

**A Guided
Journey to
Creating
the Home
Your Spirit
Craves**

**Awaken Your
Interior**

Designer

by Marney K. Makridakis & Michael J. Holland

The authors and publisher, ImagineQuest Information Products Inc. ("ImagineQuest"), have made every effort to produce a high quality, informative and helpful book. However, they make no representation or warranties of any kind with regard to the completeness or accuracy of the contents of the book. They accept no liability of any kind for any losses or damages caused or alleged to be caused, directly or indirectly, from using the information contained in this book.

All product names and/or logos are copyrights and trademarks of their respective owners.

None of these owners has authorized, sponsored, endorsed, or approved this publication.

ImagineQuest has not received any remuneration in return for including any company or product in this book.

Paint colors and other colors depicted in this book may vary slightly from manufacturer's colors. Use color names or numbers, when provided, as a starting point. Then visit your local retailers for matching.

**Awaken Your Interior Designer is Copyright © 2003
ImagineQuest Information Products Inc.**

**All rights reserved worldwide.
First Edition 2003. ISBN 0-9728292-1-0**

Some clip art images copyright [ClipsAhoy](#).

This is not a free e-book.

No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system, transmitted, or reproduced in any way, including but not limited to digital copying and printing without the prior agreement and written permission of the publisher.

ImagineQuest Information Products Inc.
7667 W. Sample Road #233
Coral Springs, FL 33065

Awaken Your Interior Designer

**Dedicated to those who truly believe that a beautiful
home is good for the spirit.**

Awaken Your Interior Designer

Foreword

by Michael J. Holland

Michael J. Holland is the founder of ImagineQuest Information Products Inc., which is dedicated to providing e-goods that will enhance the lives and lifestyles of its customers.

“All serious daring starts from within.”

— Eudora Welty

Without a doubt, decorating your home is a deeply personal process. It requires that you draw from your experiences, feelings, passions...in essence, your **inner guide**.

Surely, the writers and publishers of those other decorating books must know this, right?

Then why do they fill their books with lots of theories that aren't presented in a logical order to ensure decorating **success**? Where are the “**real-world tips and tricks**” to help put theories in action?

Why do they include photographs of beautiful homes that look nothing like those of regular people?

And **why** don't they at least provide basic information about the photographs such as the retailer for that gorgeous sofa or the manufacturer of that unusual paint color? After all, these are the pearls that could really help you **achieve** your decorating dreams!

The reason is...it's much easier and faster to churn out “formula” books with super-slick imagery, rather than to ask you what you want from an interior decorating book.

This was also the feedback I received from my friends. And so the idea for this book was born.

AYID...Foreword

I envisioned a book that would give decorating beginners the confidence to **create** beautiful spaces. I also wanted the book to be loaded with unique ideas and techniques that would even **benefit** more experienced home decorators.

Easy step-by-step instructions were a must, as were photographs with information of where to purchase items.

Wow....I was asking for a lot!

I had plenty of great thoughts **swirling** through my mind, but had never written a book. But where could I find a collaborator who shared my vision?

After searching for several months, I met Marney Makridakis, **who** had been toying with a similar concept over the years.

Let me tell you a little about Marney...

She is a spiritual, **high-energy** artist, designer, and writer who has an intense passion for decorating and the arts.

Her paintings, mixed-media collages, and three-dimensional assemblages have been shown in galleries and sold in arts and crafts shows nationally.

She has a large following of students in New York's Hudson Valley region, **teaching** classes in papermaking, handmade bookbinding, decorative painting, polymer clay, rubber stamping, and paper arts.

In addition, she has written creative feature articles for well **known** publications including Craft, Somerset Studio, The Rubber Stamper, and Stamping Arts and Crafts...(not to **mention** producing her own magazine, [Artella](#).)

For her **contributions** to the arts and art education, Marney was awarded the prestigious national 2001 Leonard Bernstein Award by the National Symphony Orchestra League.

With such a diverse artistic background, there was simply **no way** that I could pass up the opportunity to work with her!

AYID...Foreword

So our project began...

We **brainstormed** and then prepared comprehensive surveys. We obtained valuable feedback from many **home owners** and apartment dwellers — people just like **you** who told us exactly what they wanted from a home decorating book.

Marney immersed herself for months.

We would brainstorm periodically and survey **some more**. Marney would e-mail manuscript sections for my review. Then, together we would tear them apart, add a bunch of **new ideas...and** repeat the process over and over again.

Finally, after seven months...it was done. **Simple. Clear. Effective.** Written in a conversational style with one overriding purpose...to provide you with a do-able approach to finding and expressing **your** inner decorator.

Awaken Your Interior Designer is **bursting** with fresh and **original** ideas, practical time-saving tools, and easy do-it-yourself projects!

So grab your favorite beverage and put on some **soothing** background music...

You're about to embark on a fun and entertaining journey to creating the home that **your** spirit craves.

Wishing you all the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter 'M' being significantly larger and more stylized than the rest of the name.

I. How to Use AYID

Awaken Your Interior Designer comes with many special features to enhance your reading experience. If you are reading this e-book using Acrobat Reader, this section will introduce you to these features and show you how they work.

I.i Links to Spots within AYID

If you've ever read a book and have been frustrated that you can't put your finger on information you read earlier, you'll be happy to know that AYID! has **internal links** that take you from one part of the book to a related section. Internal links appear throughout the text as [blue-underlined](#).

Clicking on an internal link may take you directly to another spot in the book where relevant material was previously discussed. An internal link may also lead to you an item in the Appendix, which offers special tools that we reference throughout the book. Blue-underlined text also indicates a link to a Web site...stay tuned for more information about Web links, later in this section.

I.ii Navigation Features

Here are some easy instructions that will help you move around the book easily and effectively...

Scroll Bar -- click on the Scroll Box in the Scroll Bar and drag it **down** or **up** to rapidly move forward or backward through the book. As you click on the box, the page number displays on the screen. Then, all you have to do is release the mouse button when you get to the desired page.



You can click just **below** or **above** the Scroll Box to **advance** or **reverse** slightly within the current page.

Clicking the **Scroll Arrows** (at the bottom or top of the Scroll Bar, not shown in the illustration) will **advance** or **reverse** the page by a single line at a time. You also can scroll the page continuously by holding an Arrow down.

Arrow keys -- Pressing the arrow keys on your keyboard will cause different actions to occur, depending on your Operating System and the version of Acrobat Reader that you have. Just experiment and see what happens when you press the arrow keys.

Table of Contents -- The Table of Contents is a separate file labeled **TOC.pdf**. When this document is open in Acrobat Reader, you can click on any heading to jump to the corresponding part in the book.

Index -- AYID has an index which is located at the very end of the book, after the Appendix A-D. You can browse the Index and click on any referenced page number to *link directly* to a relevant discussion on the page indicated in the index. This will make your life a lot easier, when you're trying to locate information about a specific topic.

Bookmarks -- If you have a larger monitor, Bookmarks are a great way to get around AYID! To view the bookmarks, do one of the following...

Acrobat Reader v. 5...Click the **Bookmarks tab** on the left side of the screen

Acrobat Reader v. 4...Click **Window** and then click **Show Bookmarks**

Acrobat Reader v. 3...Click **View** and then click **Bookmarks and Page**

Here is what the Foreword and section 1.0 look like in the bookmark list or bookmark pane:



In the graphic below, the **+ sign** (or a triangle, depending on your version) to the left of sections 1.0 and 2.0 indicates that the bookmark can be expanded to display “sub bookmarks” below it. If you move your cursor to the + sign (see below)....



...and then **click the triangle**, a list of sub bookmarks under that bookmark will display:



To collapse the chapter so that the sub bookmarks do not display, just click on the + sign again.

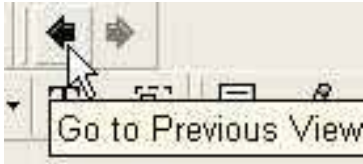
If you move your cursor over one of the actual bookmarks, you'll see that the cursor turns into a “pointing hand” (see above). Click the bookmark, and you'll immediately leap to the beginning of that section!

Straight Page Jumps -- At the bottom of the Acrobat window, you'll see something that looks like this:



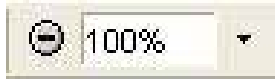
Click the single arrows on either side of the page number box to advance one page forward or move one page backward. (The appearance and mode of the page jump feature varies according to the operating system and version of Acrobat that you are using. Experiment with your version to get familiar with it.)

Returning to your original position -- If, as you navigate AYID, you want to return to your previous position, just click this button:



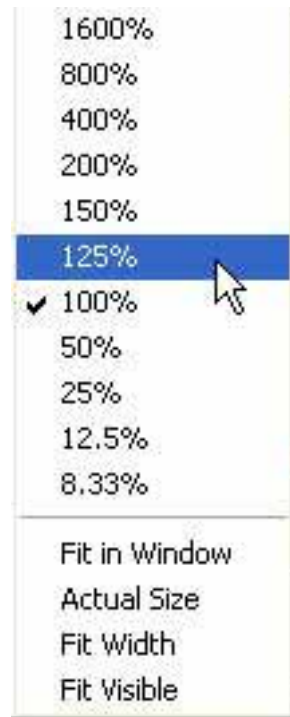
I.iii Viewing Features

Magnification -- In the **upper left corner** of the Acrobat Reader window (or at the bottom of the window, depending on the version), there is a magnification window that looks like this:



This window indicates the current magnification at which AYID displays. We recommend viewing AYID at 100%, which will give you the best general quality and effectiveness.

However, if you want to change the magnification, simply click on the **down arrow** on the right side of the magnification box. A drop-down menu will display, like the one show here (right):



Just use your cursor to select the percentage at which you'd like to view AYID. You also can simply type over the 100% in the magnification box to change the magnification percentage.

Below the list of percentages, there are some other options in the drop-down menu, as you can see in the image on the previous page.

If you have a **small monitor** (15"-17"), you can select **Fit Visible** so that AYID is maximized in your window to take up the whole monitor screen.

If you have a **large monitor** (19" or greater) you may want to select **Fit Page**, which will fit one entire page into the vertical dimension of the AYID window.

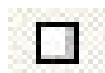
You might want to take a moment and play around with different magnifications, scrolling through the pages you've read thus far, and see which one feels most convenient and effective.

Page Display Layout -- At the bottom of the window, you'll see page layout option buttons that look like this:



(These buttons may appear differently, depending on the version of Acrobat you are using. The button on the far right (above) does not display on the screen in earlier versions of Acrobat Reader.)

These three buttons allow you to select from the following layouts:



Single page -- displays one page in the document at a time



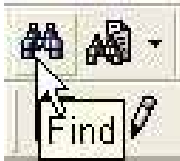
Continuous -- arranges the pages in a continuous vertical column for easy scrolling



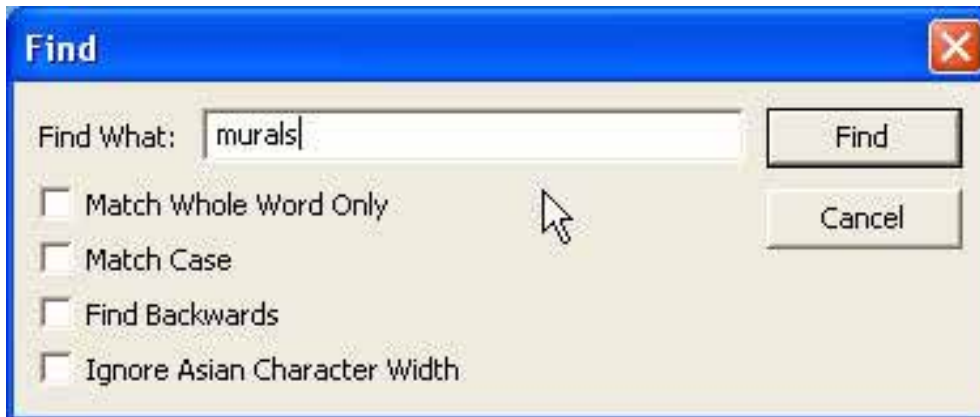
Continuous facing pages -- arranges the pages to appear side by side. This is only a good choice if you have a very large monitor.

I.iv Search Features

If you want to search for a particular word or phrase in AYID, you can click the **Find button**, located on the menu bar at the top of the window:



You can also click **Edit** on the command bar and then click **Find**. Either way, the **Find dialog box** will display:



Simply type what you want to find in the Find What box. Use the options below the Find What box to make further specifications about your search:

Match Whole Word Only -- if you only want to find the whole word you type, as opposed to another word that might include the word you have entered

Match Case -- if your search criteria is case-sensitive

Find Backwards -- if you want to move backwards in the book as you search, instead of moving forward

Then, just click the Find button and dialog boxes will lead you through the results of the search.

I.v Print Feature

You can print this document in the usual fashion. Please respect the [intellectual rights](#) attached to this book. Do not make copies for others.

I.vi Links to the Internet

We've already told you about internal links in AYID. The majority of text in [underlined blue](#), however, are links to Web sites. When you move your cursor over a link, the cursor changes to a "pointing hand". Simply **click the link** and the Web site will open up in your browser.

(Note: Sometimes a link may not work due to heavy traffic or technical difficulties. If this occurs, try again in a few minutes or the next day.)

AYID has **more than 530 links** contained in its pages!!!!

These links include the following:

- Web sites for companies where you can purchase items shown in the photographs
- Web sites for interactive tutorials and further "how-to" information that expands on the information we give you right here
- Links to the Web sites of specific designers and manufacturers of custom-made items shown in the photographs
- Links to books we LOVE and recommend

and **much, much more!**

Now that we've told you all about the great features of AYID...it's time to move right into section 1.0, *Let Your Interior Designer OUT!*

So get ready....your home will never be the same....

1.0 Let Your Interior Designer OUT!

1.1 Are You Ready to Create Your Dream Home?

Are you ready to rediscover your life, your graceful joy, and inner harmony? Are you ready to greet the day with crisper breath, lighter steps, and a dream that dances in your heart? Are you ready to look through your home – whatever its size or shape – and sigh a colorful smile, thinking, “I can’t believe I LIVE here!”

Are you ready to....



be guided through an intuitive process for decorating the home of your unique dreams



gain confidence in making decorating choices



complete creative projects while saving time and money

We’re ready to take you there!

In this book, you’ll be given the opportunity to look deeply within to find exactly what you’re seeking in the room or rooms you want to decorate.

Our interactive guidebook formula is designed to be foolproof in helping you identify your decorating needs, desires, and resources.

And we plan to have LOTS of fun, while we’re at it!



We also give you all the tools you’ll need to create your dream rooms, and take you by the hand as we go through each step, together.

AYID...Let Your Interior Designer OUT!

You'll see lots of pictures of varied and inspiring homes...homes that look like REAL people live there! **To get a closer look at the photos, change the magnification in the box on the upper-left of corner of your screen to 125%.**

We will also provide contact information and links to Web sites where you can purchase items featured in those homes. **(Note that stores with Web sites are *active links* and are underlined in blue. Contact information for stores without Web sites are listed in [Appendix A.](#))**

Color schemes, fabrics and texture, furniture, walls, window treatments, accents ...we promise to be right with you every step of the way! Thanks for entrusting us to be your humble guides on this journey.

Are you ready to give a makeover to that tired sofa that's accompanied you since your college days? Ready to add some unique charm to your dingy kitchen cabinets? Or bring some light into your dark and confining bedroom?

Or(dramatic gasp) do something about those lackluster white walls?

Then pack up...

your secret dreams,
your spirit,
and your sense of humor.

Everything else is in the pages that follow...



Imagine walking through your home and knowing that you were born to live there. That's what it means to "come home"!
(Sofa and coffee table are from [Ethan Allen.](#))

AYID...Let Your Interior Designer OUT!

1.2 Inventory, Insight, and Inspiration are the Keys to Decorating Success!

Here's an overview of this book and how it works:

1. INVENTORY: First, we will determine, together, the building blocks that we'll use to fulfill your decorative and functional requirements, while adding lots of personal ingenuity and flair to your home.

You'll participate in a comprehensive personal inventory using our **Interior Interviews** and **Discovery Playsheets**. These tools will evaluate what you're looking for in your home or the room you're decorating.

We highly recommend that you start the process by working through these activities. Now don't let visions of 8th grade math tests come into your head...these exercises are easy and don't have any wrong answers.

Even if, by some chance, you already have a pretty clear sense of what you're going after with this décor project, it's still a great idea to work through these exercises.

You're bound to pick up at least a few new ideas. Perhaps you'll end up with an even deeper intuitive sense of what you can bring to your new room or rooms.

If you have absolutely NO idea what to do or where to start, even better! These exercises are tremendously effective when you allow your gut level feelings and reactions to rise to the surface, without having any expectations for the final results. Trust us, this works!

2. INSIGHT: After completing the inventory, you'll be guided through an interactive, step-by-step process of decorating your home. Whether you're decorating one room, or taking on several rooms, or even decorating a brand new house, the steps are foolproof for guiding you to decorating success.

AYID...Let Your Interior Designer OUT!

We'll consistently refer you back to your work in the **Discovery Playsheets** and **Interior Interviews** to keep you on track, while giving you all the tools you need as you go along.

You'll learn about color schemes, wall treatments, texture, floors, furniture, window treatments, lighting...in essence, EVERYTHING you need to know, **in the order in which you need to know it.**

After getting a firm grasp on the elements of decorating (and realizing that it is far easier than you ever thought it could be!), we'll lead you through putting it all together, making the elements work to their best advantage in your home.

3. INSPIRATION: Throughout the book, you will be invited to a wealth of decorating inspiration with hands-on projects and ideas to apply in your home.

And...keep your eyes out for our friendly icons that offer various bits of information, including:



Coffee Break – quick check-ins to see how you're doing and how we can help



Sit 'n Summarize – summaries on topics for quick reference, simply put



Marney's Memo – a glimpse into Marney's mind as she solves her own personal decorating challenges



Ancient Wisdom – little known facts of home and style through the ages to inspire you along the journey

AYID...Let Your Interior Designer OUT!

1.3 Tools, Not Rules!

We'd like to briefly mention just a few things that are very important to us in writing this book. These are the guiding principles behind the process we're presenting to you, and we thought we'd better come right out and admit a few things right now.

So...

...here are our true confessions:

1. If you're looking for a book that lists all of the golden rules of decorating – the static Do's and Don'ts, well, this is NOT it. We believe in **TOOLS, not RULES**, and we're proud of it!

Even when we give you suggestions of things that usually are effective in decorating, we don't think of them as rules.

We want you to take our suggestions and feel free to run with them as far as you'd like (just don't forget to take the book with you; you may need it closer to the finish line!)

2. If you're looking for a book that tells you how to decorate one specific room...this is NOT it. We want to present you with a solid understanding of the tools that you can use every single time you decorate or redecorate a room...ANY room.

These same basic principles and sequential processes are involved with decorating a bathroom or a dining room or a bedroom.

Our heartfelt intent is to give you a resource to which you can refer for a lifetime of happy decorating!

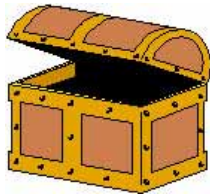


© Marney K. Makridakis 2002

AYID...Let Your Interior Designer OUT!

3. If you're looking for a book that presents decorating as merely an aesthetic entity, you had better keep looking. We believe decorating is an extremely personal experience. Not only is it dependent on personal taste, it must take into account the function of the rooms and the emotional and physical needs of the people who will inhabit them.

In this way, decorating is a deeply spiritual process. Following intuition and creating a mental picture of what "bliss" looks like to you is just as important as painting a wall!



Ancient Wisdom

An ancient series of writings called *De Architectura*, written by Vitruvius, was the first "how to" book on home decorating.

Written between 90 & 20 BCE, the papers covered aspects of Roman Design, including technical information about bricks and concrete, water supply, and design principles.

1.4 Changing Your Home Can Change Your Life!!

We believe decorating can change your life!

And we're not the only ones....read on...

Joy, a psychotherapist: "When I redecorated, I was afraid about what I would do with all of my sentimental possessions. I have a large family and have inherited a lot of things through the years, and I am always picking up items that speak to me.

The result has not been all that inspiring – it's actually been cluttered. What I learned is that I can work with my cherished belongings and not against them. I figured out what I wanted to keep and display and found that I could integrate those items into new color schemes and design choices.

AYID...Let Your Interior Designer OUT!

Marie, a writer : “The best thing I ever did for myself was redecorate a room with conscious thought about every single object I placed in the room and every adjustment I made in color, furniture placement, and lighting.

It was like a meditation for me. Now the room feels like mine, and it is my favorite place to go to ‘fill the well.’ I have more energy than ever.”

Denise, a homemaker: “For me, the big link was realizing the emotional impact of color. I set out to choose colors for my rooms that would trigger the response I sought when I was in that room.

My entire family feels the difference...we are more calm and peaceful and enjoy our fresh new space.”



When you consciously give objects a special place, it is an act of artful decorating. Even on a bedside table! (Lamp is from [JC Penney Home Store.](#))



Colors are rich with emotion...the trick is to find the right combination for you!

Deana, a medical librarian: “Apartment living can be a challenge, but I finally realized that there’s really no difference between decorating an apartment and decorating a home you own.

When I gave my small apartment a full makeover, I fell in love with the space. I stopped wishing for what I didn’t have – a house – and instead found the gifts that lay right here in front of me, simply by making some simple and affordable changes.”

2.0 The Designer Within: Interpreting Your Decorating Dreams

2.1 Interior Interviews



So, now's the fun part where we'll get down to business and help you uncover your decorating vision. The first step is the **Interior Interviews**, which are free-form writing experiments with absolutely no right or wrong answers.

For this step, you'll need something to write in. It can be anything, from a legal pad or spiral notebook to a hardbound journal with an inspiring cover.

You also can print multiple copies of the lined page found in [Appendix B](#) and place them in a binder or notebook.

Whatever form it takes, this book will act as your journal for your decorating spirit. It's important to keep all the pages together for organizational purposes.

We'll be coming back to these answers from time to time, so it will make things much easier for you if you have all of your writings together.

If you print out the pages of this book, we've given you space to write shorter answers to questions that are used as consolidation tools; that is, they ask you to summarize information that you write in the free-form questions.

If you do not print out these pages, you should write the answers to these "consolidation" questions in your journal.

We encourage you to set aside some time to yourself and dive into these questions as soon as possible. Even if you're just planning to make a small change — such as changing the wall color — getting an intuitive sense of what you truly desire in a room will be helpful.

AYID...The Designer Within

In exploring these activities, you may glean information that drastically changes what you originally had in mind, as you more fully discover what you are seeking in your home.

There is no “right” way to decorate, except to be in tune with a concept that is aligned with your heart.

In writing free-form answers to these questions, you’ll be getting right into the home that exists in your heart...and that’s the first step!

It’s time to get absolutely giddy with excitement for the home that will unfold right before your eyes!

So...make a cup of your favorite comforting beverage....

find a comfy spot to think and write...

and let’s begin!



We'll show you how to keep an eye out for cozy corners...like the one created in this very small kitchen. Often, charming corners have been right in front of your eyes, just waiting to be discovered! (Wallpaper is from MacAfee Designs, available at [Home Depot](#); dinette set is from [Pier 1 Imports](#).)

Write your answers to the following in your journal...



1. What are the very first rooms you remember from childhood? What sticks out the most in your memory? One room at a time, jot down your most sensory-specific memories.

