could have all the beautiful furniture but if the area rug is too small, it takes away from the beauty of the room," says Than. "The right rug can pull your room together and serve as a base upon which you can layer your entire room."

In living and family rooms, for example, the front legs of your furniture should sit on the rug. In bedrooms, the bed should sit on the rug and extend out at least 12 to 18 inches. "Large rugs are luxurious and make your space feel well-designed," she says.

POOR LIGHTING. Improper lighting placement and functionality will detract from a room's overall ambiance. Proper lighting, on the other hand, is key to creating a "well-balanced and comfortable" environment, Triandos notes.

Her solution: layered lighting. "In order to really elevate your home, we recommend incorporating a blend of ambient, task and accent lights across your space, from sconces to

standing and so on," she says. "This will yield a multi-dimensional aesthetic that will cater to various functional requirements."

MATCHING FURNITURE. "Matching sofa, loveseat and chair, bedroom sets or dining room sets scream a lack of creativity and are purely boring in my opinion," Than says. "I find that when you don't think through what is that you want to achieve in your space, you rush to buy the sets."

Instead, take time to see how you want to feel in your space and how your space should look. "If hiring a designer is not in your budget, buy one piece at a time, do your homework, and browse Pinterest or Google to see images that catch your eye. I believe that you can always imitate before you innovate."

LACK OF COHESION. At the opposite end of the matchy-matchy spectrum is an excess of different styles, colours and patterns. "Try finding a theme or style that you like prior to setting off into designing your space



Poor lighting detracts from a room's ambiance, says interior designer Eugenia Triandos. Layered lighting elevates a room.

in order to ensure that when sourcing pieces they all blend well together," says Triandos. She also recommends browsing Pinterest to find what design style best suits you. **INFLEXIBILITY.** Triandos recommends embracing versatility in your design. "Try to opt for pieces that can work within multiple layout arrangements or that can adapt to different needs and occasions," she says. Case in point: swivel chairs that can be part of your living space but can turn to face another area of your home. "Maximize space utilization and cater to your diverse lifestyle requirements."