Here are some memory joggers....

What did it smell like?

What did the fabric of the quilt, curtain, or carpet feel like to touch?

What colors were in the room?

Did the room feel warm or cold to you?

Did the room seem happy or serious?

Were there breakable things around?

Did the room seem big or small to you?

Now, repeat these questions for other rooms you remember as a child.



2. Continue to recall your childhood...did you ever play “house”? What did your house look like, either in your imagination or as an actual playhouse?

Here are some memory joggers....

Did you create homes for your dolls?

Did you have a miniature dollhouse, or did a friend have one that you coveted?

What did you love most about these homes...the frilly pink lace on Barbie’s bed?

The view of the apple tree outside your playhouse window?

The miniature grandfather clock in your friend’s dollhouse?

Or perhaps the grand piano or tiny rosebuds on the wallpaper?

Take a moment and write about these “play” homes that played a role in your childhood.



Coffee Break

Thinking about childhood memories often unlocks a door to the most intimate experiences that you continue to hold in your heart through adulthood.

Remember that no one ever need see these answers but you. The purpose of these exercises is to get you thinking about the role that the idea of “home” plays in your life...and the role you would like it to play.



3. When you think of the word, “home”, what are the first five words that come to mind? Write your words here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



4. Look back at your answers to the first two questions. What has the word “home” meant to you?

What key feelings about "home" were revealed?

Review all your responses for these first four questions and select the top three words that seem to best capture your vision of "home".

(For example, three words that could sum up your childhood experiences could be something like: 1. antiques; 2. feminine; 3. cozy.)

4. (continued)

Enter your 3 words here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



While not every child lives in such a magically decorated space as the one shown here, we all had imaginations with limitless rooms and windows. (Walls designed by [Sandra Gustafson](#).)

(For do-it-yourself projects like this decorated wall, consult our e-book, *Creative Stamping for Walls and Furniture*, for unique projects you won't find anywhere else.)



5. Imagine that money, time, and resources are not an issue, and describe your perfect day “at home”. What would you spend your day doing?

What time would you wake up, and what would you see as you got out of bed, got dressed, showered, ate breakfast, and started on your daily tasks?

Check in with your senses:

- What would you see?
- What would you hear?
- What would you smell?
- What would you taste?
- What would you touch?

Let yourself dream big here -- don't be limited by any thought of what is or is not feasible.



6. Think of a home you've visited in the past year or so -- perhaps it was like one of the homes pictured below.

It could be the home of a friend, or a home in which a business or social gathering took place. It could even be a home you saw on TV or in a movie.

What one word describes what you liked about it?

Enter it here:



The word for this home might be "cozy"...



While the word for this one might be "classic". (Sofa and coffee table are from [Ethan Allen](#); side table is by [Hitchcock Chair Company](#).)



7. Take a moment and think about having your dream home. How would you know if you had it?

Don't think in terms of specific decor...rather, think about how the lives of you and your family would change if you were living in your dream home.

7. (continued)

Now, make a list of several things that come to mind that would make you know you were living in your dream home.

For example:

“I would feel cheery every time I walked into the kitchen.”

“My friends would love to hang out here.”

“I would drift off to sleep basking in my favorite color.”

“The family room would be organized and completely devoid of clutter.”

Questions 5-7 encouraged you to articulate your dreams, without limitations. Look through your answers and, again, look for patterns.



8. Are there any specific concepts that were repeated throughout these answers? Write three words that summarize what you have answered in those three questions.

(i.e.: 1. elegant; 2. simple; 3. sunny)

Enter your three words here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



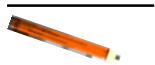
An elegant, simple, sunny bedroom - 3 words in action!



9. Imagine that you have just been informed that a flood or fire is on its way to your house and there is nothing you can do to stop it.

Which room, above all others, do you hope is spared from destruction?

Room: _____



10. Think about the room you wrote down in the last question, and describe what you like about that room in three words:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



11. In the same emergency situation, which room are you least fond of and would hope is destroyed, with insurance to pay for the complete rebuilding and redecorating of it?

(You can only choose one room here...we know, it might be tough!)

Room: _____



12. Think about the room you wrote down in #11, and describe what you *don't* like about that room in three words.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



13. Look at the 3 words you just wrote in #12. In the spaces below, write the **opposite of each word you wrote**. For example, if an aspect you don't like about a room is "messy", you could write the word, "clean" or "organized", here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

You're doing great! You've come up with some important puzzle pieces, and now we'll start putting them together.



14. In the spaces below, transfer the answers from the other pages, indicated by the question numbers. (If you're reading this on the computer, just jot these down in your journal)



- word 1 from question #4: _____
- word 2 from question #4: _____
- word 3 from question #4: _____
- word entered in question #6: _____
- word 1 from question #8: _____
- word 2 from question #8: _____
- word 3 from question #8: _____
- word 1 from question #10: _____
- word 2 from question #10: _____
- word 3 from question #10: _____
- word 1 from question #13: _____
- word 2 from question #13: _____
- word 3 from question #13: _____



15. Look at your list of words and see if there are any patterns among, or similarities between, the words.

Then narrow your list down to five words that seem to resonate most deeply in answer to the question, **“What is the essence of my dream home?”**

Enter them here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



16. Look at your list of 5 words in #15, and select the 3 words that characterize the changes in your home that would make the biggest difference in your life. Write them here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



17. Now hear this: **YES, You CAN have the home of your dreams!** When you read these words, what are the very first thoughts that come to mind?

Some thoughts to ponder...

When you dream about your home without limitations, does any resistance come up for you?

What, if anything, makes you hesitate?



18. If you indicated a hesitation or resistance in your answer from #17, see if you can label your main resistance in terms of lack (i.e., lack of funds, lack of space, lack of time, lack of self-esteem).

If applicable, pick one or two that most accurately describe your resistance.

1. _____
2. _____



19. The next step is to create an affirmation to help you move beyond the lack that you perceive.

An affirmation is a sentence that is stated in the positive, in the present tense.

Affirmations can be very powerful tools. They can help you stay focused and optimistic while you draw good things into your life and manifest your dreams.

An example of a health-related affirmation is, "I am full of energy and enjoy the freedom that comes with good health." Get the idea?

Affirmations change the focus from lack to abundance.

Now, it's time to write an affirmation for your decorating adventure. Think of it as your "mission statement."

Take the 3 words you wrote in #16, and combine them with the lack(s) you listed in #18, stated in a positive way.

Here's an example: "I enjoy designing an elegant, comforting, and pristine home using the funds and space that I have."

Write your affirmation/mission statement here:

What does all this have to do with decorating? EVERYTHING. In order to have something for your very own, you must first know what it is!



Coffee Break

If, after you've written your affirmation, you'd like to go back and change the three main words you wrote in #16...be our guest! Your affirmation is entirely flexible – you may, in fact, change it several times as we go along.

2.2 Discovery Playsheets - What's Your Style?

The next step is to work through the Discovery Playsheets, which are fun little quizzes to help you identify some of your key wants and desires for your decorating projects.

Feel free to use your affirmation - and the questions leading up to it -- as an anchor to help connect you to your vision.

But, you are also free to let go of the work you've done so far, and just answer the following questions easily and freely.

Then, you can see how well your answers match up with what you've determined about your decorating vision thus far.

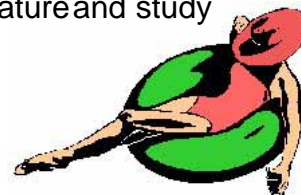


Often overlooked, stairwells can serve as inspiring "rooms" of their own! In this home, the stairwell acts as an art gallery of sorts. Thus, "taking the next step" becomes a fascinating and captivating experience for both residents and visitors!



Question #1. Consider the following vacations:

- a. Taking an impromptu tour of the French Countryside, staying at small inns, visiting the formal French gardens, and eating at stylish cafes
- b. Staying in a converted one-room schoolhouse in a small Pennsylvania town, spending your days at auctions and craft fairs, and relaxing in the evenings
- c. Embarking on a relaxed and leisurely road trip through the midwest, staying in comfortable hotels, stopping at national parks and whatever destinations strike you
- d. Toasting the town in Manhattan, staying at the most chic and trendy hotel, catching several Broadway shows, visiting modern art galleries and dancing each night until dawn
- e. Renting an adobe cabin in Santa Fe, visiting the New Mexican craft fairs and art galleries by day and sitting peacefully under a huge sky to count the stars by night
- f. Taking a historical organized tour of Europe, with a schedule packed with visits to the finest museums, castles, and historic sites
- g. Relaxing in a quaint bed and breakfast in a small New England town, with drives through the countryside in search of used bookstores, antique shops, and exquisite restaurants in surprising locations
- h. Designing your own custom vacation through Great Britain that includes visits to the most famous tea rooms and the locales associated with your favorite Jane Austen novels
- i. Escaping to a remote retreat center to connect with nature and study meditation and yoga



(Question #1, continued)

Now, enter the choice closest to....

1. Your ultimate DREAM vacation of a lifetime: _____
2. Your second choice: _____
3. The least appealing choice: _____



Coffee Break

If you're having difficulty selecting between two choices, ask yourself which choice would make the greatest difference in your life right now, considering how you've been feeling lately.



Question #2: The following are comments made by a friend or neighbor:

- a. "Your dining room is so pretty...I love the floral fabrics on the chairs, the cherry wood table, and that amazing china collection on the sideboard is exquisite!"
- b. "This is the CUTEST kitchen! I love the gingham drapes, and is that bread basket really from a general store in 1920, like it says?"
- c. "Your family room is so cozy and airy....gosh, I feel like I could just plop down anywhere and relax!"
- d. "Wow, your living room really makes a statement! The colors are so fantastic and bold, it's extraordinary! How long have you been a collector of modern art?"
- e. "Your house is so rich with meaning - everywhere I look, there's some wonderful object with a story to tell...I love the earthy colors and the natural wood furniture! "

(Question #2, continued)

f. "This room is so elegant! Were those full-length tailored drapes custom made? Those chairs are just heavenly...are they Chippendale? And where did you buy that oil painting?"

g. "The creative things you've done in this breakfast room are charming...the dinette set is so sweet and feminine, it's hand painted, right? And how unique to use an ironing board as a sideboard - you've draped it so beautifully!"

h. "This bedroom is so lavish and extravagant...I mean, I feel like I'm away in a castle somewhere, and someone's about to deliver my evening tea on a silver platter. "

i. "Your house feels like a retreat..the simplicity is so heavenly, and I love all the elements of nature you've incorporated everywhere, and that little fountain is so peaceful. If I lived here, I think I'd be calm all the time!"

Now, enter the choice closest to....

1. What you would DREAM someone would say about your home: _____
2. Your second choice: _____
3. The least appealing thing you'd like someone to say about your home: _____



Question #3: Consider the following leisure activities:

- a. Taking a series of classes in French cooking and gardening
- b. Taking classes in sewing, needlework, Tole painting, and basket weaving
- c. Going on an all-day picnic or to an amusement park with close friends or family
- d. Attending a trendy, sophisticated wine-tasting gala at an art gallery

(Question #3, continued)

- e. Touring a little-known wood and pottery studio in a remote location
- f. Taking a class in art history
- g. Meeting your girlfriends for a local cafe for heart-to-heart talks with laughter, tears....the works
- h. Hosting an elaborate formal parlour tea with engraved invitations and all the trimmings
- i. Attending workshops on aromatherapy, yoga, and natural healing

Now, enter the choice closest to....

1. The activity you'd enjoy most: _____
2. Your second choice: _____
3. The least appealing thing you'd want to do: _____



Question #4: Consider the following pairs of adjectives:

- a. Formal and cheery
- b. Cute and homey
- c. Comfortable and relaxing
- d. Trendy and sophisticated
- e. Earthy and unique
- f. Formal and conservative
- g. Feminine and cozy
- h. Lavish and elegant
- i. Simple and peaceful

Now, enter the choice closest to....

1. The pair that describes what you'd like your home to exude: _____
2. Your second choice: _____
3. The pair that is least appealing, when describing your home: _____

Okay.... here's the fun part.....photos!!!



Question #5: Consider the following dining areas:

a.



b.



c.



d.



AYID...The Designer Within

e.



f.



g.



h.



i.



Now, enter the choice closest to....

1. The picture closest to your ultimate dream of a dining area: _____
2. Your second choice: _____
3. The least appealing choice: _____

Ok...It's time to tabulate your results!!!

First, write down the letters (a. - i.) in a column in your journal (see below), or you can print out this page and write directly on it.

For the five questions you just answered, tally up the points for each letter choice, according to the instructions below:

For questions #1-#4:

- add 2 points** for each letter written as your top choice
- add 1 point** for each letter written as your second choice
- subtract 1 point** for each letter written as your least desirable choice

For question #5:

- add 3 points** for the letter written as your top choice
- add 1 point** for the letter written as your second choice
- subtract 1 point** for the letter written as your least desirable choice.

<u>Letter Choice</u>	<u>Total Points</u>
a.	
b.	
c.	
d.	
e.	
f.	
g.	
h.	
i.	

To find out what your score means, read on...

3.0 Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

3.1 Summarizing the “Perfect 10” !

You’ve scored your quiz, have you? Well, the letter with the highest total points is likely your most dominant decorating style.

The choice with the second highest total corresponds to another style that also may interest you. This is useful information for reasons we’ll discuss in a moment.

The choice with the lowest number of points will likely be the style that interests you the least. This also is helpful, as knowing what you don’t like can often help you zone in on its opposite.

Find your decorating style(s) by matching your quiz results to the following list:

- a. European Country
- b. American Country
- c. Casual Contemporary
- d. Formal Contemporary
- e. Rustic
- f. Traditional
- g. Casual Romantic
- h. Traditional Romantic
- i. Spiritual

But wait! There is a tenth style to add to this list....Eclectic style! If your answers were a combination of several letters, it is most likely that your style can be defined as Eclectic.

In some way, almost all homes are Eclectic. More often than not, effective decorating mixes elements of at least two styles together. We’ve found that homes can actually adhere to a style TOO much, and end up looking like a catalog, rather than a home inhabited by real humans with beating hearts.

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

Rooms in which every single element of a room is representative of only one style can come across as distant or “not lived in.” The key lies in knowing how the different styles can work together to enhance, rather than oppose, one another.

This is a reason why it is helpful to determine not only your most dominant style, but other styles that appeal to you.

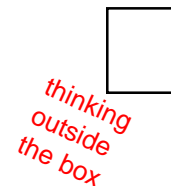
3.2 What a Style Can Do, and What it Can't!

A word about **decorating styles**, before we move on.....

It's useful to have a sense of your preferred decorating style because it can anchor you as you make decorating decisions.

If you learn about styles and the basic components that define them, you can grasp how different elements work together in harmony.

That being said, this is one decorating book that wants you to think outside of the box when it comes to decorating styles. That is, you should not be confined to a style, just because you've identified it as your dominant style.



What makes us all wonderfully human is our individuality, and there's no greater place to express that than in the home. As individuals, our tastes may be complicated and even downright paradoxical.

So, we encourage you not to hang everything on a label...but instead to allow yourself to be open to all the things that you love, and to be excited about figuring out how they can work together.

What follows is an introduction to each of the ten styles referenced in the quiz. We will show you the same photos of the dining areas that you saw in the quiz...this time, pointing out various elements in the room that signify its style.

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

Then, for each style, we've paired the dining area photo with another photo that shows how that style can be used effectively with other styles.

We suggest that you read through the descriptions for all styles mentioned, even if some of them do not seem all that interesting to you.

You may be surprised to see how styles can work together in unusual but effective ways.

3.3 European Country Style: The Old World Charm

This style includes two decorating styles that happen to be very fashionable today: **English Country** and **French Country** (which also can be called French Provencal).

However, unlike some decorating trends, the timeless grace of European Country is not at risk for becoming passé.

European Country style is dominated by extensive use of pattern, especially cheery florals. Colors are bright, bold, and often include jewel tones.

In this photo (right), a vibrant red and yellow floral wallpaper sets a garden-like atmosphere for a simple, understated dining experience.



A relaxing English garden created in the breakfast nook of a kitchen. (Chandelier is from [The Great Indoors](#); table is from [Restoration Hardware](#).)

This style presents natural woods such as cherry, oak, and mahogany in a mix of mismatched traditional 19th style furniture pieces, blending the classical and comfortable together. In this photo, antique 19th century chairs are paired with a reproduction English dining table.

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

This makes shopping for European Country furniture easy - just go to your local antique shops and find pieces you like....there's no hesitation in mixing them together!

In European Country style, **chintz**, a patterned floral fabric with a crisp and polished finish, is mixed and matched with thoughtful abandon.

Like in planting a garden, mixed florals of diverse sizes and shapes work well together, as long as they maintain a harmonious color scheme. Chintz also refers to floral patterns in fine china.

Another common fabric is **toile**, which is short for the French, *Toile de Jouy*. Toile (pronounced *twall*) depicts the joy and activity of French life, illustrated in a solid color on a white or cream background.

While both English Country and French Country styles can be categorized as elegant, they do have some subtle differences.



Toile patterns are enchanting because, like books, they tell a story. (For toile fabrics, we recommend DecorateToday.com.)



The European Country rooster takes its place in these kitchen tiles. (Tiles are by [American Marazzi Tile](http://AmericanMarazziTile.com).)

French Country style tends to be more delicate than English Country. French Country style furniture often is hand painted and/or gilded with gold and silver leaf, with extreme attention to detail.

Blue and yellow are popular colors in French Country style, and the the quirky decorative use of roosters often is a defining characteristic of the style.

A staple in French Country decor, roosters show up on everything from paintings to pillows to floor tiles!

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

English Country style takes the “accumulated look” we discussed earlier all the way. A multitude of contrasting fabrics are paired with dark woods (such as cherry and mahogany) and old, worn-out leather furniture.

English Country entertaining rooms - such as dining and living rooms - tend to be more formal and traditional than French Country, which lends itself to a more “bohemian” look and feel.



Sit ‘n Summarize



The ABC's of European Country:

Armoires
Bookcases
Chintz
Duvets
Elegant pillows,
Full-length curtains

Greenery
Heirlooms
Italian tile
Jewel tones
Linens
Marble countertops

Oil paintings
Portraits
Roosters
Sculptures
Toile
Valances

3.4 A Little Bit Country: European & American Country Mixed

On the following page, you'll see another breakfast nook with European Country flair. But what happens when you add a pinch of American Country to the mix? You get a cute and cozy room that is draped in elegance!

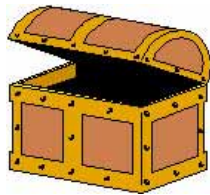
True to European Country form, the full-length draped curtains are made of toile, and the furnishings are a mix of antiques.

This room, however, also embraces the charm of the American Country style, which is the style that we will discuss next.

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

The red-and-white checkered tablecloth, lattice design on the walls, and the lace sheer panels used with the toile curtains are accents that bring an American spirit to the forefront.

The result is a look in which country coziness and European elegance dance together in their own sweet time.



Ancient Wisdom

European Country style is the result of aristocratic gentry forced to “scale down” for financial reasons. Thus, while some “finery” was kept, it was mixed with more provincial furnishings, fabrics, and accessories.

*Combining European Country with American Country produces a charming, stylish environment. ([Waverly](#) offers a wide variety of toile curtains. Refer to our e-book, *Creative Stamping for Walls & Furniture*, for instructions on how to create a repetitive design, such as this yellow lattice, using stamps.)*



Marney's Memo

I absolutely love toile, but the authentic version can be rather expensive! I've had luck finding the pattern in inexpensive bedsheets at stores such as [Wal-Mart](#), [Bed, Bath, and Beyond](#), and [Linens 'n Things](#).

You can use bedsheets to make curtains, covers for throw pillows, even slipcovers! (Refer to our companion e-book, *Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts*, for instructions on making a no-sew slipcover!)

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

3.5 American Country Style: Anyone for Apple Pie?

American Country style has a distinctive look associated with the old farmhouses of late 18th- and late 19th- century America.

Its trademark is cute coziness punctuated by an abundance of accessories and accents that pay tribute to all things Americana.

American Country is popular in homes all around the United States, but is especially prevalent in New England and in southern states.

Like European Country, American Country makes use of mismatched antiques. However, American Country antiques are American in origin, such as those manufactured by the Shakers or Amish.

In addition to antiques, American Country style also uses plenty of hand painted furniture as well as hand painted decorative accessories such as serving trays, and dishes.



The perfect setting for an All-American Dinner. An American quilt acts as a unique tablecloth. (Dinette set was purchased at an Amish auction in Lancaster County, PA; dollhouse kit is from [A.C. Moore](#). For affordable quilts, we recommend [Ebay](#) and [Texana Quilt Company](#).)

Walls and shelves are piled high with accessories ranging from birdhouses to hand-sewn samplers to old photographs and souvenirs. Collections are displayed proudly, such as those of postcards, dolls, sewing supplies, old clothing, teddy bears, decorative boxes, thimbles, china, and just about any other cherished possession.

The garden is an important motif in American Country, and homes decorated in this style often include elements that bring the garden inside. Thus, common accents include antique garden tools, garden-themed artwork, painted flower pots, and lattices and picket fences draped with artificial flower garlands.

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!



Hand painted wooden decor pieces bring out the country style in this corner. (For a large selection of unfinished wood items, we recommend [A.C. Moore](#) and [Michaels](#).)

Synonymous with American Country is “life on the farm”, so farm animals such as roosters, hens, pigs, horses, and cows are often featured in wallpaper, fabrics, and hand painted furniture and décor.

Colors range from bright and bold (including the traditional red, white, and blue) to soft and cheery, such as the sage green of the built-in hutch (left).

There is also a current decorating trend (often referred to in magazines as “new country” or “contemporary country”) that utilizes surprisingly vivid colors to add modern drama to American Country style furniture and accessories.

Popular colors for this “new country” style include hot, punchy shades of pink, violet, blue, and orange.



Sit ‘n Summarize



The ABC's of American Country:

Amish-made furniture

Birdhouses

Cross-stitch wall hangings

Doilies

Earthenware

Fresh flowers

Greenhouses

Hutches

Knitted blankets

Latticework

Mementos

Nesting baskets

Outdoor ornaments

Plate collections

Quilt racks

Rocking chairs

Sewing machines

Teapots

United States flags

Vases

Wallpaper borders

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

3.6 A Country Romance: American Country Mixed with Traditional Romantic Style

The fact that it is so distinctive does not mean that American Country cannot be combined with other styles.

In the unusual guest room pictured here, American Country is mixed with Traditional Romantic, also known as Victorian style.

While the room features several American Country signatures, such as handmade quilts, lace curtains, and a country fresh pink on the walls, the furniture style of the bedroom set is late 19th century, at the height of the Victorian Era.



A bedroom trapped in the quaintest of time machines. (Bedroom set purchased at [Lafayette Mill Antiques](#) in Lafayette, New Jersey. For reproduction Victorian furnishings, we recommend the [Home Decorators catalog.](#))

The knickknacks in this room are also from different eras. A Victorian-era tea set is paired with American teddy bears and toys for a cross-century tea party.

Similarly, the artwork on the walls dips from across centuries and countries.

The result is a whimsical, museum-like intrigue that is fit for a princess.



Memorabilia from across the centuries adds fascinating charm to this bedroom. (For vintage clothing and toys, we recommend [Ebay.](#))



Marney's Memo

Displaying artwork is a wonderful way to add character and style to any room, but sometimes the cost can be prohibitive. You know what I do? I buy calendars, cut the pages out, and frame them using ready-made frames. It's a great way to showcase art of any style -- from country samplers to oil paintings.

Since most calendars focus on one topic, I can create several art pieces from one calendar! After-Holiday sales are the perfect time to buy calendars at drastic discounts.

Other sources that I've used for images include:

posters	stationery	magazines
catalogs	children's books	recipe cards
advertisements	computer clip art	textbooks
discount art books	old record covers	seed packets

(You can find instructions on how to rescue garage sale frames to make them look polished and authentic for all decorating styles in our e-book, *Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts*.)

3.7 Casual Contemporary Style: The Livin' is Easy

A relaxing, comfortable, functional environment -- that's the Casual Contemporary mantra.

This decorating style, on which the majority of American chain retail furniture stores are based, is created with the furniture elements we know so well: sofas, loveseats, entertainment centers, dinette sets, table lamps, and area rugs.

Generally round in shape, these furniture pieces suggest ease, comfort, and simple luxury.

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

But just because such furniture items are familiar, they needn't be staid or boring.

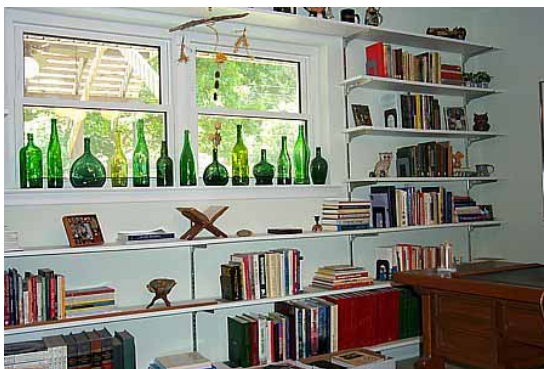
Casual Contemporary style, when carried out effectively, can be infused with style, while maintaining its signature of comfort, ease, and convenience.

The key in Casual Contemporary style is to place furnishings in arrangements that are both pleasing to the eye as well as functional, and to use pattern and color in ways that enhance the comfortable feel of the room.

Color schemes for Casual Contemporary vary from bold to pastels, but most often are light and fresh midtones mixed with neutrals.



Interest is added to this casual dining area by displaying a collection of international artifacts. (Chairs are from [Levitz Furniture](#).)



Inspiring collections grace the shelves of this study. The green glass bottles punch up the comforting sage green on the walls. (Paint color is Peaceful Green by [Sherwin-Williams](#).)

Personal collections bring character and uniqueness to rooms decorated in Casual Contemporary style, ensuring that the room does not appear to be manufactured or mass-produced.

As with a room of any style, the key to an inspiring home is to fill it with things that you adore!

Casual Contemporary is an affordable style in which to decorate. It lends itself to mixed furniture pieces purchased in a variety of stores at different times.

The key to making a Casual Contemporary room work, however, lies in unifying elements. Color is an excellent unifier, as are matching accents, such as matching lamps, side tables, and throw pillows.



Sit 'n Summarize



The ABC's of Casual Contemporary:

Accent tables

Bar stools

Collections

Dinette sets

Entertainment centers

Floor pillows

Game tables

Hanging plants

Knickknacks

Loveseats

Message centers

Photographs

Quilts

Reclining chairs

Sectional sofas

Throw pillows

3.8 Comfy Grandeur: Casual Contemporary with Traditional Romantic Style

Casual Contemporary style is also quite versatile. So, if your results from the previous **Discovery Playsheet** showed a combination of this style and another, you're in luck!

The family room pictured in this photograph (right) and on the following page is a great example.

The room conveys a casual feel, with soft, round furniture, fresh and crisp color, track lighting fixtures, and an overall laid-back environment.



Contemporary and Traditional lighting fixtures are mixed together for variety and interest. (Tiffany chandelier and track lighting are from [Lights Fantastic](#) in Dallas and Austin, TX.)

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

It is a stylish room, yet you feel as if you could just plop down and watch TV on the loveseat, or play a game on the game table in the corner.

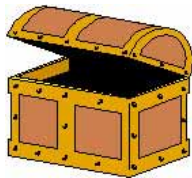
But look closer, and you'll see other elements at work.

The forest green chaise, as well as the Tiffany lamp over the game table, bring Traditional Romantic style, the style of the Victorian era, into this Casual Contemporary room.

Without becoming overly formal, these touches add a hint of understated grandeur to the room. While subtle, this sprinkling of elegance strikes a balance with the comfort inherent in the room's design.



Understated elegance in a casual family room.
(Chaise and loveseat are from [Gabberts Furniture](#); game table is from [Freed's Furniture](#); chairs at table are from [Wicke's Furniture](#).)



Ancient Wisdom

The chaise longue (often called a "chaise lounge", which is a misnomer) was a highly criticized furniture piece in the Victorian era.

MMe. de Fenlis - a "Miss Manners" of the age - said that the chaise lent itself to women demonstrating sloppy and indecent behavior by placing their uncovered feet on the chaise.

She insisted that ladies should use a *couvre pied* (foot cover) to cover their feet in order to stop this appalling habit!

3.9 Formal Contemporary Style: The Latest and the Greatest

Formal Contemporary style is deliciously modern, sleek, and elegant.

Rooms decorated in this style can be very formal and highly accessorized, like the dining room pictured here. It utilizes the popular black, white, and gray Formal Contemporary color scheme.

Abstract and “artsy” styles also fall in this category. These styles are more simplistic, with less elegance and grandeur.

Whether a Formal Contemporary room is formal or casual, what differentiates it from Casual Contemporary style is its focus on line and angles.



The common contrasts of black, white, and gray create a sleek sophistication in this dining room. (To create this stylish look affordably, we recommend the Lilian style at FurnitureFind.com, which offers a wide variety of furniture in all styles.)

Casual Contemporary traditionally emphasizes curves, comfy round shapes, and neutral colors interwoven with classic color schemes. Formal Contemporary style is more angular, abstract, and features bold, stark colors. Modern art such as abstract paintings and sculptures are used for added drama.



Coffee Break

If you find yourself responding negatively to this style, that is clue that you should stick with its polar opposite - the traditional styles.

If you find it intriguing, consider adding modern elements in rooms, even if you don't wish to decorate an entire room or home in this style. Accent pieces like lamps, end tables, and artwork are excellent for this purpose.

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!



Furniture considered to be Formal Contemporary can date back to the 1960's and 1970's, when the Pop and High Tech styles were in vogue.

Furniture of this style can be made from wood, formica, metal, or chrome silver, and often uses glass in place of traditional surfaces.

Formal Contemporary furniture maintains a focus on line and angle. The red accent pillow provides a sharp contrast with the white chair cushion. (Chair and lamp are from [IKEA](#).)



Sit 'n Summarize



The ABC's of Formal Contemporary:

Art books
Backlighting
Chandeliers
Dali paintings
Eccentric accents
Ficus plants

Glass tabletops
Hanging lamps
Inventive artwork
Jumbo light fixtures
Leather sofa
Mirrors

Open spaces
Puddled drapery
Spot lighting
Throw pillows
Verandas
Window seats

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

3.10 Earthy Sophistication: Where Formal Contemporary & Rustic Styles Meet

Here's an example of a living room (right) that combines Formal Contemporary style with Rustic style, which is the next style we will discuss.

The glass coffee table, sleek window blinds, modern artwork, and contemporary sectional sofa create a formal, lustrous atmosphere.



An aerial view of a formal living room that brings elements of the desert into modern terrain.

The rough hardwood floor, cacti plants, and Native-American knickknacks pull in the Rustic elements, creating a haven where sophistication and nature sing in harmony.

3.11 Rustic Style: Back to Nature

Santa Fe, the Adirondacks, North Woods, Mexico...all of these transportive locations can be conjured up with the effective use of Rustic style decorating.

A Rustic-style room gives the appearance of having been decorated by time and nature. Rustic style features unfinished, rough woods, meaningful artifacts and knickknacks with stories to tell, and an embrace of nature and the outdoors.

Rustic homes strive to bring the outdoors in, and in doing so, create a contrast between dark woods and the light of nature.

While Rustic style typically exudes a casual, comfortable living environment, it can also be used within a more formal setting. Take a look at the dining room pictured on the next page, which showcases stunningly handcrafted furniture, and a weathered hand painted hutch.

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

As this photograph demonstrates, Rustic style is typified by sparse, simplistic, handcrafted furniture. In addition to old wood, wrought iron and rusted metal are also prevalent in furniture pieces.

In contrast, decorative accents such as knickknacks, souvenirs, and artwork are used with abandon, creating colorful landscapes of narrative intrigue.

Color schemes for Rustic style vary widely, from bold and vivid to dark neutrals. Color selection is often determined by the locale the decorator desires to reflect in her home.

For example, Santa Fe style is often conveyed with muted pastels interspersed with accents of bold color, while Taos, New Mexico, conjures up the warm earth tones like orange and rust.



Rustic simplicity is infused with elegance to create an earthy dining room. (For rustic furniture, we recommend Southwestern-Rustic-Furniture.com.)



An earthy, kaleidoscopic collection of colorful rustic artifacts.

Adirondack and North Woods styles usually subscribe to a darker color palette, with forest greens, deep reds, and midnight blues.

Rustic style can also be used to create whimsical, Bohemian environments reminiscent of Morocco and Mexico. Perhaps more than any other decorating style, Rustic style throws out the rules and encourages bold experimentation.



A collection of Mexican brooms is paired with Native artwork and a weathered bookshelf overflowing with old books. (For rustic décor accents and artifacts, we recommend searching Ebay or surfing the Web for a variety of private dealers and artisans.)



Sit 'n Summarize



The ABC's of Rustic:

Afghans
Braided rugs
Colorful accessories
Denim
Exposed beams
Flannel

Georgia O'Keefe prints
Hardwood floors
Kokopelli art
Log furniture
Masks
Native-American tapestries

Oak tables
Pottery
Skulls
Tarnished metal
Unfinished wood
Wrought iron

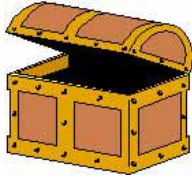
3.12 Comfy Southwest Nests: Rustic Mixed with Casual Contemporary Style



The living room corner pictured here (left) illustrates an interesting combination of Rustic and Casual Contemporary styles.

The weathered armoire, textured paint finish on the walls, and spicy earth tones convey Rustic style. The slipcovered oversized chair and throw cushions enhance the corner with coziness.

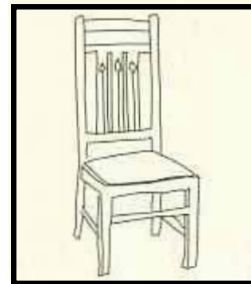
A comfy corner from the old world blooms whimsically with a larger than life tissue paper sunflower. (Flower is from [Home Goods](#); armoire is from [Seaman's Furniture](#); chenille throw and decorative pillows are from [Bed, Bath and Beyond](#); chair is covered with a no-sew slipcover using upholstery fabrics from [Joann Fabrics](#). You can see project directions for no-sew slipcovers in our e-book, [Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts](#).)



Ancient Wisdom

Furniture inspired by The Arts and Crafts Movement of 1870-1920 is often utilized in Rustic style homes. This movement began as a protest against Victorian mass-manufactured and ornate furnishings, which proponents of the movement believed to be a great detriment to society.

The movement was an effort to promote the value of precise construction and hand craftsmanship in furniture.



3.13 Traditional Style: Hooked on Classics

Traditional style is a general heading for the décor styles produced in the 18th century. The specific styles from this century, such as Louis XV, Louis XVI, Colonial Georgian, and Neoclassical, vary, but there are commonalities in the way in which overall design is approached.

During these years, furniture was created with a focus on form and shape. Much attention was paid to ornate decorating, such as special carvings or inlaid wood pieces built into the furniture.

This century was highly driven by decorating trends. Most often, the style present in the castles and homes of the ruling class was popularized among the nobility and upper-class home owners.

For this reason, a particular decade did not offer a wide selection of furniture styles. Traditional furniture pieces, such as this pair of antique chairs (right), are easily identified as being of a specific era.



Two antique chairs in the style of Louis XV.

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!



A true classic: the Traditional dining room.
(For affordable oriental rugs, we recommend [The Oriental Rug Warehouse](#).)

While decorating styles such as European Country and Traditional Romantic rely heavily on the use of antiques, Traditional style needn't. Reproductions of 18th-century furniture pieces are readily available in most furniture stores.

Furthermore, furniture, fabrics, and accents that vaguely resemble 18th century styles are also considered to be Traditional style.

The dining room table in the photograph (left) is an excellent example. The chairs and table are not designed to be exact replicas, yet the set exudes a classical style and flair.

Traditional style employs classical artwork, such as oil paintings, busts and sculptures. It also makes frequent use of accents such as oriental and kilim rugs and conventional-style lamps.



Sit 'n Summarize



The ABC's of Traditional:

Antiques
Bone china
Crown molding
Dado moldings
Friezes
Grand pianos

Headboards
Inlaid wood
Jabot curtains
Kilim rugs
Libraries
Mantels

Neoclassical art
Oriental rugs
Pewter vases
Rococo furniture
Sideboards
Trompe l'oeil murals
Wine cellars

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

3.14 Homey Elegance: Traditional Style Mixed with American Country

In this bedroom (below), Traditional style is elegantly mixed with American Country. The dark cherry wood bed (below left) and traditional bedroom furniture (below right) frame the room in Traditional style.

While oil paintings are a staple in Traditional Style, the subject - a horse - shown in the oil painting above the bed, along with the quilt used for bedding, adds American Country ambiance.

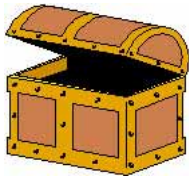
The lamp base on the dresser (right), while classical in shape, is painted in an American folk art style. This enhances the country character of the room.



A traditional bedroom with a bit of country charm.
(Bed is from [Ethan Allen](#); dresser is by [Hitchcock Chair Company](#).)



A folk art lamp base adds whimsy to a traditional bedroom.



Ancient Wisdom

In a 1928 book called “Quilts: Their Story and How to Make Them”, Ruth E. Finley said, “There is not antique more expressive of our foremothers than patchwork, which, in the main, took the form of bed-quilts...a wholly feminine creation.”

3.15 Casual Romantic Style: A Dance with Romance

The Casual Romantic style has come into the forefront recently, with the popularity of “Shabby Chic” and “Cottage” styles.

Casual Romantic embraces a style that is cozy, dreamy, and relaxed, with a sweet and sophisticated charm.

Embracing the feminine, Casual Romantic rooms generate softness and light. Flowing, lightweight and sheet fabrics are draped in abundance, and color schemes are fresh and crisp.

Traditional Romantic style, which is the style we will discuss next, was born of the Victorian era, when romance defined the home. While influenced by romance and gracious living, Casual Romantic style negates fussy backgrounds or accessories with an overall straightforwardness in design choices.

Elegance is found in simple items, such as soft fabric slipcovers and throw blankets, fresh flowers, and simple hand painted designs on furniture.

Casual Romantic style lends itself to décor that is highly unique. Furniture pieces found at garage sales and flea markets are altered in a variety of ways -- paint, papers, decoupage, fabric, fibers, and simple carpentry -- to create one of a kind pieces.

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

Casual Romantic can range from understated sophistication, as in the pictured dining room (below right), to dream-like whimsy. For example, the desk shown in this photograph (below left) was a garage sale purchase that underwent a radical makeover to claim its new fanciful personality.



This hand painted desk looks like it came from a magic cottage!

Because a piece of furniture or a decorative accent in this style can be created out of just about anything you can find at a flea market or garage sale, Casual Romantic is a wonderful style choice if you are short on funds or space, but crave a stylish and unique look.



Empty distressed picture frames serve as wall décor, keeping the atmosphere breezy and casual while maintaining elegance. (For slipcovers, we recommend [Surefit Slipcovers.](#))



Sit 'n Summarize



The ABC's of Casual Romantic:

Adirondack chairs
Birdcages
Comforters
Distressed furniture
Easy chairs
Faux finishes

Gliders
Hand painted furniture
Junk made beautiful
Lace
Milk wood
Overstuffed chairs

Paper lampshades
Ruffles
Sleigh Beds
Table runners
Vanities
Wicker

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

3.16 Mystical Romance: Casual Romantic and Spiritual Styles Join Forces

Casual Romantic can be mixed with virtually any style.

A Contemporary Casual room can be offset with a chandelier made from an old whitewashed birdcage....or a Traditional bedroom can top a classic 18th-century inspired bed frame with a quilt made from vintage handkerchiefs....

Or a small living room filled with hand painted treasures can invoke the spiritual feeling that defines Spiritual style, which we will introduce shortly.



Japanese characters for Good Luck, Long Life, Good Health, Prosperous Future add a touch of spirit to this room. (Art prints are from [IKEA](#).)

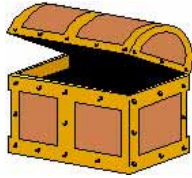


A vintage hanky quilt - the epitome of Casual Romantic!

This is the case in the room pictured here (left). The desk (see a close-up of this desk on the previous page) and the large console were both “rescued” furniture pieces painted and refinished by the owner.

The turquoise color of the console ties in with the color of the hand painted desk, but the dark wood grounds the room with an earthiness that is typical in Spiritual style rooms.

Prints of Japanese characters and an exotic candle complete the touches of Spiritual style in the room. The result created is that of a romantic Zen cottage!



Ancient Wisdom

Sprinkling the home with romance dates all the way back to the origin of Greek mythology. The Greek goddess, Aphrodite, was the goddess of love. She symbolized romance, beauty, and sensuality.

There are several recorded myths in which she conspires with Hera, the goddess of the home and hearth, to bring romance into the home in order to inspire amorous activity and general peace and goodwill.

3.17 Traditional Romantic Style: Remembering the Gilded Age

Traditional Romantic style is inspired by the style of the 19th century, known as the Victorian era, which typically refers to the years between 1837-1901.

During these years women spent the majority of their time tirelessly preparing their homes and decorating. New decorating opportunities were available to them because of the boom in technology.

Elaborate, ornate furnishings were being mass-produced, and fine fabrics were readily available.

Home decorating became much more flamboyant than the restrained, conservative traditional styles that preceded these years. Victorian women subscribed to the idea that “more is more” and decorated their homes in ornate eclecticism.



A Victorian dining room represents what Mark Twain coined as “the gilded age”. (Photograph is courtesy of Judith and Martin Miller and VictorianStation.com, where you can find an extensive line of Victorian décor items.)

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

For the majority of this time period, furnishings were made from dark woods, especially mahogany. Colors used in the home were rich and deep. Victorian women were fearless in their use of color, draping their homes in bright red and pinks, purples, greens, and gold.

Toward the end of the century, the style changed to embrace lighter colors and woods, and became less fussy and cluttered.



Coffee Break

If you are drawn to this style but do not wish to decorate your entire home in such an ornate way, Traditional Romantic lends itself to being isolated in one formal room, such as a dining room.

A dining room like the one pictured on the previous page could be “at home” anywhere!



Sit ‘n Summarize



The ABC's of Traditional Romantic:

Atriums

Butler's pantries

Chaise

Drapery

Entry halls

Four-poster beds

Gilt

Jewelled chandeliers

Lambrequins

Mahogany

Opera curtains

Portraits

Queen Anne furniture

Raw silk

Stained glass

Tiffany lamp

Victrolas

Winding staircases

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

3.18 A Lavish Potpourri: Combining Traditional Romantic with Casual Contemporary & Traditional Styles

The eclectic room pictured in these two photos (below) combines several styles, but the overall feel that permeates the room is definitely Traditional Romantic.

Traditional furniture and even Casual Contemporary items - such as the floor lamp, white easy chair, and TV tray - add to, rather than detract from, the ornate and luxurious environment.



The timeless grandeur of the Victorian era in a 21st-century living room. (For Victorian-inspired window treatments, we recommend [Victorian Drapes and Interiors.](#))

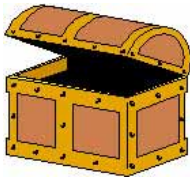


Traditional Romantic with casual overtones. (For Victorian-style furniture such as the chair on the right, we recommend [Victorian Showcase.](#))

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

Accessories such as candlesticks, elaborate mirrors, statues, and velvet footstool emphasize the Traditional Romantic mystique.

The lambrequin window treatments in the room pictured on the previous page (middle) are authentic to Traditional Romantic style. A *lambrequin* -- from the French word for drapery -- is made from fringed damask fabric and accented by decorative embroidery, combined with lace panels.



Ancient Wisdom

In the Victorian era, if a visitor came to call and the homeowner was not home, the visitor would leave a calling card in a silver tray in the entry hall.

The visitor would fold down a corner of the card to indicate a message, in accordance with the following:

- upper-right corner: a visit
- lower-right corner: to take leave
- upper-left corner: congratulations
- lower-left corner: condolences



3.19 Spiritual Style: At One With Home

Spiritual style combines elements of nature, spirit, and minimalist simplicity to create rooms that are calm, balanced, and soothing.

Spiritual style - which is completely non-religious in nature - recently has become popular, as more and more people are feeling the call to simplify their lives and counterbalance the hectic, frenetic nature of modern living.



A spiritual hallway welcomes inner bliss.

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

But the influences of this style go back to the ancient ages. For hundreds of years, the Chinese have practiced the discipline of *Feng Shui* to establish harmony and balance in their lives and environment.

Feng Shui involves the mindful arrangement of living spaces to create vital energy in all areas of our life.

Spiritual style does not necessarily have to utilize the components of Feng Shui, although rooms decorated in this style most often have many Feng Shui elements inherent in their design.

We'll discuss Feng Shui a bit further in section 13.8, *It's All About Energy*.

The key to Spiritual style is simplicity. Rooms are sparsely furnished and any potentially distracting decor beyond the necessities is kept to a minimum.

For example, a living room may contain one or two seating areas, a small table with candles and a modest assortment of small meaningful objects.

Spiritual homes strive to bring components of nature indoors, and often include representations of all five elements - earth, wind, fire, water, and space.



Living ficus plants join this dining room with nature's simple peace. (For instructions to make your own artificial ficus plants, see our project instructions at Home-decorating-made-easy.com. Scroll down to "Do-It-Yourself Ideas"!)

The dining room pictured here is completely enclosed by windows, and makes use of living ficus trees to complete the sanctuary-like environment.

The chairs and table are made of natural oak that has been bleached and stained to cast a subtle white hue on the wood, bringing another earth element to this serene space.

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

In the dining room pictured on the previous page, the furniture is made of simple wood and iron, with seat cushion covers made from earthy gray suede. The table and chairs serve as the focal point in a room that is not offset by other accessories.

Spiritual rooms often are sensory-specific, with purposeful selection of objects to create a desired mood. Fountains, lamps, aromatherapy essential oils, candles, soft fabrics, and soothing music are treated as important decorative accents.

Since the goal of Spiritual style is to create an environment free of external stimulation, black and white photographs or prints are often the artwork of choice. Minimalist modern art paintings also are used to add color.



White is often the main color used in Spiritual style rooms, and frequently is paired with green, which is the most neutral of all colors on the color wheel. You'll be taking a quiz to find your inner color scheme, next!

A simple arrangement of black and white photos showcased by soothing lighting adds interest to a sparsely-decorated sitting room. (For wicker furniture like that pictured here, we recommend [WickerFurniture](#).)



Sit 'n Summarize



The ABC's of Spiritual:

Altars
Black and white photos
Candles
Dried flowers
Essential oils
Fountains

Handmade furniture
Incense burners
Japanese prints
Lanterns
Modern art
Offering plates

Plates
Quaker furniture
Rock gardens
Stacking tables
Throw blankets
White walls

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

3.20 A European Sanctuary: Spiritual Style Joined with European Country

While the look of Spiritual style is very unique, it can be achieved using elements that are distinctive of another style.

For example, the bedroom in this photograph showcases an iron four-poster bed that is most closely associated with European Country style.

The luxurious linens and down comforter are white, as is the color of the walls. Accents are limited to a lamp, a chair, and a live plant.

The result is a sacred and peaceful resting place reminiscent of an English Garden.



A peaceful bedroom with European flair. (Bedding is from [Horchow](#).)

3.21 Eclectic Style: A Home of Many Faces

You've just seen nine examples of eclectic rooms that feature one style intermingled with aspects of another. These could all be described as rooms decorated in Eclectic style....and, as we've said, most rooms are eclectic in one way or another.

Eclectic style can also refer to a room that pushes the limit by decorating with unusual elements... just look at our Eclectic Gallery on the following page!



In this living room, bright blue velvet bucket chairs and the modern artwork, glass table top, and chrome silver bookcase represent Formal Contemporary style; the classic console in the hallway, the old piano, and oriental rugs represent Traditional style.

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

PUSHING THE LIMITS...WITH ECLECTIC DECOR



Glass Christmas ornaments serve as a centerpiece for this table, which is fitting, considering the room's unusual color scheme. The hutch is graced by little vintage dolls, dried flowers, and handmade candles.



A retro cafe kitchen adorned with vintage menus decouped on the walls, inspired by this life-sized pizza chef! (Statue is from [Home Goods](#).)

A bold mural sets the tone in an entry hall. (Design is by [Sandra Gustafson](#).)



A bookshelf is lined with a menagerie of vintage toys.



A piece of sculpture you can sit in... alongside a life-sized baby burro statue.



Coffee Break

Now that you've read a bit about the different decorating styles, we encourage you to go back to the your [affirmation](#).

Do the three words you included in your affirmation seem to be consistent with your results from the quiz on decorating styles?

If not - there's no problem! It just means you need to tweak things a bit. Remember, everything we've been doing is just research. We want to guide you to make conclusions from that research that feels right.

Here are some examples:

If the three words in your affirmation were elegant, comforting, and pristine, and your results of the decorating style quiz yielded European Country in the top position, then your research is consistent and you're ready to move forward!

If the three words in your affirmation were formal, conservative, and classic, and your results from the decorating style yielded a combination of Casual Romantic and Casual Contemporary, then you should do some more thinking before plunging ahead.

If this is the case, which is more in line with your true vision: your three words, or the results to your quiz? If there is a very evident contradiction between the two, do you think that might mean that you should lean more toward an eclectic approach, combining several decorating styles?

We'll reiterate that a design style (or combination of styles) is not the be-all, end-all of decorating. But it is a helpful tool to ground you as we move forward. So the time spent in revisiting your affirmation and perhaps modifying it is time well spent.

4.0 Embracing Your True Colors

4.1 Discovery Playsheets: Color Quiz!

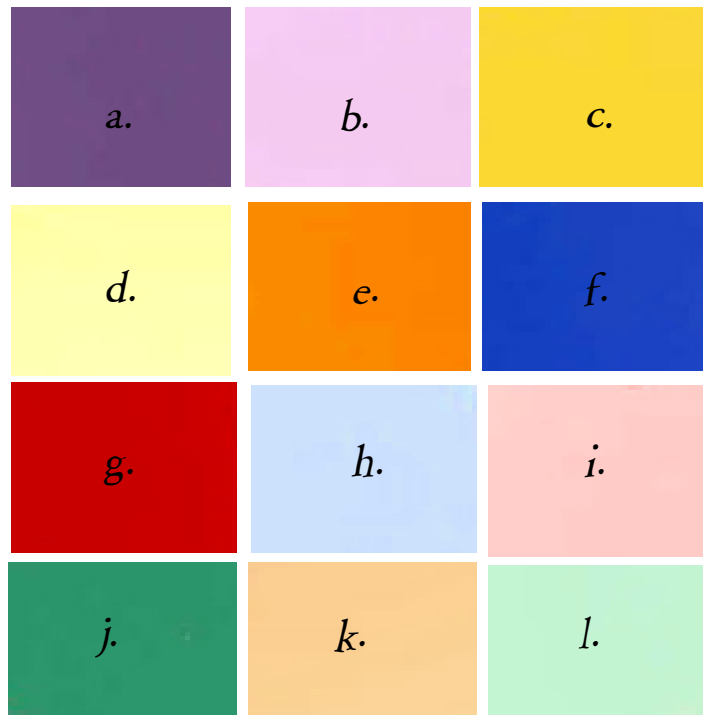
There's one more quiz before we dive into the nuts and bolts of decorating. This one pertains to color.

Effective color choice is not just about personal preference...it's about creating an emotional environment and mood that will enrich your life and the lives of those who live in and visit your home.

Take a moment and answer the following 16 questions to discover some interesting - and perhaps, surprising - revelations about the role colors can play in your life.



Question #1. Consider the following color squares:



(Question #1, continued)

Without giving it too much thought, which color jumps out at you as the most pleasing? Write its letter here: _____

Using the "color squares" from question #1, answer questions #2-#11 by entering the letter for the color you choose in the space provided.



Question #2: Write down your "gut response" for the color you would most like to see when you open your eyes the first thing in the morning: _____



Question #3: Write down your "gut response" for the color you would most like to see as you shower/get dressed/prepare for the day: _____



Question #4: As you prepare meals? _____



Question #5: When relaxing with your family? _____



Coffee Break

Don't worry if your answers don't feel "scientific." Go with your gut! The goal of this exercise is to encourage you to start thinking of color as something that can make a difference in how you feel and perform. The results may give you some insight as to colors that may be effective choices to use in your home.

In section 5.0, *Making Friends with the Color Wheel*, we'll be getting into the real nuts and bolts about color and how to use it. You'll be able to take any ideas that you pick up from doing these exercises, and apply them more easily than you thought possible!



Question #6: When you are relaxing alone? _____



Question #7: When you are participating in your favorite hobby or pastime? _____



Question #8: When taking care of household work and/or business tasks? _____



Question #9: When preparing and eating dinner? _____



Question #10: When hosting a dinner party, social gathering, or special event? _____



Question #11: Falling asleep? _____



Question #12: Consider the six kitchens on the following page...

AYID...Embracing Your True Colors

(Question #12, continued)

a.



b.



c.



d.



e.



f.



Which kitchen is the most appealing to you, color-wise? _____



Question #13: Consider the following personality descriptions:

- a. You are passionate, expressive and emotional.
- b. You are dependable, truthful, and honest.
- c. You are playful, fun, and light-hearted.
- d. You are energetic, outgoing, and generous.
- e. You are confident, content, and relaxed.
- f. You are intense, unique, and mysterious.

Which choice is the most accurate description of your personality? _____



Question #14: Considering the choices in Question #13, above, which choice corresponds to the qualities you are presently most interesting in developing, personally? _____



Question #15: Consider the following qualities:

- a. Intimacy and closeness
- b. Energy and vitality
- c. Passion and excitement
- d. Stability and peace
- e. Radiance and optimism
- f. Magic and sacred mystery

(Question #15, continued)

Which choice corresponds to the quality that you are most interested in cultivating in your home? _____



Question #16: Make a list of the rooms in your house (feel free to use and revise our sample list, below).

For each room, write the letter from Question #15 that corresponds to the quality that you and your family need the most in that particular room.

Master Bedroom: _____

Dining Room: _____

Master Bathroom: _____

Kitchen: _____

Family Room: _____

Sun Room/Porch: _____

Living Room: _____

Child's Room: _____

Home Office: _____

Child's Bathroom: _____

Other rooms:

_____:

_____:

_____:

_____:

_____:

_____:

_____:

_____:

_____:

_____:

_____:

_____:

It's time to score your answers!

The scoring for this quiz is a little tricky, so to make it easier, we've provided a scoresheet for you to use. We recommend that you print out this page first and enter your answers to the 16 questions in the "LETTER" column below. Then proceed to the next page for further instructions.

QUESTION	LETTER	COLOR	TEMP	VALUE
1. Color Squares	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Waking up	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Grooming	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Preparing meals	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Family relaxation	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Solitary relaxation	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Hobby/leisure	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Work/business	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Eating dinner	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Entertaining	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Going to sleep	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Kitchen choice	_____	_____	_____	<i>(Organic choice)</i>
13. Personality choice	_____	_____	_____	<i>(Organic choice)</i>
14. Personal Development	_____	_____	_____	<i>(Desired response)</i>
15. Home personality	_____	_____	_____	<i>(Desired response)</i>
16. Master Bedroom	_____	_____	_____	<i>compare with #2</i>
Master Bathroom	_____	_____	_____	<i>compare with #3</i>
Family Room	_____	_____	_____	<i>compare with #5,6, 7</i>
Living Room	_____	_____	_____	<i>compare with #5,6,10</i>
Home Office	_____	_____	_____	<i>compare with #8</i>
Dining Room	_____	_____	_____	<i>compare with 9 & 10</i>
Kitchen	_____	_____	_____	<i>compare with #4 & #9</i>
Sun Room/Porch	_____	_____	_____	<i>compare with #5 & #7</i>
Child's Room	_____	_____	_____	
Child's Bathroom	_____	_____	_____	
Other rooms:				
_____	_____	_____		
_____	_____	_____		

Now that you've completed the LETTER column on the score sheet, the rest should be a breeze! Simply match the responses you entered on the score sheet to the "Letter Choice" column on the answer key below. Then transfer the corresponding COLOR, TEMP, and VALUE codes to the score sheet.

After marking your scores, we'll tell you what the columns, codes, and your answers mean on the following pages!

For Questions #1 - #11

Letter Choice		COLOR	TEMP	VALUE
a.	=	V	C	B
b.	=	V	C	T
c.	=	Y	W	B
d.	=	Y	W	T
e.	=	O	W	B
f.	=	B	C	B
g.	=	R	W	B
h.	=	B	C	T
i.	=	R	W	T
j.	=	G	C	B
k.	=	O	W	T
l.	=	G	C	T

For Questions # 12 - #14

a.	=	R	W
b.	=	B	C
c.	=	Y	W
d.	=	O	W
e.	=	G	C
f.	=	V	C

For Questions #15 - #16

a.	=	B	C
b.	=	O	W
c.	=	R	W
d.	=	G	C
e.	=	Y	W
f.	=	V	C

All right....it's time to see what all these letters mean. Grab your score sheet!

The entry in the **COLOR** column contains the base color codes for the colors you chose in your quiz responses. A base color is one of the 6 main colors (red, yellow, orange, blue, green, violet) on the color wheel.

(Of course, you also can decorate with neutrals - white, black, beige, tan - but for the purposes of this quiz, we are focusing on the 6 main colors, since they are the ones that ignite emotional responses and are usually the most difficult to select. We'll be discussing selection of neutral colors in section 8.0, *Finalizing Your Color Choices.*)

The entry in the **TEMP** column refers to whether the color is a "warm" color or a "cool" color.

Here are the six base colors, divided into warm and cool categories, listed with the color codes that we assigned for the purpose of scoring this quiz.

Warm colors (W)			Cool colors (C)		
<u>color code</u>			<u>color code</u>		
R	=	RED	G	=	GREEN
O	=	ORANGE	B	=	BLUE
Y	=	YELLOW	V	=	VIOLET

The entry in the **VALUE** column only applies to the first twelve questions. Value refers to the lightness or darkness of a color, which is determined by how much black or white is added to a base color. When you add white to a color, you create a **tint** of that color. When you add black to a color, you create a **shade** of that color. In scoring these questions, "B" stands for **base color**, and "T" stands for **tint**.

An "B" indicates that the color is one of the base colors. A "T" indicates that the base color has been mixed with white to achieve a lighter color. As examples, the following letter choices, from quiz question #1, correspond to colors that are **tints**:

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|----|----------------------------|
| b. | Lavender = white + violet | i. | Pink = white + red |
| d. | Pale Yellow = white + yellow | k. | Peach = white + orange |
| h. | Pale Blue = white + blue | l. | Pale Green = white + green |



Drum Roll, Please...

Now that you know what all the columns mean, let's discuss your quiz results!

The first twelve questions asked you to respond to specific squares of color, while questions #13-#16 relate to specific emotional responses to color. Now more than ever, research abounds on the emotional effects of the color of our environments. Color specialists work in fields such as architecture, health care, and psychotherapy, using color to produce desired responses.

The questions in bold on your score sheet (numbers 1,12, 13, 14, and 15) relate to general colors for your home. The other questions relate to specific rooms and areas in your home.

Questions #1 - #13 indicate a possible **organic choice** for a color scheme for your home. An organic choice is one that is connected with your personal tastes, such as your favorite color.

Questions #14 - #16 relate to a possible **desired choice** for a color scheme in your home. A desired choice is one that corresponds to a result you would like to achieve in your personality, mood, and productivity (for example, the desire to be more focused or feel more calm). **The key to evaluating your answers is to look for patterns. Look at your answers with the following in mind:**

- Is there one color that dominates your score sheet?
- Are most of your answers warm or cool colors (W or C in the TEMP column)?
- Are your organic choices different than your desired choices?

Compare #2 with #11. These two questions asked you to select the preferred color to see upon waking up and before going to sleep? Are these two answers the same? How do they compare with the Bedroom answer in #16?

Compare your #2-#12 answers with your answers to #16. We've given you some suggestions for comparison pairs in italics on the right side of the score sheet. Adapt these suggestions according to tasks you carry out in your own room. (For example, your dining room may also serve as your hobby room, in which case you should compare #7 with the Dining Room answer in #16.)

Do your answers for the desired choice questions surprise you? If they are colors that you would not normally think of using, what are your thoughts and feelings about exploring these colors?

Take a moment and write some of your initial thoughts about this color quiz in your journal.

Later, we'll be coming back to work with color in your room(s), and it will be helpful to have your notes handy.



Ancient Wisdom

The art of healing with color was founded by the god Thoth, according to Ancient Egyptian mythology. Later, in Ancient Greece, colors were associated with the four bodily fluids, referred to as the four humors, and acted as diagnostic tools.

Today, color is used by a large number of alternative healers. Some of the common healing properties of specific colors include the following:

BLUE calms the nervous system, lowers blood pressure, regulates heart rate and reduces stress.

GREEN treats migraines, stress, headaches, anxiety disorders, and fertility problems.

VIOLET treats skin conditions, tension, oversensitivity, and insomnia.

RED treats anemia, bad circulation, rheumatism, and eases constipation.

ORANGE treats depression, immune system disorders, gallstones, alcoholism, and stimulates the appetite.

YELLOW treats arthritis, jaundice, skin problems, and physical tiredness.

Now, let's take each color, one at a time, and further discuss its emotional impact and versatility.

We already explained that the six base colors are divided into warm and cool colors. Generally speaking, warm colors are stimulating and cool colors are relaxing.

Let's discuss the cool colors, first.

4.2 The Bounty of Blues

Blue is a restful, soothing color that focuses the mind. It's an excellent choice for bedrooms and other rooms where you want to relax, like the sitting room pictured here (right).

It is also a great color for kitchens, in which work tasks are combined with relaxation. Blue's alert peacefulness lends itself to this balance quite nicely.



Calming, cozy, contented blue. (Chair is from Brooks Weir Warehouse in Dallas, TX).



There's another side of blue, too -- a bright "midnight blue", often called indigo, which promotes daydreaming and creates emotional stability and increased energy, as in this kitchen (left).

The bolder side of blue takes center stage in this textured paint finish. (Design is by [Sandra Gustafson](#).)

4.3 Greens Growing All Around

Green is the most neutral color in the color wheel and as such, our eyes adjust to it very easily. Green promotes a harmonious, calming, reassuring atmosphere, as shown in the living room pictured here (right).



The color of paint on the walls of this calming living room is "Peaceful Green"...and it's no wonder! (Paint is by [Sherwin-Williams](#); sofa, chair, and lamp are from [Gabberts Furniture](#).)

Green can also be rich and dramatic, as shown in the photograph of the dining room (below right). The result is a jewel-like luminescence that glows in its rich saturation, yet still allows the calming, organic nature of green to shine.



A springy bathroom, complete with dragonflies stenciled on the walls. (Our e-book, [Creative Stamping for Walls & Furniture](#), is packed with unique, easy ways to add punch to your walls....check it out!)

Green can also be fresh and whimsical, as shown in the photo of this bathroom (left). Green is an excellent choice for any room. It is extremely versatile and grounding. Green works well either as the main color of a room, and is equally effective as accent color. Take a tip from nature -- it works just about anywhere!



Green takes a dramatic bow in this dining room. (Wall color: Raintree by [Frazee](#); dining set: "Woodbriar" line from [Drexel Heritage](#); built-in alder wood hutches custom designed by Chess Pacific, Inc. in Phoenix, AZ. You can find glass fiber baskets like this centerpiece at [Uncommon Goods](#).)

4.4 The Varieties of Violet

Violet, which we often call purple, calms us at the deepest level, soothing the body and mind.

When used in its palest forms, it is a wonderful choice for a bedroom, as shown in the photograph of the Casual Romantic bedroom (below left). The soothing and crisp tone of the lavender creates a very relaxing and restful atmosphere.

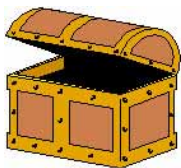
Violet also can be bold and dripping with energy, as shown in this living room photograph (below right). In “public” rooms, violet is a perfect backdrop for a room in which you entertain, as it will immediately soothe your guests and make them feel comfortable.



Pale violet kisses this bedroom with promises of sweet dreams. (Bedding is from [Bed, Bath, and Beyond](#).)



Bold, textured purple is a dramatic, yet reassuring, background in this living room.



Ancient Wisdom

Way back in 1876, Augustus Pleasanton published his findings on the effects of color in plants, animals, and humans, including his theory that the quality, yield, and size of grapes could be increased if they were grown in greenhouses with violet and blue panes of glass!

4.5 All the Ways to See Red

Red invokes power, passion, and energy.

Small touches of red can lift a room's mood in an instant...while using red as a focal main color creates an unforgettable environment, the focus of which depends on the shade of red used.



Touches of red add energy to this living room.
(Window treatment fabric is from [Calico Corners.](#))

Take these two bedrooms below, for example. The red used on the walls in the bedroom on the left creates a rich warmth to frame the European Country look.

The rose-red walls in the bedroom on the right accentuate the angled ceilings of the room and create a splashy, playful environment.



A bedroom wrapped in an embrace of rich elegance.
(Wall color is Opera House Red by [Behr](#); bedding is from [Horchow](#).)



Red takes this bedroom out for a modern spin.
(Wall color is Coral Fantasy by [Benjamin Moore](#).)

4.6 The Options of Orange

Orange is the quintessential “wake up” color that conveys joy, sociability, and confidence.

It’s a great color for rooms used for entertaining, as it stimulates the appetite and the desire to converse. It also can be a daring choice for a home office, as it stimulates attention and revitalizes the mind and body.

It is not recommended for bedrooms because of its awakening qualities.



A home office that's the perfect antidote to the doldrums. (Wall color is Terra Cotta Sunrise by Glidden.)



A more neutral side of orange enlivens a rustic entry hall.



Ancient Wisdom

In the early Italian Renaissance, before homes were heated, orange and red were used in sleeping chambers to create warmth, *literally!*

These warm colors were used on walls and in the fabrics for drapery and blankets.

4.7 Yearnings for Yellow

Yellow affects us in the same way that sunlight does. It raises energy, lifts spirits, and sharpens memory. Using yellow as a main color in a room is a wonderful way to drench a room with sunlight and optimistic warmth.

Like sunlight, yellow is not the best aid for sleep or relaxation. It is not recommended for bedrooms, unless a very pale shade of yellow is used.

Yellow is not as versatile as the other colors, in terms of the moods that it can invoke. In basically all of its forms, it remains cheery and uplifting. But it can vary in shades and saturations, as these two photographs illustrate.



The wall color, specialty flooring, and a ceramic tile backsplash behind the stove tie in several shades of pale yellow to create a unified look in this sunny kitchen.



Accented by red florals, yellow shows its warmer, golden hues in this living room chair. (Chair and ottoman are from [Seaman's Furniture](#).)



Ancient Wisdom

It's important to choose a color that resonates with you deeply, and not just the color that happens to be in fashion. Any home may be decorated attractively, but unless its contents are meaningful, it will never make your heart sing!

Duc de Saint Simon, courtier to the Sun King of France in the 18th Century, echoes this sentiment when he wrote of the palace at Versailles, "It is impressive ...and at the height (of fashion) but empty of emotion and heavy with troubles."

4.8 What Are Your Values?

As the preceding pages demonstrate, different shades of a color can produce highly contrasting effects. Here's a quick reference sheet for the qualities that are associated with various shades and tints of colors and neutrals:

Bright red: passionate, vibrant, aggressive
Dark red: Sophisticated, rich, old world
Pale pink: Calming, soothing, naïve
Bright pink: Fun, gregarious, playful
Pale yellow: Compassionate, intellectual, spiritual
Bright yellow: Cheerful, sunny, stimulating
Gold: Wealthy, powerful, elegant
Pastel blue: Calm, cool, introspective, secure
Medium blue: Safe, relaxing, intimate
Dark blue: Conservative, secure, trusting, authoritative
Light green: Youthful, growing, blossoming
Medium Green: Earthy, safe, comfortable
Dark green: Secure, wealthy, balanced
Blue-green: Artistic, romantic
Pale orange: Comfortable, stress-reducing
Medium orange: Exciting, earthy, social, generous
Pale purple: Sensuous, sweet, imaginative
Medium purple: Theatrical, serious, spiritual
Beige: Calm, earthy, natural, passive
Gray: Sophisticated, cool, laid-back
Black: Dramatic, oppressive, stimulating
White: Pure, clean, crisp, cool



Marney's Memo

Decorating magazines tend to “announce” the new predictions for color trends twice a year: in late Spring and late Fall. I have to admit, it's always fun to see what they feature as the latest and greatest colors. So, to satisfy your curiosity, check out magazine covers in April and November to get the low-down. But stick with using colors in your home that you'll still love when the trend fades.



Coffee Break

Time to check in, again!

How do you feel about your results from the color quiz? What do you think about the color suggested by your answers? When you think of using that color as the main color in your room, what do you feel?

As we've said, these tests aren't supposed to dictate the colors you HAVE to implement...rather, they are tools to get you thinking about what your heart desires in your home. Now, it's time to start gathering up the tools for the journey: structure, color, texture, pattern, furniture, accents, and lighting. We'll take you through each one, step by step.

Before we launch into the next section of the book, we'd like you to revisit your affirmation once more. If the preceding exploration into color has helped you find a color that is likely to be featured in your room, you might want to add it to your affirmation.

For example, your new affirmation might be, "I enjoy designing an elegant, comforting, and pristine home in reds and yellows, using the funds and space that I have."

After making any additional changes to your affirmation, think about a physical object that could represent this affirmation to you. It could be something fairly literal, like a photograph from a magazine, or something abstract, like a rose quartz rock, your grandmother's antique brooch, or a deep purple candle. When you assign it a personal meaning, any object can be symbolic.

Place your object in a special place in your home, where you will see it often. You don't even need to tell anyone else what it symbolizes, if you don't want to. But having this object in plain view will remind you of your decorating dream and will act as a magnet to harness the energy surrounding the vision of your new home...and your new life!

5.0 Preparing Your Home for its Magic Makeover!

5.1 Wholesome Houseclearing

Ok...so you're armed with your [affirmation](#) and ready to start absorbing all kinds of new tricks and techniques to make the vision in your mission statement come true.

The first step is **houseclearing**. Not housecleaning, houseclearing.

Before you can undertake the serious evaluation of the room you're planning to decorate, you have to be able to see it with as clear an eye as possible. So it's time to clear, clean, and de-clutter.

Now, we know this isn't as fun as picking out colors and wallpaper, but it's not a step that you should ignore.

Whether you are getting rid of everything in a room and starting over, or if you plan – as most people do – to integrate some of your existing belongings into the room, at some point or another, you have to get rid of the stuff, anyway.

So the first step is to get rid of the things you KNOW you won't need. This will then allow you to look with a discerning eye at the things that you WONDER if you need, or not.



Ancient Wisdom

An ancient Native-American tradition called "smudging" involves burning sage leaves, placing them on a stick, and waving the stick around the room. This practice is said to clear evil spirits from a space.

Even if you're just planning on painting a room, it's still a good idea to do this. You'll have to move everything around, any way. This way, you'll actually know where to find things, and get rid of unwanted junk at the same time.

We're talking about the stuff that you definitely don't need anymore. Don't worry – you don't have to make any big decisions about furniture pieces or artwork. It's time to simply organize and/or get rid of items such as the following:

- Papers and junk mail that can be gotten rid of and recycled
- Important paperwork that needs to be filed in a memorable place so that you can find it when you need it. (Now, really, your bank statements from last year may be old, but do they really need to remain on the coffee table under the book on the art of Ancient Egypt?)
- Clothes items that are no longer worn by your family members
- Clothes items that are no longer worn by you (nope, you didn't get off the hook so fast!)
- Magazines and books that can be donated to a used bookstore or charity
- Kitchen appliances that you don't use
- Unwanted gifts and old memories that you KNOW you want to get rid of. Later, we'll be going through all those "undecideds", so don't worry about those yet.

Right now, use this as an opportunity to throw out, sell, donate, or give away anything that you have been holding on to that you're ready to release.

We challenge you to use this houseclearing time as an extension of the work you've already done in getting to know what you are looking for in your space. Think about your mission statement for your room(s) as you work, and pay attention to any new musings that come to mind.

When it's time to take a break for lunch (or dinner!), grab a bite, a refreshing beverage, and your journal. Write down any thoughts that have come to mind, to be sure they aren't swept out with the dust behind the shelves!





Ancient Wisdom

Long ago, the Balinese Sweeper was considered an artist of the highest sacred level. These men would use only brushes made from rare coconut leaf spines to do their work, which was considered one of the highest forms of meditation.

We recommend the book *Sweeping Changes*, written by Gary Thorp and available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), for interesting and applicable ideas on how to make regular household chores a meditative experience.

5.2 Clearing Your Home Means Clearing Your Head!

After you've finished with your houseclearing, take a moment with your journal and answer the following questions:



1. While houseclearing, did you get any more glimpses of what your ideal space is NOT?

Write it out...let yourself be free with all of the negative words that you associate with clutter and the extraneous *stuff* you cleared away.

Suggestion: Try making a free-association of all the words that describe the home you don't want.



2. With that murky water out of the way...did you have any visions of what your ideal space looks like?

Think of words and ideas that are opposites of what you just wrote in #1. Does articulating what you *don't* want open up any ideas of what you *do* want?



3. **Focus on one thing that clearly needed to be thrown away.** It doesn't matter if the item was a gift from an old love, or a chewing gum wrapper.

Think about that one item that you could throw away as a no-brainer. **What did it feel like not to have to make that decision, and to discard something with confidence?**



4. **Make a list of things that you came across in the room that you might consider discarding (or altering) but aren't sure about yet. Write a brief explanation beside each item to which you can refer later.**

Here are some examples:

- Silver vase - I like the shape and maybe something could be done with it, but it's too stuffy for me, as it is now
- French painting - never crazy about it but it was a gift and is expensive so I'd feel guilty getting rid of it
- Pink rug - might like it if it fits into my new room...or in another room....I just know it doesn't fit where it is now
- Gooseneck lamp - I've had this in every home since college and it works fine even though it's not attractive at all...but I don't think I have the money to buy something nicer
- Electric can opener - I never use it but I still just might



5. **Go back to your [affirmation](#). How does it feel to you? Do you need to make any modifications, based on your new ideas and findings while houseclearing?**



Marney's Memo

If you're limited on time, you might want to consider bringing in a professional to help you out with de-cluttering and re-organizing. Today, most professional organizers and housecleaners are available to come for one-time consultations. Fees usually range from \$35 to \$75 an hour.

The [National Association of Professional Organizers](#) has a free referral service that will hook you up with a NAPO member in your area. Also check your local phone book under "cleaning" and "organizers."

If you could use some extra help but are limited on money, I have to tell you about a book that really changed my life: [Organizing from the Inside Out](#), by Julie Morgenstern. The book presents a system that's easy to follow and is applicable to any organizing task. Trust me, it's an enjoyable read and totally worth it!

5.3 Planning Makes Perfect

This is a good time to solidify your budget for your decorating project(s). At [Home-decorating-made-easy.com](#), we've got a home [decorating budget worksheet](#) and plenty of [project planning tips](#) for you to use!

After defining your budget, you may realize that you can only tackle one room at a time. No problem! Remember, Rome wasn't built in a day...and neither will be your dream home.

If you face this kind of decision, think about which room would make the most immediate impact on your life right now, if you were to carry its decorating makeover to completion.

AYID...Preparing Your Home for its Magic Makeover!

That is, if you have a room that is functioning fairly well, even though it isn't altogether inspiring, it may be best to start with another room that really gets under your skin.

Or it might be best to start with the room in which you spend the most time. Or a room that serves multiple functions (for example, a bedroom that also serves as a TV room, a dining room that also serves as a hobby room, a den that also serves as the computer room.)

It might be helpful to go back to [question #11](#) on page 28, and see the room that you selected as the room you MOST hope would be destroyed in an emergency, with insurance ready to foot the bill for redoing the room.

Whatever your criteria for selecting the first room(s) you will attack, keep the rest of your house in mind as you work, and make notes in your journal of ideas, as you think of them.

When you're ready to get to subsequent projects, we'll still be here for you!

5.4 Structural Sanity: How to Make a Floor Plan

You've done your houseclearing...you've figured out your budget...the next step is to create a floor plan of the room you're tackling first.

This may seem like an unnecessary step, but you'll come back to this floor plan often, so stick with us!

Basically, a floor plan allows you to see what a room looks like at its core - and it may have been a while since you've seen it that way.

A floor plan keeps you honest, and allows you to refer back to the shell of the room -- how the room actually IS -- over and over again.

You'll also be able to honestly evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the room's architecture. Don't worry about the disadvantages -- we're going to tell you how you can implement all kinds of nifty tricks to "beat the system" and counteract structural flaws.



Ancient Wisdom

In 1018, an abbey in France was recorded to be the first building that utilized the “opening of spaces” -- that is, the abbey had semicircular arches that joined with pointed arches to create a high and structured ceiling.

While high ceilings are a real selling point for any house, if your ceiling is too high, it actually may be hard to create a feeling of fellowship or intimacy. Stay tuned for how to fix that...as well as how to make a room look taller if the ceiling is low!



Steps for Making a Floor Plan:

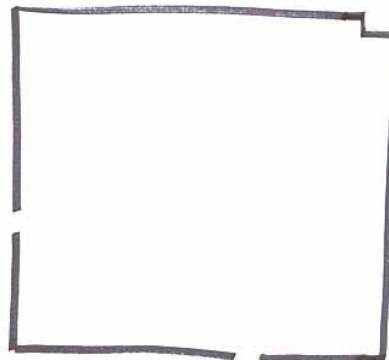
1. Take a blank piece of paper and make a very rough sketch of your room, based on how the “floor” looks.

Don't worry about dimensions or measurements at this point.

Start in one corner of the room and draw the outline of the floor, all the way back around to where you started. Sketch in every indentation or protrusion, such as fireplaces, alcoves, or built-ins. Include indentations or protrusions that are behind moveable furniture.

When you reach a doorway, leave a small gap and then start the line again where the wall starts.

When you're done, you should have something like this on your page:



AYID...Preparing Your Home for its Magic Makeover!

2. Mark off, on your sketch, any obstructions that aren't already included on your sketch, specifically those that aren't directly touching your floor.

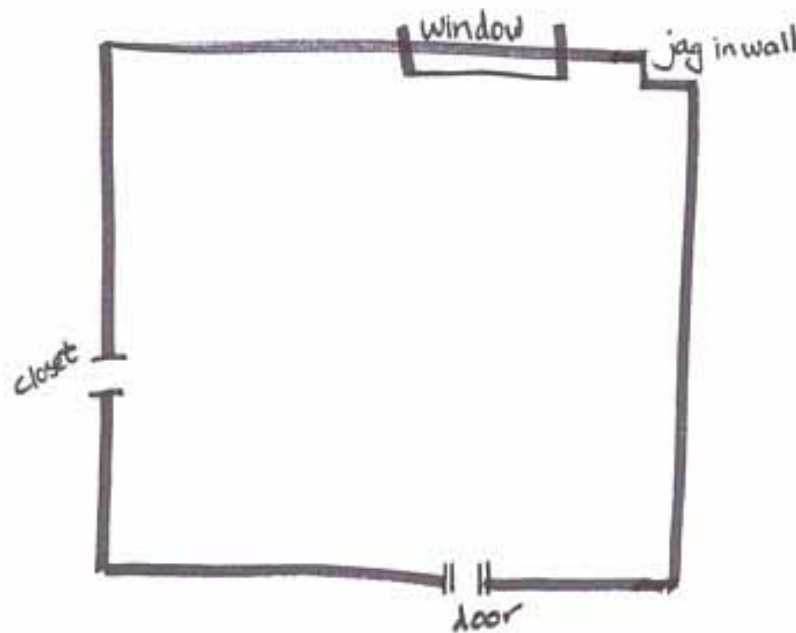
For example, windows or radiators are obstructions because they may prohibit you from placing furniture in front of them. They should be marked on your sketch.

Frames of doors and windows are slight obstructions because they jut out into the room just a bit, so they need to be indicated as well. Draw little vertical lines on your sketch to indicate the outer and inner edges of the door or window frame. Later, you'll go back and measure the moldings for those areas.

Write a note to yourself for each obstruction or recession, labelling what it is, such as a door or window. That will make it easier for you when you go to the next step, which is measuring and writing down dimensions.

Remember, this is just a rough sketch, so don't worry about not being able to draw or getting the dimensions right!

At this point, you should have something that looks like this:



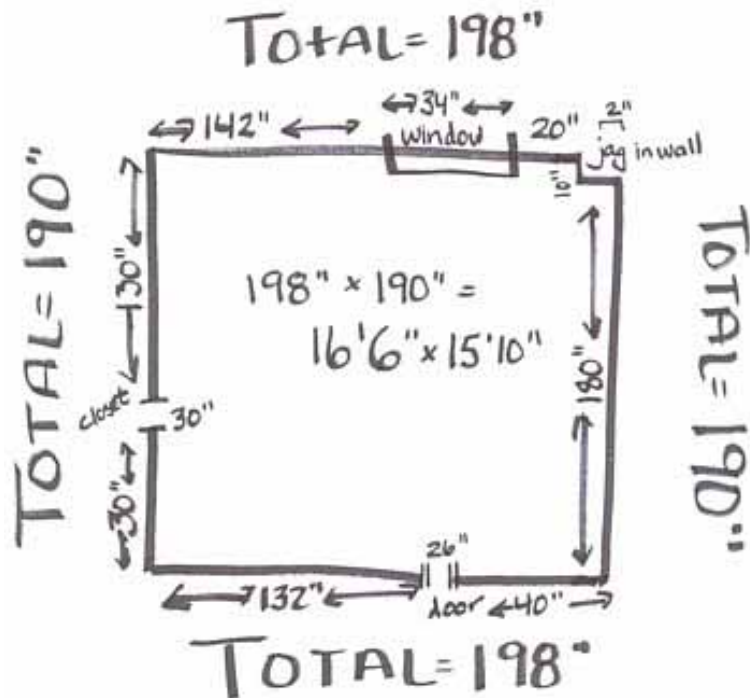
AYID...Preparing Your Home for its Magic Makeover!

3. Get your tape measure and start measuring around the room. Measure from one corner to the first built-in obstacle you come to, and write this measurement down next to its corresponding part on your sketch.

Continue this way around the room, writing each individual measurement down as you go. If you're using a standard measuring tape, it's easiest to write down the measurements in inches. For clarity's sake, it's a good idea to convert any measurements over 100 inches to their equivalent in feet and inches. For example, 198" is equal to 16'6" ($198"/12" = 16'6"$).

Next, write down the individual measurements you took of each wall on a separate paper. Add them up, so you have a total measurement for each wall.

At this point, your sketch should look something like this:



AYID...Preparing Your Home for its Magic Makeover!

4. Next, you're going to double-check to make sure your measurements are correct. Go to the center of one wall and measure across the center of the room in a straight line to the wall on the opposite side. Write down that measurement. Do the same for the other two walls. Write the results in the middle of the sketch.

Compare your results with the measurements you took in #3. They should match, within two inches. If they don't, go back and remeasure to see where a mistake was made.

5. If your measurements add up correctly, it's time to convert this rough rendering into an official floor plan using the graph paper we've provided in [Appendix C](#).

This step is remarkably easy! You'll be making a plan using a 1/4 inch = 1 foot scale. What this means is that each square on this graph paper represents one square foot.

Use a ruler and draw the lines for your measurements on the graph paper. If you need to, go back to the steps for converting inches to feet on the preceding page in order to get the feet right.

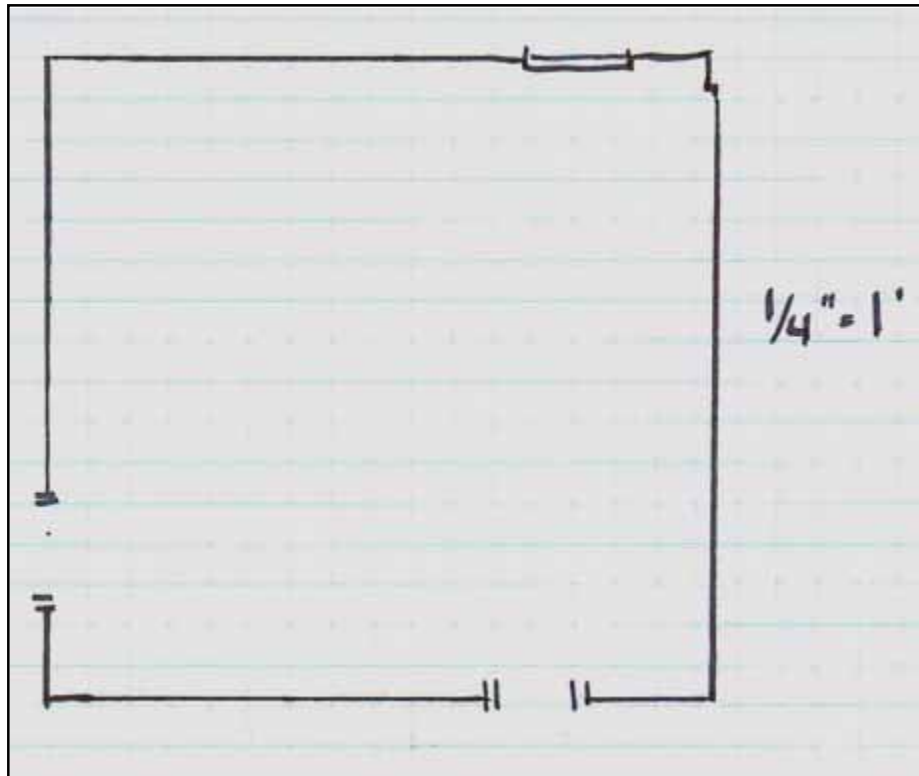
When you reach an obstruction, you'll need to draw lines around the correct number of squares that represent each side of the obstruction.

Be sure to mark all of the windows, window frames, doors, door frames, and built-ins.

Look at our example on the next page...



AYID...Preparing Your Home for its Magic Makeover!



There, you did it! You drew a floor plan!

Now for the really cool news....you drew the floor plan in a $1/4'' = 1'$ scale, and we've got the furniture pieces that fit that scale exactly! In [Appendix D](#), you'll find furniture of traditional dimensions, ready to print and cut out when we're ready to talk about furniture arrangements.

(We know you're curious....so go ahead and check out the furniture pieces now, if you want to...)



Ancient Wisdom

On the TV show, Seinfeld, George Constanza said that he had no greater dream than to be an architect. And now you've done it! Wait...aren't TV shows of the 90's ancient history by now??? 😊

5.5 How to Easily Evaluate a Room's Structure

Now that you've completed your floor plan, you have an honest, accurate view of the room that you're tackling. Also, in taking measurements and drawing your plan, you've likely become acquainted with the room's structural elements - many you may not have noticed before.

While many of these elements cannot be changed without remodeling or construction work, most CAN be changed with sneaky decorating tricks. By making a list of the strengths and weaknesses at this point, it will be easy to make strategic decisions in the coming sections.

In your journal, consider the following questions to determine the structural strengths and weaknesses that are inherent in the room.

1. **Basic Shape:**

Do you care for the basic shape of the room?
Are there irregular angles and corners that you would like to camouflage?
Are there angles that you would like to highlight?

2. **Room size:**

Is the room too small?
Is it too large to feel cozy?
Are the ceilings too low?
Are the ceilings too high?

3. **Windows:**

Are the views and/or the windows themselves unattractive?
Is there an air conditioner in the window that you'd prefer to camouflage?
Is the position of the windows appealing?
If there are multiple windows in the room, are they symmetrical or of different shapes and sizes?
Are the windows of a height or width that you do not care for?
Is the room without windows or does it seem to lack natural light?

4. **Doors:**

Do you like the position of the doors in the room?
Do they make the room feel balanced or off-balance?

AYID...Preparing Your Home for its Magic Makeover!

5. **Built-ins:**

Does the room contain built-ins, such as shelves or desks?

Are they elements that you would like to showcase...or camouflage?

Take this family room for example (below right). The built-in bookcases have become the focal point in the room, thanks to a unique and effective paint finish.

When the homeowner moved into this house, the built-ins were whitewashed and basically disappeared into the walls.

The homeowner chose a golden yellow on the walls to be a backdrop for the weathered wood fireplace frame and bookcases, achieved with a faux finish.



A closer view of the faux finish on the built-in cabinets.

Steps to achieve this look:

1. Paint the cabinets with a base coat of white.
2. Mix brown paint with a little bit of black. Take 2 parts of this paint mixture and add to 1 part glaze.
3. Brush the paint/glaze mixture onto the white cabinets with a really old and hard dried up paintbrush with a stabbing motion.
4. Take any excess off with the brush so you can see the brush marks, which simulate the look of the grain.



Thanks to an effective faux finish, built-in shelves become the dramatic focal point in this room. (Wall color is Glove Suede by [Behr](#); leather sofa and chair are from Geneva Home in W. Chicago, IL; coffee table is from Walter E. Smithe in Geneva, IL; painting was purchased on [Ebay](#).)

See our e-books *Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts and Creative Stamping for Walls & Furniture*, for more great decorating projects, step-by-step!

AYID...Preparing Your Home for its Magic Makeover!

6. **Lighting:**

What is the condition of natural light in the room?

What lighting fixtures are built-in? Do you care for them, aesthetically?

Do they provide effective lighting?

7. **Detailing:**

Does the room have moldings, arches, or trims? (These are collectively referred to as **detailing**.)

Do you like them?

Would you like to highlight or camouflage the detailing?

Would you like to add detailing to the walls?

(Refer to our e-book, *Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts*, for an easy do-it-yourself detailing project!)



Baseboard, window, and door trims painted in a contrasting color sweeten this little girl's room. (Trim color is Cracker Crumbs by [Olympic](#).)



Moldings around doors and floors are painted in neutral white to blend in with the walls. (Rug is from [Ethan Allen](#); console table from [Hitchcock Chair Company](#).)



This molding is set a third of the way down the wall to emphasize contrasting colors between the upper and lower segments of this serene dining room.

8. **Fireplace:**

Is there a fireplace in the room? Do you like it's frame and mantel?

Is the lack of a fireplace frustrating?

Are you interested in building your own fireplace?

You CAN build your own fireplace...here's how!



A mosaic fireplace built from scratch!
(Design is by [Diane Armstrong](#).)

1. Find a mantel at an antique store or yard sale. It should be sturdy and have trim around the inside to hold a mirror in the center hole. Install a mirror in this center part with glass mastic (a glass adhesive available at [Home Depot](#) or other hardware stores).

2. Build a hearth and connect the mantel to the hearth using metal plates. If you want, you can install trim around the edge of the hearth to create a solid place to end the grout. The mantle should be able to stand freely without a wall behind it - or build the fireplace next to its eventual home.

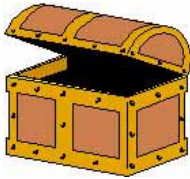
3. Determine the size of the mirrored space in the center of the fireplace and cover it with paper for protection. Attach any material you wish on the hearth and around the mirror that is still exposed in the center area.

4. Let the glue dry completely and then grout.

5. Paint the mantel the desired colors and put the completed fireplace in its new home.

For more do-it-yourself projects, check out our e-book, *Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts*

Grouting tips: Make enough grout to do the entire project but only grout one area at a time. Wipe off excess grout after letting it sit for about 15 minutes and then proceed to the next part. After you completely grout the area, wipe down each piece separately. Wait 2-3 hours and wipe down and shine each piece a second time, and then remove the protective paper in the fireplace center. Carefully blend and smooth the grout edge with your finger into the mirror, taking care not to scratch the mirror. Let the grout dry for a few days and then seal the grout, especially if you will be burning candles directly on the hearth surface. Melted wax is hard to get off of the grout.



Ancient Wisdom

Mosaics have been a powerful decorative statement for thousands of years. They have added texture, color, and interest to sacred temples in Egypt, early Greek buildings, and Italian Renaissance churches, to name a few.

In the 6th century, Byzantine mosaics in churches and chapels were the most complex artwork that had been created to date. The poet Dante Alighieri wrote of them:

“Out of that current, living sparks were teeming
and flashing from the flowers
with hues intense
Like very rubies from gold patinas gleaming.”

Now you can bring those “living sparks” into your own home! The technique described on the previous page was related to a faux fireplace, but you can use it on any object, such as this vase (right).



Almost any small material can be used to make mosaics. (Vase design by [Lime Dragonfly Art](#). You can make your own mosaic vase with items such as shells, rocks, stones, buttons or wood scraps. Or visit [A.C. Moore](#), [Rag Shop](#), or [Michaels](#) to purchase mosaic kits with all the supplies included.)



Coffee Break

Now that you’ve taken a good look at the “raw material” in the room you’re working with, you may want to revisit your mission statement again. For example, you may be interested in exploring a different decorating style or color than you had considered previously.

Perfect timing! We’re revisiting the subject of COLOR next....so keep reading!

6.0 Making Friends with Color

6.1 On the Road to the Perfect Color Scheme

Your responses to the questions in the personal inventory began your journey to the perfect color scheme. We hope that they gave you some new information about how different colors can affect your mood and productivity.

Those colors may be exactly what you end up using in your room(s)...or they may not! Think of your answers to that quiz as raw data to be refined.

In this section, we'll give you all the basics on color so you that can refine your vision and tackle your decorating projects.

It's helpful to think of color as the first layer of your decorating vision. Once you have selected a color scheme, you continue adding layers until the room is complete.

We're here to make sure that you choose your colors with confidence and that you are thrilled with your choices!

So, how do you choose a color scheme? There is no one answer to this.

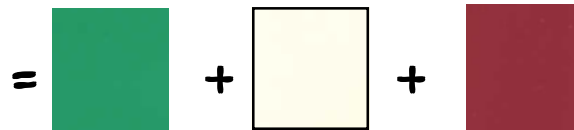
- You can build a color scheme around a favorite object.
- You can build a color scheme around existing furniture or fabrics.
- You can build a color scheme around strategic choices to help overcome problems you notated when you evaluated the room's structure.
- You can build a color scheme according to the emotional response you would like to invoke, as described in the previous section, "Your True Colors".

6.2 Color Schemes are Right in Front of You!

One sure way to personalize a room is to create its color scheme around an object or collection of objects that have personal meaning to you. This object could be anything! Take the following examples:



(Maplebuff and Laramie Tan are by [Behr](#) paints.)



(Summery Savory and Flair are by [Glidden](#); Cameo is by Ralph Lauren, available at [Home Depot](#).)



(True Blue (hi-gloss) and True White are by [Behr](#).)



(Deep Pleasure is by [Glidden](#); Summer Orchid and Siberian Iris are by [Behr](#).)



(Bright Citrus and Mesa Sunrise are by Ralph Lauren, available at [Home Depot](#); Folk Tale is by [Glidden](#).)



Marney's Memo

I really love creating a color scheme from an object that strikes my fancy. Here are some more ideas of objects that may inspire you:

A flower you have always found beautiful (think of yellow roses with bright green stems, pink carnations with baby's breath...just imagine being surrounded by the spirit of your favorite flower!!)

Your favorite vacation spot (Perhaps the colors of Tuscany? The orchid gardens you visited in Georgia? The dynamic red of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco?)

A favorite fabric (your cherished handbag, your childhood draperies, the cushions on the seats at your favorite café...)

A piece of fruit (think melon, kiwi, orange, lemon, blueberries...very yummy on walls!)

A piece of china (from a catalog, a collection, or just from your memory...)

An existing collection (your collection of retro yellow clocks, ceramic blue birds, orange tabby cats, chintz teapots...the list goes on and on!)

To convert a favorite object into a full-fledged color scheme, take the object (or a photograph of the object, if it is too bulky to carry around) to a paint or hardware store.

Look through the paint sample strips to find colors that match the object, just as we've done on the previous page. Don't worry about which color will be used for which purpose yet....just look for paint strips of colors that match the object you are hoping to emulate.

With current technology, most paint departments can mix a custom paint for you, even if you don't see a swatch that is "just right".

That is just what the owner of the home below did. She knew that she wanted to hang the abstract painting (right) above her front door.

She had two custom colors mixed at a paint store that mirrored colors in the painting. The first was a dark purple that matched the main color in the painting's background, and the second was a darker beige color, also mixed to match the painting exactly.

The sandy beige was used to outline the panels in the door (below right), making the door itself more of a focal point due the depth added with the color. If the large canvas were simply hung above a plain white door, the effect would not be nearly as dramatic.



An abstract painting by Wladimir Politano inspired an entire color scheme!

The purple color was painted on a tall wall adjacent to the entry hall. The color ties in perfectly with the painting (below right) while adding an unforgettable splash to an architecturally dramatic wall of windows (below left).



A custom color created from the painting floods a windowed wall with color!



The recesses of the door's panels add depth and mirror the beige used in the painting.

Similarly, you also can build a color scheme around furniture or fabrics that you plan to use in a room. Starting with a piece of fabric is a very simple way to go about selecting paint colors, and is a great option if you are short on time and want to get the job done quickly.

Take a swatch of fabric and select paint sample strips that match the colors in the fabric.

From there, you'll have paint colors from which to choose when you decide to paint walls and/or furniture. For example:

Fabric Swatches **Paint Combinations**



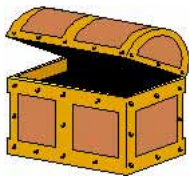
(clockwise, from left: Tea Time is by [Glidden](#); Green Thumb, Brandy Cherry, and Balsam Beige by [Behr](#).)



This color scheme was built around the art print on the wall. (Chair and cushions are from [Pier 1 Imports](#); rug is from [Bed, Bath, and Beyond](#)).

6.3 Color Theory, FINALLY Simplified!

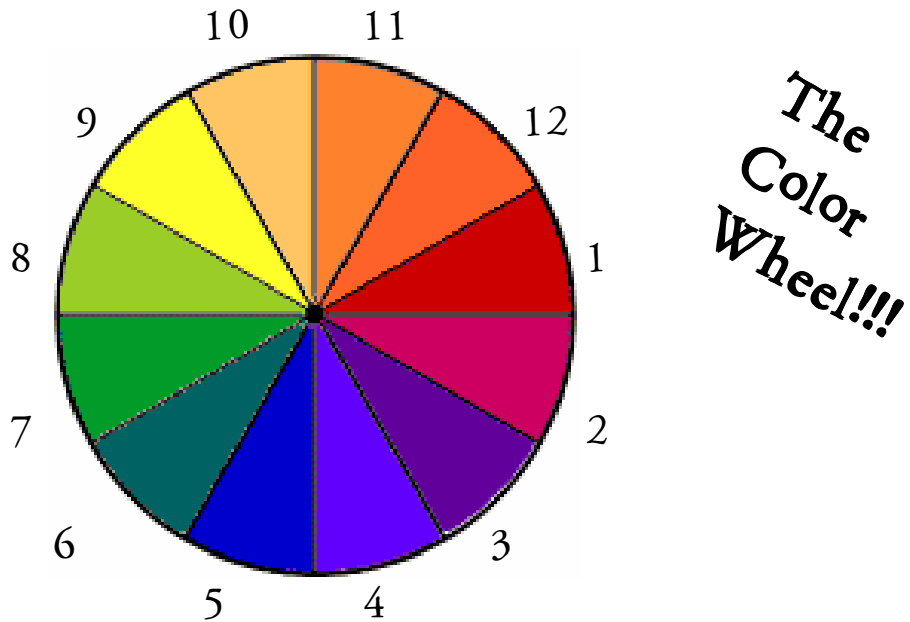
For something that is so simple, the color wheel often is made to seem complex and mysterious. Trust us, it's not! We're here to show you how easy it is!



Ancient Wisdom

The first attempt at organizing colors was made by Sir Isaac Newton in 1660 when he bent white light through a prism and discovered the spectrum of colors. He actually selected seven major colors to relate to the seven planets and seven musical notes.

In the middle 1700's, J.C. LeBlon published a treatise on the fundamental nature of the primary colors - red, blue, and yellow. It explained that, when mixed together in prescribed orders, they make what we now call secondary colors.



The **color wheel** is made up of 12 colors, which are also referred to as **hues**. The **primary colors** on the color wheel are Red (1), Blue (5), and Yellow (9).

When two primary colors are mixed together, they create the color found halfway between them on the color wheel, called a **secondary color**. Violet (3), Green (7), and Orange (11) are secondary colors.

Tertiary colors, also called **intermediate colors**, are colors created when you mix a primary color with a secondary color. Red-Violet (2), Blue-Violet (4), Blue-Green (6), Yellow-Green (8), Yellow-Orange (10), and Red-Orange (12) are tertiary colors.

Beyond showing us how different colors are created, the color wheel helps us understand the relationships of colors among one another. This is useful information when building a color scheme for a room.

Remember when we discussed the warm colors and cool colors? As you can see, the color wheel is divided in half, with warm colors on one side (7 - 12) and cool colors on the other side (1 - 6).

We're going to show you the simple way to create three different kinds of color schemes, using the color wheel. If you select a color that you want to start with, following one of these three recipes is a foolproof way to get your colors right!

1. **Complementary colors** are colors that are opposite one another on the color wheel. To build a **complementary color scheme**, select a color, add the color that is its opposite, and then add a neutral color - such as white, cream, beige, brown, or gray - to balance it.

You don't need a color wheel around to remember which colors are complementary. We've made it easy for you!

All you have to do is remember the word, **BED**...which is an acronym for:

Bathtub, Earth, December.

Now stop laughing, we're serious! You'll never have to look at a color wheel again (unless you want to)!

The first complements are **violet** and **yellow**. All you have to do is make a mental image of this bathtub, and remember "B" for bathtub!

Blue and **orange** are the second pair of complementary colors. You can remember this pair by thinking of the earth - the orange land against the blue sky. Remember "E" for earth!

Red and **green** are complementary colors. Think of the December holidays for an easy reminder about this pair. Think "D" for December.

See? **BED**! It works!

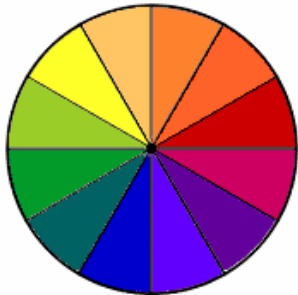
2. **Analogous colors** are colors that are next to one another on the color wheel, such as red and red-orange.



Complements violet and yellow set a playful tone in this bathroom! (Bathtub color is Safety Yellow by [Rust-Oleum](#); shower curtain is from [Lowe's](#).)

To build an **analogous color scheme**, select two adjacent colors such red and red-orange and then add a third color, such as blue, to use as an accent color.

You can't go wrong with an accent color that is a split complementary color. A **split complementary color** is a color that is on either side of a color's complement on the color wheel. For example, the complementary color for yellow is violet. Therefore, the split complementary of yellow would be those on either side of violet, which are blue-violet and red-violet.



Technical definitions of terms like “analogous” and “split complementary” are helpful to teach color theory basics. If you were mixing paints from scratch, it would be important that you adhere to the strict definitions of these terms.

But you're not mixing paints, you're creating the home of your dreams! As we've said, we believe in tools, not rules, and so we'll show you an easy way to have flexibility when you choose your colors but always know that you're getting your scheme right.

Let's say, for example, that you want to select an analogous color scheme that includes the color red. As we explained above, red-orange and red-violet are the tertiary colors that are analogous to red. But you don't have to limit yourself to only using tertiary colors in this role. You also can move over one more color on the color wheel to the next primary or secondary color and still maintain the analogous quality of the scheme.

So, for our purposes, an analogous color scheme needn't only be “next door pairs”, like red and red-orange. It can also be a “two doors down” configuration, such as red and orange. An analogous color scheme could be blue and blue-violet OR blue and violet.

The same rule applies to selecting a split complementary color. As we stated above, the split complementary of yellow is a color on either side of violet, which would be either blue-violet or red-violet. But if you move “two doors down” in either direction, you have another option for a split complementary as well. In this example, a split complementary for yellow could be red or blue.

Now, let's put all this together and create an analogous color scheme using orange that also utilizes a split complementary accent color.

Orange could be paired with any of the following:

Yellow-orange	Red-orange
Yellow	Red

With an accent color of any of the following:

Blue-green	Blue-violet
Green	Violet

So, with any color, you can easily create a "menu" and then order the combination you like best! See? We told you it was easy! (For an even easier method of selecting colors, you can refer to section 7.0, [Your Personal Paint Color Consultant](#), which includes 135 paint color schemes that we've gathered exclusively for this book.)

Here's an analogous color scheme in action. This breakfast nook (below) says "Good morning!" with an orange and rust color scheme. Split complementary green serves as an accent color in the lamp base and hand painted lampshade. Violet appears subtly in the paintings on the wall.



(Wall color is a mix of Mesa Sunrise and Chamois, both by Ralph Lauren and available at [Home Depot](#). Refer to our easy instructions for [antiquing furniture](#) to create the look of these distressed chairs. And refer to our helpful e-book, *Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts*, for projects like those in this picture, including a gilded picture frame and do-it-yourself lampshades.)

AYID...Making Friends with Color

By way of comparison, let's examine two other rooms in which green is used as part of complementary and analogous schemes.

In a lighthearted retro kitchen (below left), green is paired with its complement, red. While in the bathroom (below right), green, blue, and blue-green are harmonious elements in an analogous color scheme.



Complements red and green make this kitchen absolutely pop!



A soothing analogous color scheme of green, blue, and violet creates a calming atmosphere in this bathroom.

3. **Neutral colors:** Many people describe a **neutral color scheme** as one that is based on neutral colors, such as shades of white, beige, brown, gray, or black.

For example, in the dining room pictured here (right), brown and ivory serves as key colors, with other neutrals (bright white on the hearth and trim, slate in the fireplace and pale gray in the rug and upholstery) serving as accent colors. Gold is also introduced as an accent color through the use of the candlesticks and chandelier.



However, you also can use neutrals to build up a color scheme in which the key color is a non-neutral color, like blue or orange.

A color scheme based on neutrals can be both sophisticated and soothing (Dining room set is from [Ethan Allen](#).)



The color scheme of this family room (left) combines orange with neutral colors of beige, brown, and cream.

Though orange plays a large role in this scheme, it still can be considered a neutral color scheme because orange is paired with neutral colors.

Dynamic, fiery orange is tamed by pleasing neutral colors. (Sofa and loveseat are from [Freeds Furniture](#).)

Neutral colors are calming, easy on the eye, and down to earth. But they needn't be boring...just look at the romantic bedroom pictured below! Far from drab, this room demonstrates how effectively neutrals can contrast with one another.

The blackberry and taupe sheer panels used in the window treatment stunningly pop against the neutral walls and white trim of the window moldings. And the luxuriously bed linens prove that a richly saturated brown can hold its own with orange and maroon any day.



The bold and dramatic side of neutrals! (Armoire is from [Sauder.com](#); bedding is by [Ralph Lauren](#); window scarves are from [Linens 'n Things](#).)

Whether you want to create a room with dramatic flair or one with casual comfort, the key to using neutrals is to add small bits of color to keep the room from seeming drab and staid.




One last word on neutrals: using them is an excellent choice if you prefer to “play it safe”. You can always add bits of color with decorative objects, while maintaining a neutral frame around the room.




6.4 Color First Aid: Using Color to Fix Flaws

This is where things get really fun! Color really is magical, and can be used to remedy a variety of problems and challenges.

Go back to the notes you made in your journal in section 5.5, [How to Easily Evaluate a Room's Structure](#). We asked you several questions about the structure and elements inherent to the room, in order to get you to the bottom of what you like and dislike about it in its raw form.

Here's where you'll see what you can DO about the deficiencies. Look through the list on the following pages, and check any situations that apply to you. Then, consider the “first aid” advice as you make your color choices for the room.

- PROBLEM: Room has few windows.
FIRST AID: Use yellow as the wall color, either painted solid or as the dominant color in wallpaper. This also includes orange-yellows, like melon. Also think of making room on walls for giant photographs, large paintings, and mirrors to serve as “artificial windows.”

- PROBLEM: A hallway, passageway, or stairway is narrow and very dark.
FIRST AID: Add warmth with red or reddish orange on the walls, which will also enhance the drama of the small corridor.
- PROBLEM: The ceiling is below 9 feet and feels too low.
FIRST AID: Paint the ceiling two shades lighter than the wall to give the feeling of expansiveness. You may want to continue the wall color all the way over the moldings to lengthen the walls. Also, painting darker colors in a vertical design on the wall (or using a vertical striped wallpaper) gives the effect of heightening the ceiling.

- PROBLEM: The ceiling is higher than 9 ft. and feels separate from the rest of the room.
FIRST AID: Paint the ceiling one shade darker than the walls. This will allow the light to reflect evenly throughout the room, which will unify it. Painting a horizontal picture rail in a contrasting color, one-third of the way down from the ceiling, will draw the eye to the lower part of the room.
- PROBLEM: Room gets too much direct sunlight.
FIRST AID: Pale colors and whites with a blueish cast will work against the heat to cool off the room.

- PROBLEM: Room is large and doesn't feel cozy.
FIRST AID: Use warm colors (reds, oranges, and yellows) on the walls to make the walls advance, or seem closer. Select a matte finish to keep walls less reflective, and therefore, more enclosed.

- PROBLEM:** Room is too small.
FIRST AID: Use cool colors on the walls to make walls recede, or seem farther away. Selecting a light color in a glossy finish will enlarge the space even more.
- 
- PROBLEM:** Walls have design flaws, such as cracks, small holes, or uneven trims.
FIRST AID: Select white or a light color in an unshiny (matte) finish to camouflage design flaws.
- PROBLEM:** Room contains lots of unusual architectural elements, such as sloping ceilings, poles, and built-in elements.
FIRST AID: Either bring attention to the architecture, or remove attention from it -- there's no middle ground. Either use very vivid colors to emphasize the unique nature of the architecture, or paint walls in a light, cool, solid color to counter-balance the architectural "busy-ness" in the room.
- 
- PROBLEM:** Room often is cold, either due to climate or north-facing windows.
FIRST AID: Use floral tones such as reds, oranges, and yellows with greens to create a summery and fresh feeling year-round.
- PROBLEM:** Room is devoid of any interesting structural elements -- it's just four walls with no detailing.
FIRST AID: Consider spicy colors, such as rusts, tangy yellows, and earthy browns. A spicy palette adds interest to any structure or space. To keep a spicy scheme from getting too hot, add bits of cool colors as accents, such as turquoise or emerald green.
- 
- PROBLEM:** You love nature, but live in the middle of the city.
FIRST AID: Bring nature to your room by starting with natural, wood-like neutrals, ranging from pine-like yellow to the reddish brown of cherry wood. Use greens as accent colors to complete the natural feel.



PROBLEM: You want to paint your walls white, but the room gets little sunlight and you're afraid it will seem too stark.

FIRST AID: As we'll discuss a little later, there are many faces to white! Select a warm white for the walls, one with an orange-yellow cast. Use a white with a blue-violet cast on the trim to bring more attention to the warmish white on the walls.



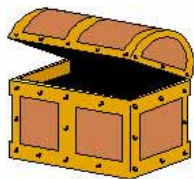
PROBLEM: The lighting in the room is incandescent.

FIRST AID: Incandescent light makes pale yellows disappear, and often turns greens yellow-green and neutral clay colors orange. If you don't care for these colors, then pale, cool colors are a good choice, as is a darker, golden yellow. You can also purchase color-corrected light bulbs, which are expensive but may be worth it.



PROBLEM: The lighting inherent in the room is fluorescent.

FIRST AID: Fluorescent bulbs cast a bluish hue, making reds appear closer to purple, and yellows may appear green. If you don't care for these colors, the colors that hold "truest" in this case are medium to dark blues and greens. Again, you may want to consider color-corrected light bulbs.



Ancient Wisdom

From ancient times until today, true craftsman in varied cultures, such as Native-American potters, Shaker cabinet makers, and African bead carvers, have always been intent upon building Spirit into their objects.

Even if they are crafting a piece for the purpose of selling it, they place elements of their memories and energies into the objects...in essence, filling their creation with memoirs.

You can do the same thing with your dream home, by utilizing colors with which you associate pleasant memories!

7.0 Your Personal Paint Color Consultant!!

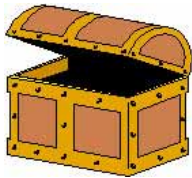
7.1 EASE on Down the Color Road!

We're about to make things even EASIER for you! So, if you don't have an object or existing fabric or furniture piece that inspires you to create a color scheme, don't worry!

In the following pages, exclusively in this book, we've gathered 135 paint color schemes just for you! We've done all the work for you to make your life just a bit easier!

All you have to do is select a key color and a decorating style, and you'll see two or three color schemes that have been designed with a particular decorating style in mind. Each of the schemes corresponds to one of the scheme-building methods we have discussed above - complementary, analogous, and neutral.

When you find a scheme you like, you can find information on the paint manufacturer(s) and color name in the Index we've provided at the end of this section.



Ancient Wisdom

Like the idea of having a personal color consultant? The tradition of having helpers to assist with house-related tasks goes back for centuries!

Almost every culture has a myth or tale of mystical beings who come to help with household work. In England, they were called the brownies.

In Denmark, these little creatures were called the *puge*. Ireland has the tale of *pooka* who help with cleaning and cooking, as Russians tell of the *kikmora* and Italians of the *befana*!

7.2 Blue Color Schemes

Aqua, cobalt, cyan, navy, peacock, periwinkle, sky, teal....

What do they have in common? They are all BLUES!

Check out how we take clues from blues to create these color schemes:



1. European Country
Complementary



2. European Country
Analogous



3. European Country
Neutral



4. American Country
Complementary



5. American Country
Analogous



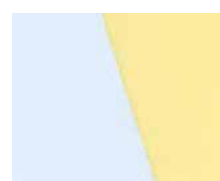
6. American Country
Neutral



7. Casual Contemp.
Complementary



8. Casual Contemp.
Analogous



9. Casual Contemp.
Neutral



10. Formal Contemp.
Complementary



11. Formal Contemp.
Analogous



12. Formal Contemp.
Neutral

(Blue Color Schemes, continued)



13. Rustic
Complementary



14. Rustic
Analogous



15. Rustic
Neutral



16. Traditional
Complementary



17. Traditional
Analogous



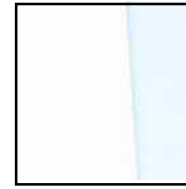
18. Traditional
Neutral



19. Casual Romantic
Complementary



20. Casual Romantic
Analogous



21. Casual Romantic
Neutral



22. Trad. Romantic
Complementary



23. Trad. Romantic
Analogous



24. Trad. Romantic
Neutral



25. Spiritual
Complementary



26. Spiritual
Analogous



27. Spiritual
Neutral

7.3 Green Color Schemes

Emerald, forest, hazel, hunter, ivy, jade, kiwi, lime, mint moss, pine, sage...

You gotta love green!

See how we've paired all kinds of greens with other colors to create enchanting color schemes:



28. European Country
Complementary



29. European Country
Analogous



30. European Country
Neutral



31. American Country
Complementary



32. American Country
Analogous



33. American Country
Neutral



34. Casual Contemp.
Complementary



35. Casual Contemp.
Analogous



36. Casual Contemp.
Neutral



37. Formal Contemp.
Complementary



38. Formal Contemp.
Analogous

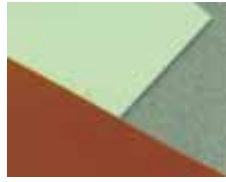


39. Formal Contemp.
Analogous

(Green Color Schemes, continued)



40. Rustic
Complementary



41. Rustic
Analogous



42. Rustic
Neutral



43. Traditional
Complementary



44. Traditional
Analogous



45. Traditional
Neutral



46. Casual Romantic
Complementary



47. Casual Romantic
Analogous



48. Casual Romantic
Neutral



49. Trad. Romantic
Complementary



50. Trad. Romantic
Analogous



50. Trad. Romantic
Neutral



52. Spiritual
Complementary



53. Spiritual
Analogous



54. Spiritual
Neutral

7.4 Violet Color Schemes

Amethyst, aubergine, eggplant, iris, lavender, lilac, purple, wisteria...

No matter what you call it, violet passes with flying colors!

We've taken violet's many faces and made each one shine in its best light:



55. European Country
Complementary



56. European Country
Analogous



56. European Country
Neutral



58. American Country
Complementary



59. American Country
Analogous



60. American Country
Neutral



61. Casual Contemp.
Complementary



62. Casual Contemp.
Analogous



63. Casual Contemp.
Neutral



64. Formal Contemp.
Complementary



65. Formal Contemp.
Analogous

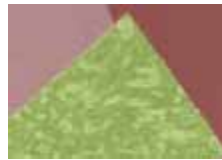


65. Formal Contemp.
Neutral

(Violet Color Schemes, continued)



67. Rustic
Complementary



68. Rustic
Analogous



69. Rustic
Neutral



70. Traditional
Complementary



71. Traditional
Analogous



72. Traditional
Neutral



73. Casual Romantic
Complementary



74. Casual Romantic
Analogous



75. Casual Romantic
Neutral



76. Trad. Romantic
Complementary



77. Trad. Romantic
Analogous



78. Trad. Romantic
Neutral



79. Spiritual
Complementary



80. Spiritual
Analogous



81. Spiritual
Neutral

7.5 Red Color Schemes

Berry, chimayo, coral, cranberry, claret, garnet, pink, rose, ruby, scarlet...

Red is the true Drama Queen!

We've given her several dance partners, below....now watch 'em whirl!
(For red's complementary color schemes, refer to the [green color schemes](#).)



82. European Country
Analogous



83. European Country
Neutral



84. American Country
Analogous



85. American Country
Neutral



86. Casual Contemp.
Analogous



87. Casual Contemp.
Neutral



88. Formal Contemp.
Analogous



89. Formal Contemp.
Neutral

(Red Color Schemes, continued)



90. Rustic
Analogous



91. Rustic
Neutral



92. Traditional
Analogous



93. Traditional
Neutral



94. Casual Romantic
Analogous



95. Casual Romantic
Neutral



96. Trad. Romantic
Analogous



97. Trad. Romantic
Neutral



98. Spiritual
Analogous



99. Spiritual
Analogous

7.6 Orange Color Schemes

Apricot, burnt sienna, citrine, melon, peach, tangerine, terra-cotta, rust...

We're awed by orange! Here's how we made it work with all ten decorating styles! (For orange's complementary color schemes, refer to the [blue schemes](#).)



100. European Country
Analogous



101. European Country
Neutral



102. American Country
Analogous



103. American Country
Neutral



104. Casual Contemp.
Analogous



105. Casual Contemp.
Neutral



106. Formal Contemp.
Analogous



107. Formal Contemp.
Neutral

(Orange Color Schemes, continued)



108. Rustic
Analogous



109. Rustic
Neutral



110. Traditional
Analogous



111. Traditional
Neutral



112. Casual Romantic
Analogous



113. Casual Romantic
Neutral



114. Trad. Romantic
Analogous



114. Trad. Romantic
Neutral



116. Spiritual
Analogous



116. Spiritual
Neutral

7.7 Yellow Color Schemes

Cream, golden, lemon, mustard, ochre, slicker, sunny...

We've got all the yellows, right here! And they work in every decorating style!
(For yellow's complementary color schemes, refer to the [violet color schemes](#).)



118. European Country
Analogous



119. European Country
Neutral



120. American Country
Analogous



121. American Country
Neutral



122. Casual Contemp.
Analogous



123. Casual Contemp.
Neutral



124. Formal Contemp.
Analogous



125. Formal Contemp.
Neutral

(Yellow Color Schemes, continued)



126. Rustic
Analogous



127. Rustic
Neutral



128. Traditional
Analogous



129. Traditional
Neutral



130. Casual Romantic
Analogous



131. Casual Romantic
Neutral



132. Trad. Romantic
Analogous



133. Trad. Romantic
Neutral



134. Spiritual
Analogous



135. Spiritual
Neutral

AYID...Your Personal Paint Color Consultant!

7.8 Source Information from Your Personal Paint Color Consultant

Paint manufacturers referenced include [Behr](#), [Glidden](#), and Ralph Lauren, which is available at [Home Depot](#).

Blue

1. Glidden: Ribbon Dance, Antique Gold, Parchment
2. Glidden: Image Blue, Ceremonial Blue, Billow, Royal Gold
3. Glidden: Eclectic, Soft Angora
4. Behr: Epic Blue, Orange Torch, Violet Whisper
5. Glidden: Cosmos, Tibet Blue; Behr: Sashay Red
6. Glidden: Harbor Blue, Horizons
7. Glidden: Teton Sky, Nature's Essence, Soft Ecru
8. Ralph Lauren: Lilac Acres, Lupine Violet; Behr: Renaissance (Venetian Plaster line)
9. Glidden: Siesta Key, Day Star
10. Behr: Harbor View, Brick (both Sandwash line), London Morn (base) + Bayleaf (mixed with BEHR Faux Glaze)
11. Behr: Crown Jewel; Ralph Lauren: Azalea; Glidden: Del Sol
12. Behr: Crown Jewel, Ink Black (both High Gloss)
13. Glidden: Peacock's Plume, Papaya, Sandstone
14. Glidden: Tempting Teal, Regal Wave; Behr: Hot Curry (Sandwash line)
15. Ralph Lauren: Shale and Sonte Chasm (both River Rock line)
16. Glidden: Aristocratic, Sizzle; Ralph Lauren: Oxfordshire
17. Glidden: Jazz; Ralph Lauren: Asiatic Lily; Behr: Cactus Moon (Sandwash line)
18. Behr: Norse Blue, Perfumed Powder (base) + Chopin Blue (mixed with BEHR Faux Crackle)
19. Ralph Lauren: Cedar Lake, Spokane Falls, Bright Citrus
20. Ralph Lauren: Dusk, Grape Hyacinth; Ralph Lauren: Chamois
21. Glidden: Aerial View, Innocence
22. Glidden: Planetarium, Blue Light; Ralph Lauren: Peach
23. Glidden: Heather Highland, Grape Vineyard, Celestial Sun
24. Behr: Venetian Blue (Hi-gloss); Ralph Lauren: Library Mahogany, Pearl
25. Ralph Lauren: Boothbay, Peach; Glidden: White on White
26. Glidden: Calm Sea, Balkan Sea, Celestial Sun
27. Glidden: Cool Dip, Sugar Cane

Green

28. Ralph Lauren: Gallery Green, Aspen Orange; Glidden: Desert Train
29. Glidden: Wreath of Green, Tarragon Leaf, Breathless
30. Behr: Green Court; Glidden: Wood Carving
31. Glidden: Luscious Moss, Savannah Rose, Whimsical
32. Glidden: Secret Garden, Private Lagoon, Vivacious
33. Glidden: Kiwi Fun, Pure Pink
34. Glidden: Ivy, Florida Pink; Ralph Lauren: Oatmeal

(Paint Names and Manufacturers, continued)

Green, cont.

35. Glidden: Crownhill, Autumn Mist, Silver Night
36. Glidden: Autumn Crisp, Mocha Cream
37. Glidden: Racing Green; Ralph Lauren: Cherry Birch (Duchesse Satin line), Beachwalk
38. Glidden: Zesty Lime, Floating Bubbles, Turkish Brown
39. Behr: Green Gable + BEHR faux glaze, Ink Black (Hi-gloss)
40. Ralph Lauren: Pine Forest, Hazel Woods, Aquinnah Sunset
41. Behr: Turtle Rock (Sandwash line); Ralph Lauren: Orchard; Glidden: Bold Terra-cotta
42. Glidden: Green Meadow; Behr: Faux (base) + English Toffee (mixed with BEHR Faux Glaze)
43. Ralph Lauren: Windsor; Behr: Cinnamon Silk; Glidden: Drum Beat
44. Glidden: Irish Ivy, Vintage Maze, Purple Sage
45. Glidden: Irish Ivy, Antique Photograph
46. Glidden: Willow Branch, Cheery Cherry, Pearl Essence
47. Glidden: Aquabelle, South Seas, Tropical Mango
48. Behr: Glidden: Country Cottage; Behr: Tortilla
49. Ralph Lauren: British Racing Green, Olivine (Duchesse Satin line); Glidden: Racy Red
50. Ralph Lauren: Hunter Green, Teal Forest; Glidden: Royal Renaissance
51. Ralph Lauren: Emerald Vestment, Manchester Brown
52. Glidden: Quietude, Misty Rose, Peaceful Time
53. Glidden: Soft Jade, Surfside, Lovely Lady
54. Glidden: Stillness; Ralph Lauren: Dune White

Violet

55. Glidden: Nostalgic, Desert Train, Ballerina Slipper
56. Glidden: Tropical Punch, Grape Fizz; Ralph Lauren: Thoroughbred
57. Glidden: Deep Lilac, Lavender Lullaby
58. Ralph Lauren: Garden Pansy, Pale Straw Yellow; Glidden: Light Breeze
59. Glidden: Sweet Lilac, Easter Egg, Southern Pine
60. Glidden: Purple Passion; Ralph Lauren: Rice
61. Ralph Lauren: Rhododendron, Homestead Yellow
62. Glidden: Lavender Meadow, Dusk, Tender Green
63. Ralph Lauren: Quarry; Behr: Cellar (Venetian Plaster line)
64. Glidden: Deep Aubergine, Celandine
65. Ralph Lauren: Claret; Behr: Eggplant; Glidden: Zodiac Night
66. Ralph Lauren: Chinese Hibiscus, Desert Boot
67. Behr: Excalibur (base) + Heather Haze (mixed with BEHR Faux Glaze); Ralph Lauren: Moccasin
68. Glidden: Mystic, Sonata; Behr: Woodcliff (base) + Mistletoe (mixed with BEHR Faux Glaze)
69. Ralph Lauren: Iris, Eagle's Nest
70. Behr: Vineyard Vines (Venetian Plaster line), Glidden: Corn Silk
71. Glidden: Mystic, Sonata, Pasture Green
72. Ralph Lauren: Parma Violet, Mahogany
73. Glidden: Silver Mauve, Jonquil, Fine Lace

AYID...Your Personal Color Consultant!

(Paint Names and Manufacturers, continued)

Violet, cont.

74. Glidden: Easter Egg, Purple Passion, Potpourri Green
75. Behr: French (base) + Monique (mixed with BEHR Faux Glaze); Glidden: Lavender Blush
76. Ralph Lauren: Invitation Gold (Duchesse Satin line); Burgundy
77. Glidden: Royal Renaissance, Razz Berries, Forest Floor
78. Glidden: Deep Aubergine, Soft Wine
79. Glidden: Vesper, Delicate Yellow
80. Glidden: Purple Safe, Silver Night, Summer Rain
81. Glidden: Dusk, Angel's Gaze

Red

82. Glidden: Victorian Red, Cheery Cherry; Behr: Plum Paradise
83. Behr: Drama Red; Glidden: Naturally Calm, Ivory Beige
84. Glidden: Frankly Scarlet, Rosey, Butterscotch Tempest
85. Behr: Scarlet Cap; Ralph Lauren: Glaze White
86. Glidden: Red Rose, Florida Pink, Purple Sage
87. Behr: Garnet Rose; Glidden: Cozy Melon
88. Ralph Lauren: Coral Pink; Behr: Full Wine (Hi-Gloss); Glidden: Fuschia Berry
89. Ralph Lauren: Banded Agate (Duchesse Satin line); Glidden: Scarlet's Velvet
90. Ralph Lauren: Chimayo Red; Behr: Garnet Rose, Apache Plume (Sandstone line)
91. Behr: Antique Coin (Venetian Plaster line); Ralph Lauren: Tangier Island
92. Glidden: Cranberry Zing, Flamingo, Deep Aubergine
93. Glidden: Tender Rose, Chippendale, Dapper Tan
94. Glidden: Candy Stripe, Saltmarsh Pink; Ralph Lauren: Snapdragon
95. Behr: Gelato (Venetian Plaster line); Glidden: Pure Pink
96. Glidden: Victorian Red, Valhalla; Behr: Vivid Orange
97. Behr: Sicilia (Venetian Plaster with Metallic Copper added); Glidden: Soft Copper
98. Glidden: Rio Rose, Pink Lemonade; Behr: Coral Bead
99. Glidden: Serene Thoughts, Delight

Orange

100. Glidden: Bold Terra-cotta, Dramatic Coral, Rich Brocade
101. Behr: Trailblaze, Angel Apricot
102. Ralph Lauren: Lifevest Orange, California Poppy; Glidden: Sundrenched
103. Ralph Lauren: California Poppy, Picket Fence White
104. Glidden: Burnt Sienna, Dramatic Coral, Wispy Peach
105. Glidden: Southern Tip, Soft Copper
106. Glidden: Coral Depths, Tangerine Fizz, Flair
107. Behr: Orange Toch (Hi-gloss); Ralph Lauren: Palladium Silver (Duchesse Satin line)
108. Behr: Meyer Lemon (base) + Zesty Orange (mixed with BEHR Faux Glaze);
Glidden: Copper Coin, Tender Rose
109. Behr: Cypress (base) + Melon Ball (mixed with BEHR Faux Glaze); Glidden: Coral Depths
110. Glidden: Breathless, Sand Dance, Jonquil

AYID...Your Personal Color Consultant!

(Paint Names and Manufacturers, continued)

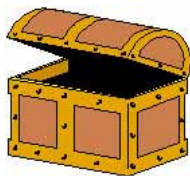
Orange, cont.

- 111. Behr: Cedar Ridge, Vesper
- 112. Ralph Lauren: Outrigger Orange; Glidden: Peach Swirl, Celestial Sun
- 113. Behr: Mimosa (base) + Bright Sunrise (mixed with BEHR Faux Glaze);
Glidden: Peach Sorbet
- 114. Ralph Lauren: Persimmon, Seed Pearl (both Duchesse Satin line); Glidden: Fire's Glow
- 115. Behr: Orange Sovereign, Stillwood (base) + Babarua (mixed with BEHR Faux Crackle)
- 116. Glidden: Tangerine Fizz, Ripe Peach, Pale Orange
- 117. Glidden: Sunlit Topaz, Navajo White

Yellow

- 118. Glidden: Star Fruit, Sparkler, Cranberry Zing
- 119. Glidden: Pale Lemon, Pure White
- 120. Glidden: Brilliance, Yellow Rose; Behr: Sashay Red (Hi-gloss)
- 121. Ralph Lauren: Slicker Yellow, Gerber Daisy
- 122. Glidden: Sunshower, Jonquil Yellow, Flamingo
- 123. Behr: Yellow Cluster, Cream Sateen
- 123. Glidden: Blazing Star, Theatre Lights, Burgundy
- 125. Glidden: Sundrenched, Dark Safari
- 126. Ralph Lauren: Kayak Yellow, Ochre Yellow; Behr: Jelly Bean (base) + Cherry Pie (mixed with BEHR Faux Glaze)
- 127. Ralph Lauren: Golden Yellow; Behr: Forcassia (base) + Carriage Leather (mixed with BEHR Faux Glaze)
- 128. Glidden: Sundrenched, Theatre Lights, Southern Pine
- 129. Glidden: Ribbon Yellow; Ralph Lauren: White Wash
- 130. Glidden: Celandrine, Dandelion, Apple Green
- 131. Glidden: Lemon Zest, Cotton Blossom
- 132. Behr: Dante, Grazie (both Venetian Plaster line); Glidden: Flaming Sword
- 133. Ralph Lauren: Citrine (Duchesses Satin line), Oxfordshire
- 134. Glidden: Sun Rays, Newborn, Pink Chablis
- 135. Glidden: Yarborough Yellow; Ralph Lauren: Sunlight

Paint manufacturers referenced include [Behr](#), [Glidden](#), and Ralph Lauren, which is available at [Home Depot](#).



Ancient Wisdom

“Making it feel like home” goes WAY back. The Mongolian Yurt tribe were nomads and constantly moved their belongings from one place to another. But artifacts show they still made efforts to make their temporary homes efficient and comfortable, with early rugs, chairs and stools, and boxes to hold their tools.

8.0 Finalizing Your Color Choices

8.1 Look at Me, Look at Me!: The Importance of a Focal Color

We've just presented several methods by which you can select colors you would like to incorporate in your scheme.

To review, a color scheme can be inspired by a favorite object, existing furniture or fabrics, a strategic solution to a structural deficit, a desired emotional response, or anything else that moves you to make your color choice.

We've shown you how to take one color and add other colors to it to create complementary, analogous, and neutral color schemes.

So, at this point, you should now have a few colors in mind to use in your room. It doesn't matter one bit *how* you selected these colors - the next step toward finalizing your color scheme is to select which of the colors you want to serve as the **focal color**.

A color scheme always consists of two or more colors. Even if a room is based only on one color (which is referred to as a **monochromatic** color scheme), there will be a variety of shades that are used in the room.

It is important to keep in mind that, even in this case, one shade of the color should stand out above the rest.

You can think of this one color as the pulse of the room. It is the visual pull that brings us into a room and helps our eyes move around it freely.



In a breakfast room that “sings the blues”, the deep navy of the floor rug carries the tune!

AYID...Finalizing Your Color Choices

This is not to say that you can't use two or more colors proportionately. But you should plan the room with the intention that some quality of one of the colors should make it stand out from the rest.

For example, red and pink could be used in a room fairly equally, but the fact that red is brighter and darker would make it stand out in front of the pink. In this instance, the value of the color red is the quality that makes it the focal color.

Another example is the room below. In this bedroom, green, purple, and blue are all used in fairly equal amounts in the bedding, artwork, and decorative accents. But the pale sage green on the wall clearly is the focal color.

It doesn't matter that the color is less vibrant than the others; the sheer quantity in which it is applied makes it the color that makes the statement.

As a result, a bedroom that incorporates bright and vivid colors still maintains an overall feeling of relaxation and tranquility. The understated nature of the green wall color sings with the bolder tones to create a striking contrast.



A soft green is the focal color in a bedroom that is anything but soft on color!
(Wall color is Peaceful Green by [Sherwin-Williams](#); bedding is from Martha Stewart Everyday Collection from [Kmart](#); floral throw pillows were made with fabric from [Joann Fabrics](#); lamps are from [Bed, Bath, and Beyond](#); quilt rack is from Weirs Furniture in Dallas, TX.)

Once the focal color is determined, it is easy to add the rest of the colors in your scheme to the mix. As shown in the bedroom on the previous page, you can liberally add other colors to the room to create a balanced palette that uses similar quantities of multiple colors.

You also can add color sparingly to create small, focused pockets of visual interest, such as that fostered with the use of the bright green lamp shown in this study (right).

In this example, the green desk lamp not only breaks up the neutral color scheme in the room, but it also draws attention to the touches of nature brought to the room by the live plants.



A green lamp and live plants add liveliness and vitality to a study decorated primarily in neutral colors. (Desk chair is from Weirs Furniture in Dallas, TX; desk lamp is from [Office Depot](#); leather chair and ottoman are by [Hancock & Moore](#).)



Marney's Memo

One reason that I like to know my focal color from the get-go is that it helps me make decisions when I'm shopping or making something for a room.

Once, I was decorating a living room in rust, burnt orange, and mustard yellow, with rust serving as my focal color.

When I shopped for the fabrics to make the daybed cover and throw pillows pictured here (right), the rust focal color was my "anchor", and the right fabrics jumped right out at me. The choices were narrowed down for me since I knew I wanted fabrics that were dominated by the rust color, and accented by the others.



*Rust takes center stage in this spicy color scheme! (Daybed frame is from [Mattress Giant](#); fabrics used on daybed are all from [Joann Fabrics](#). You can refer to our e-book, *Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts*, for instructions on making no-sew pillows and slipcovers!)*

8.2 Saturating a Sumptuous Style: Working Colors into Your Decorating Style

The color schemes presented in section 7.0, [Your Personal Paint Color Consultant](#), clearly illustrate that you are not limited by decorating style when it comes to selecting a color.

Every color can work with every style!

Take the two rooms below, for example. You couldn't get a more drastic contrast in terms of decorating styles. But both rooms make use of a yellow-green and bright pink.



A study with a modern edge uses vivid retro-inspired colors to make a statement! (Wall color is Optic White by [Rust-Oleum](#); color on shelves is Safety Red by [Rust-Oleum](#); floor rug is from [Lowe's](#)).



This bedroom basks in the opulence of Victorian-inspired colors. (Photograph is courtesy of Judith and Martin Miller and [VictorianStation.com](#), a fantastic provider of Victorian décor items!)

Still, it's helpful to have some guidelines to help you figure out the best colors to use with your decorating style or combination of styles, so we're giving you a handy summary....a "cheat sheet", of sorts!

Remember, these aren't hard and fast rules, but just a couple of guiding principles to help you as make your decisions.

Feel free to refer back to the suggested color schemes in section 7.0, [Your Personal Paint Color Consultant](#), as you read the following summary.



Sit 'n Summarize

Your color cheat sheet:

European Country: vivid, rich colors used in combination with dark neutral browns, accented with golds and yellows to give a hint of warmth and sunlight

American Country: vibrant, pure colors straight from the color wheel, combined with pure and creamy whites to create contrast and a clean, crisp, and cheery look

Casual Contemporary: muted tones of similar value and shade, combined with light neutrals such as beige and tan

Formal Contemporary: runs the gamut...from shocking, bold, and abstract palettes, to high-shine primary colors, to glitzy metallics to black and white; all with a heavy focus on contrast between colors

Rustic: lively colors such as spicy earth tones and ultra-rich pastel shades mixed with wood-like neutrals, often presented in faux finishes to simulate age and texture

Traditional: dark colors with low contrast to create a solid feel to a room, accompanied by dark neutral browns or flat off-whites

(Color Cheat Sheet, continued)

Casual Romantic: a wide variety of tinted colors mixed together in a single scheme, ranging from soft and light pastels to warm, fruity sherbet tones, all mixed with white and cream

Traditional Romantic: deep, shimmery jewel tones with very little contrast between light and dark; neutrals are used sparingly but the deep browns used are rich enough to make a statement on their own

Spiritual: pure white and white mixed with pale, reflective, cooling colors; schemes are even and uniform with little contrast

8.3 Pure and Simple: Using White

We've been discussing color and all of its fabulous advantages.



Color can create any atmosphere you'd like - from whimsical to sophisticated to serene.



Color can pull a room together and make an unmistakable decorating statement.



Color can influence your mood and productivity and act as a magnet for what you are seeking in your life.

But remember that WHITE is a color, too! Far from being the absence of color, scientifically, white contains every color in the spectrum in natural light. White is a popular choice for trim in rooms with a lot of color. But you can also select to use white as one of the main colors in your color scheme.

Here's why:

REASON #1: **Using one color plus white is an easy way to get it right!** All you need to do is select one color, select a shade of white, and put them together and you've got a color scheme that will never fail.

AYID...Finalizing Your Color Choices

You may notice that we just said you need to pick a shade of white, and that's exactly what we mean! Not all whites are created equal!

Most often, a shade of white is either warm or cool, just as other colors are.

Warm whites have been mixed with small amounts of yellow and have the same effect that warm colors do. They advance a space and make it feel cozier.

Warm whites are soft; think of linen, pearl, stone, and white rose petals.

Most modern "brilliant" whites have a bit of blue added to them. They expand areas to make them seem more open, crisp, and fresh.

Cool whites are sophisticated and clean; think of sugar, milk, and snow.

Pure white, which has no blue added, looks great in rooms that get a lot of sun. In darker rooms, pure white looks very stark and even a bit gloomy.

REASON #2: You're not quite ready to take the plunge and make a color statement. You appreciate all of the great qualities of color but it just doesn't feel like "you".

Don't worry! The solution is to mix neutral colors (such as brown, tan, beige, and gray) with a warm white to create atmosphere and richness, without adding a lot of colors.

In this den (right), the walls have been painted a warm white, and the trim has been painted a pure white. This sets the windows off and provides a clean finish to the room.



A bright, cool white added to navy... effectively crisp, and a color scheme recipe that will work every time!



Risk-free neutrals can still be warm and inviting! (Sofa and table are from [Ethan Allen](#).)



Marney's Memo

Okay, so you've probably picked up by now that I'm a real color lover. I confess, it's true! I do understand that a free-spirited approach to color is not for everyone...but I encourage you to experiment with color in modest ways if you choose to decorate your space in neutrals. Here's what I'm talking about:

lamps	artwork	rugs
pottery	fresh flowers	sculpture
end tables	throw pillows	vases
decorative books	candles	throw blankets

Now, see? That's not so bad, is it? Bringing in something like a sumptuous purple chenille throw blanket can get you used to seeing some color in your home, and you may be surprised how much you enjoy it!

REASON #3: You love the look of white! White can be sleek and sophisticated, lush and romantic, or pure and meditative. If you love it, use it! This bedroom (bottom left) mixes shades of white, sprinkling the atmosphere with sweet, flowing romance. In this living room (bottom right), white is used to draw the eye directly to the focal point of the armoire.



A simple and warm collage of white, created with a variety of white-based hues. (For instructions on decorating lampshades, see our companion e-book, [Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts](#).)



Wonderful white creates a dramatic focal point in this room.

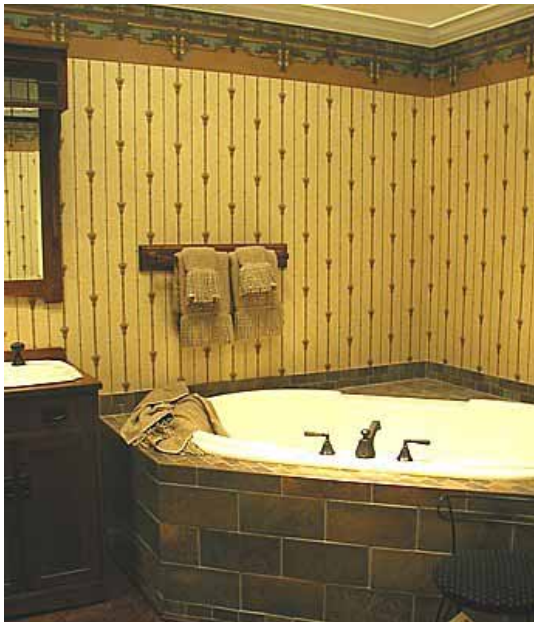
8.4 The Nifty Neutrals

We just discussed the strategy of adding other neutral colors - brown, beige, tan, and gray - to warm whites to create a comfortable and risk-free color scheme.

But neutrals have a wild side, too. When laid on with a liberal hand, these hues can be saturated and juicy and create a rich atmosphere that is anything but “neutral”!

Take the two rooms shown here. The bathroom (below left) embraces a brown and beige color scheme that virtually pops with sophisticated drama.

The neutral color gray (made by mixing black and white) is technically a “cool” color, but it can turn up the heat. When combined with saturated brown, as shown in this kitchen (below right) it projects a roasty warmth.



A bathroom that sways with seductive sophistication! (Stone whirlpool bath is by [Jetta](#).)



Neutrals can wrap you in warmth! (Cabinetry is by [Kraft Maid/Arbor Cliff](#).)

Keep in mind, too, that black is a neutral color as well, and is especially popular in formal contemporary rooms, such as this living room (right).

Rooms decorated completely in black are best left to angry teenagers, as black is quite oppressive when used solidly.

This living room, for example, lightens black's heavy hand with textured gray walls and a white marble coffee table.



Lighter accents and natural sunlight complement this stunning, opaque color scheme.

If you're going for "sophisticated", use black with white, other neutrals, and light pastels.

If you're going for "striking", use black with vivid solid colors. (But stay away from black and orange - it's practically impossible to make it anything but Halloween!)



Marney's Memo

Just a little reminder that the ultimate contrast duo - black and white - can work in other styles besides Formal Contemporary.

Think of black and white checkerboards, which are ever the staple in American Country décor....they also work in Casual Romantic and Casual Contemporary.

And black and white toile is very popular right now...in fact, Waverly offers a line of black and white toile items, which are perfect for European Country or Casual Romantic.



Coffee Break

So....how are you doing with your colors? Have you decided upon a scheme?

Don't worry, you don't need to know about what you are going to DO with the colors, yet. Paint, wallpaper, fabrics, furniture....they are all in the sections to come. But settling on your color scheme makes the rest of the job so much easier.

If you need a little push, we'll help you out. If you haven't settled on your complete scheme, have you selected one color? Try the following with that color in mind, and see if anything strikes a chord:

1. Revisit the [color palettes](#) we suggested in section 7.0, *Your Personal Paint Color Consultant!*. Use your chosen decorating style(s) as a guide. Do any jump out at you that perhaps didn't speak to you earlier?
 2. Add a complement to your color and then play with the values (shades and tints) a bit to see if you like any results. Remember -- B - E - D for Bathtub, Earth, December! For example, if you've chosen green as your color, play around with different shades of red (green's complement) to see if you like any combinations. Pale pink? Salmon? Coral? Dusty rose? If you find a combination you like, add a neutral (such as beige, brown, white, cream, or gray) and viola! There's your scheme!
 3. With your chosen color in mind, revisit our [color wheel](#). Select one or two colors next to it on the color wheel. Put them together - do you like the look? Try adding an accent color - such as a complementary or split complementary (which is the color next to its complement) to spruce it up.
 4. Add white to your color for a simple and clean look. Decide if you want a cool white or warm white, and you're done!
-

8.5 Using Color to Relate Rooms Throughout Your Home

Once you've settled on a color scheme, before going any further, it's a good idea to think of your scheme in terms of the rest of your home.

Generally speaking, it is a good idea to create some kind of connection between rooms in your home to create a cohesiveness in design and living style. It is especially effective to do so with rooms that are next to one another.

Even if you are only decorating one room, it still needs to flow with other adjacent rooms that are not being redecorated at this point. Take a look at our techniques:

1. **Use a basic monochromatic scheme throughout the house.** This is a risk-free way to go, although it can be limiting if you are aiming for a unique approach to your design.

The three photographs show how a single color scheme unifies a living room, kitchen, and family room, all of which are next to one another.

The pale sage green color is consistently used on the walls, with darker green as a secondary color and shades of tan and orange as accent colors.

The flow among these rooms is attractive and soothing, yet the subtle varieties in the use of the colors assure that the color scheme is never boring.



It's SO easy livin' green! (Sofa, chair, and lamp are from [Gabberts Furniture.](#))



Light and dark greens make this breakfast nook look like it was snatched from the garden! (Table and chairs are from [Freed's Furniture.](#))



Three rooms sing harmoniously in a monochromatic scheme!

AYID...Finalizing Your Color Choices



A terrific transition...



from golden yellow...



to red, with yellow accents!

2. Use the focal color in one room as a secondary color in another room that is next to it. Like the previous option, this technique brings a real flow to adjacent rooms, but it allows for greater contrast and interest.

In the home shown in the photographs on the left, the focal color in the family room (top left) is the golden yellow on the walls.

The wallpaper in the adjacent kitchen (bottom and middle left) is red with yellow flowers. While red clearly is the dominant color in the kitchen, the yellow flowers are highlighted by the golden wall color in the family room.

In the middle photograph, you can see how well the transition space allows each room to shine on its own, while still providing cohesiveness and flow.

3. Alternate wall and trim colors to create a positive/negative effect. This is another easy way to stick with a color but keep things interesting.

Here is a simple example: The walls in your family room are painted dusty rose and the trim is painted taupe. In the adjacent study, flip it around so that the walls are painted taupe, and the trim is painted dusty rose.

It doesn't get easier than that, and it will definitely bring an interconnectedness to the design.

8.6 Other Ways to Relate Rooms

If using one of the above methods to relate rooms using color seems too limiting, don't worry! You can still decorate different rooms in separate color schemes with confidence. There are other ways to ensure that your home promotes a comforting flow from room to room.

Consider these techniques:

1. **Repeat a theme or mood in adjacent rooms, or throughout your home.** For example, you may want to design a home that is inspired by the beach. Colors could vary from room to room, but the beach theme would pull it all together.
2. **Taking the previous technique a bit further, you can repeat an element in several rooms.** In the beach-inspired home mentioned above, you could feature artwork of sailboats in each room. The art could be in different color schemes to match the room colors, but the sailboats join the rooms together by concept.

Furniture can serve this purpose as well. For example, you could use one piece of wicker furniture in each room. Even if just a side table or stool, the use of wicker creates unity.

The photographs below illustrate the use of this technique in a living room, kitchen, and family room. Though the feeling invoked by each room is completely different, the use of cacti - whether live or whimsically painted - is an effective anchor for the home's American southwestern style.



The formal...



playful...



and casual side of the desert!

4. Repeat or mirror a furniture placement pattern in adjacent rooms.

This is a simple way to tie rooms together if they have very different color schemes.

This formal living room (right) is adjacent to a casual family room. In the living room, the furnishings are dark wood, and the focal color is a traditional muted pink, paired with a clean, refined white and charcoal blue.

The family room is all about the casual neutrals: light wood, beige leather sofa, and off-white wall color.

You can see, however, how the placement of the sofa in each room draws the eye to move freely from one room to another.



Even though the design elements of these rooms are contrasting, the echo in furniture placement relates them effectively.

5. Decorate “public” areas in one style or color scheme, and “private” areas in another. This is especially effective in two-story homes, where the lower floor often consists of living room, dining room, kitchen and the like, with bedrooms, offices, and entertainment rooms upstairs. However, the same concept can be put into use in any home.

Divide your living space into “public” and “private” rooms...or, perhaps, “formal” and “informal” areas, and split your color choices between the two.

Or, divide a single-level home right down the middle and decorate one half in one color scheme and the other half in another. Be sure the room that functions as the “transition area” from one side to the other makes use of a unifying element, such as those we’ve mentioned in this section.

9.0 Enlivening the Box: Painting Walls and Ceilings

9.1 To Paint or Paste, That is the Question!

In the majority of rooms, walls speak volumes. Walls account for the most square footage of a room, so the way you decorate them usually sets the room's tone. After selecting your color scheme, selecting your chosen wall decorations should always be your first step.

The two main options for wall covering are wallpaper and paint. One isn't a better choice than the other - each can create wonderful effects, from casual and understated to dazzling and daring. Your selection is a matter of personal choice, as well as of budget and time constraints.



A spritely wallpaper design brightens up this entry hall! (Wallpaper is by [Eisenhart Wallcoverings](#).)

If you are interested in filling your wall with a pattern, wallpaper definitely is the easiest way to go.

Take the entry hall pictured here (left). Painting this lovely design would require a formidable amount of both time and skill.

While putting up wallpaper takes a bit of know-how, anyone can do it. Most of today's wallpapers are pre-glued, which means you don't even have to mess around with wallpaper glue.

Wallpapering is easy and quick, and an entire room, depending on its size, can be completed in one day, sometimes in a single afternoon.

One drawback to wallpaper is that it can be quite expensive. There are plenty of inexpensive wallpapers available, but if the one you fall in love with is a premium brand, the square feet can add up!

Often, it is less expensive to buy cans of paint, and sometimes, even hiring painters is less expensive than wallpaper.

Putting aside the factors of time and money, the main distinction between painting and wallpapering is the resulting look. Paint offers endless possibilities for special techniques and finishes, and we'll be outlining many of them shortly.



A blended color wash reflects the light in this entry hall. (Design by [Sandra Gustafson](#).)

One choice is not better than the other....but the important thing that we want to convey is this: **if you want to do your own walls, YOU CAN!**

We've heard of far too many people who want to paint their walls but don't think they can. Or who want to paint their walls but can't afford to hire someone to do it, so they give up.

If you don't WANT to do it yourself, that's one thing.

While some companies do manufacturer wallpapers with "paint-like" solid colors or textured finishes, we think there is still no substitute for the way that a painted surface reflects light.

Furthermore, painted walls often lend themselves to a more personalized and unique approach to decorating.



The fascinating magic of a faux faded fresco finish.

Then you can enjoy the process of selecting your paint and letting the experts take care of the rest. (See section 9.13, *Ten Tips for Hiring Professional Painters* for our advice). If you are intrigued by the idea of painting your own walls with a special decorative touch, you'll find lots of ideas in our e-book, *Creative Stamping for Walls & Furniture*.

There are many effects that can be achieved by both paint and wallpaper. Take the two photographs below. Vertical stripes are used to lengthen the walls of both of these rooms. The stripes in the stairwell (left) were hand painted, and the stripes in the dining room (right) are on wallpaper.



Sleek stripes add height to this painted entry hall.



Sophisticated stripes...via wallpaper! (Wine cellar is the Cal Wine Cellars Prestige Mahogany on Mahogany model from [Wine Enthusiast](#); table and chairs are from Weirs Furniture in Dallas, TX.)



Sit 'n Summarize

Limited time, limited funds = inexpensive wallpaper

Limited time, flexible with funds = wallpaper

Moderate time, limited funds = solid color paint

Flexible with time, limited/flexible with funds = decorative paint finish

9.2 Just Around the Corner: The Role of Moldings and Trims

When you evaluated the structure of your bare room in section 5.4, *How to Easily Evaluate a Room's Structure*, we asked you to observe the detailing in your room - the moldings, arches, or trims.

Now we're going to discuss moldings and trims a bit further, and offer options of how to use them to their best advantage.

The term, **molding**, is a general classification of pieces of wood, plaster, tile, marble, or synthetic material that are applied to walls at the points where the sheetrock, of which the wall is made, ends, such as at doorways, window frames, floors and ceilings. If moldings are made from wood, they often are referred to as **woodwork**.

The non-decorative portion of wood that makes up a molding is called the **trim**.

Baseboard molding is a strip of trim attached horizontally to the base of a wall. Trim attached to the base of a cabinet or bookcase is also referred to as baseboard molding.

Baseboard molding covers the seam where the wall meets the floor, and also blocks drafts.

A **chair rail** is a strip, or combination of strips, of trim attached horizontally to the wall, usually about 3 feet from the floor. A chair rail acts as a belt and allows the wall to "wear" a different top and bottom.

When a chair rail divides a room, the bottom part below the chair rail is called a **dado** (pronounced "day-doe").



A chair rail divides a wall papered wall and a painted dado.

Cornice molding is a trim that is attached to the top of the wall. Cornice molding is used to hide any unevenness in the line where the top of the wall meets this ceiling. This is one of the great advantages of molding - it can make an uneven wall or ceiling line appear even.

One of the most common forms is **crown molding**, which is made from joining multiple layers. This living room (below) is framed in cornice crown molding.



Like a ribbon around a package, crown molding finishes off this living room with decorative punctuation. (Wall color is Mushroom by [Sherwin-Williams](#); sofas are from Walter E. Smithe in Geneva, IL.)

Edge molding refers to small pieces of molding that are usually used as an accent with other moldings. The most elaborate cornices are often layered edge moldings.

Using several different edge moldings to create your own cornice allows you to mirror the shapes of other moldings in the room, such as those found on furniture pieces like armoires, bookcases, and coffee tables.

Some of the more popular edge moldings include the following:

- ✦ Cove molding: concave surface most often used as a bridge between the top of a baseboard and the wall, or the bottom of a cornice and the wall
- ✦ Quarter-round molding (also called shoe molding): quarter section of a round pole, most often used at the bottom of baseboard molding where there are uneven gaps between the baseboard and the floor
- ✦ Half-round molding: half of a round pole used to give a finished edge to the end of a shelf or counter; can also be combined with other moldings to create intricate cornices
- ✦ Bullnose molding: a trim with a flat center and softly rounded edges, used in the same way as half-round molding

Wainscotting is actually a wall treatment, not a molding, but it usually is classified with moldings because it is decorative woodwork around the edge of a room.

Wainscotting is achieved by installing many (usually hundreds of) narrow, tongue-and-groove boards vertically, directly above the baseboard.

These boards, called **bead boards**, are typically installed on the dado, such as shown in this living room (right).

You can achieve the look of wainscotting in a fraction of the time by installing paneling that is intended to mimic wainscotting, such as the Ply-Bead Classics line by [Georgia Pacific](#).



Wainscotting provides a classic frame to an airy living room.

9.3 Methods for “Installing” Faux Moldings

If you'd like to frame your room in a really unique way, or if you're not interested in pulling out your tools to install your own moldings, consider our creative alternatives.

An easy way to install a highly unique “faux” cornice molding is to add a wallpaper border to the top of a wall, as shown on the walls of this rustic bathroom (right).

This is an especially dramatic look if the wall is painted in a light color, as the contrast becomes even more dramatic.



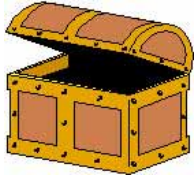
This Aztec border is a frieze - a decorative band at the top of a wall - and frames this rustic-themed bathroom in the same way a cornice molding would.



When is molding not molding? When it's paint, instead! (Design is by [Sandra Gustafson](#).)

Here's another idea! In this dining room (left), vertical stripes simulate the look of wainscoting, and a horizontal stripe is painted with a faux-wood technique to look like a wooden chair rail.

The faux-wood finish is repeated in a wider horizontal stripe at the top of the wall. This completes the wall with the look of a cornice molding.



Ancient Wisdom

The original purpose of a chair rail was to protect finished walls in the dining room. When a chair was pushed back from the table, then, the chair rail was hit instead of the wall. The chair rail separated the hard-wearing finish on the lower portion of the wall from the decorative finish on the upper portion.

Though the purpose of the chair rail in modern homes is primarily to tailor a wall aesthetically, most walls with chair rails call upon tradition: the dado (lower portion) is usually solid or covered in panelling, and the upper portion maintains the more elaborate, decorated finish.

9.4 Highlighting Your Moldings

Moldings are literal room-frames. In fact, the same principles apply to moldings as do frames around a picture or piece of artwork. Here are some simple guidelines to follow:

- ☐ If a wall doesn't require emphasis, don't frame it. (For example, if you want a wall to "disappear" into the cg or floor.)
- ☐ If a wall doesn't merit emphasis, frame it very simply with something that won't call attention to itself. (For example, if a door or window is in a strange or awkward place, or if a room is very small.)
- ☐ If a wall merits emphasis, frame it by drawing attention to the moldings.

If your room has existing molding, you can choose to play it up or play it down, depending on whether or not you want to highlight it.

If you want to camouflage molding, paint it in the same paint color as your wall, or in the most dominant color of the wallpaper. To highlight a molding, paint or stain it in a color that contrasts with your wall color.



Marney's Memo

For a no-brainer approach to moldings, you can employ an old trick of paint strip magic...

If you want to emphasize the moldings moderately, paint them one shade/color above your wall color on the paint strip chart. Paint your ceiling the same color as the moldings, or, to make the ceiling look higher, paint it one shade lighter than the moldings.

To emphasize the moldings more dramatically, paint them the top color shown on the paint strip chart. Then, paint your walls the third or fourth color down from the top on the paint strip chart. These positions are typically the most neutral shades/colors. To complete the dramatic display, paint the ceiling the second color from the top of the chart. Viola! A uniform room with plenty of contrast!

Another no-fail recipe is to paint your moldings white or off-white, as shown in this entry hall (right).

This hallway has moldings around the baseboard and closet door, below the stair rail, and on top of the shelf that is situated halfway up the stairs.

The contrasting white highlights each spot and frames this area from bottom to top.

A similar approach is to paint your moldings several shades darker than the wall color to make them stand out. The bottom line is: the more contrast that there is between the wall color and the color of the moldings, the more they will stand out!



An elegant entry hall is cleanly finished in white trim and moldings. (Wall color is Mushroom by [Sherwin-Williams](#).)

Wondering if you should highlight your moldings? Here's why you should:

- 🌀 To add definition to a bland stretch of wall
- 🌀 To emphasize good-looking windows and doors
- 🌀 To add a color transition for color changes above and below a chair rail
- 🌀 To define a large living area by dividing it into smaller, more manageable parts
- 🌀 To frame specific areas for display of artwork or special furniture pieces
- 🌀 To add elegance to a plain room
- 🌀 To make simple built-ins look elegant and finished

If your room does not have moldings, and you want to install your own, they come pre-fabricated in a variety of materials, such as plaster, wood, tile, marble, and synthetics. A large variety of moldings are available in home improvement stores such as [Home Depot](#) and [Lowe's](#).

If you're feeling a bit more industrious, you can even make your own moldings out of lumber and prefabricated trim.

Whether you want to install prefabricated moldings or build your own, home improvement stores often hold classes to instruct first-time carpenters on how to do this. The Lowe's Web site includes free on-line tutorials and videos of excellent quality on subjects such as [Selecting Molding](#) and [Installing Molding](#).

If you'd rather consult a book than a Web site, we recommend [*Grand Finishes for Carpentry: A Step-by-Step Guide Through Molding Installation Projects*](#) by Matt Nikitas, which gives a comprehensive approach for beginners.

9.5 Don't Forget to Look Up!: Becoming Satisfied with Your Ceilings

The ceiling is the part of the room that is most neglected, which is a pity. Ceilings have tremendous potential for impact, and also for creating desired structural effects.

While a ceiling can be painted with a splendid effect, such as the romantic sky painted on the ceiling of this foyer (right), it is more common for ceilings to be painted in solid colors.

In order to demonstrate how painting a ceiling affects the look of a room, we're going to present a single bedroom and try out some different shades to compare results.



A fresco ceiling emphasizes this foyer's height, while adding a bit of childlike wonder.



#1

Here is the bedroom that will serve as our "guinea pig" (#1, left).

The bedding and artwork are full of gentle color, but the non-descript white on the walls and ceiling do not enhance the look of the room.

Let's see what happens when we add some paint to these walls...

The "before" picture. (Bedding from [Bed, Bath, and Beyond](#).)

#2



For photo #2 (left), we added a rich apricot color to the walls, echoing one of the colors in the quilt on the bed.

We left the ceiling unpainted, however. You can see how the room seems to stop abruptly at the top of the walls.

The room seems shallow and unfinished, and the lovely wall color is not able to shine in its best light.

#3

Back in section 6.4, *Color First Aid: Using Color to Fix Flaws*, we discussed the ways in which ceiling paint can alter the perception of a room's size.

In photo #3 (right), we've demonstrated how painting the ceiling two shades lighter than the walls gives a feeling of expansiveness to the room.

Our eyes are drawn upward, which gives the impression of lengthened walls and an opening up of the space.



#4



In photo #4 (left), the ceiling has been painted one shade darker than the room.

You can see how the size of the room immediately shifts. In this particular room, this technique is not put to use well...it makes the room feel too crowded and confined.

However, in a cavernous room that needs coziness and intimacy, or in a room in which the ceiling feels too separate and distant, this is a highly effective technique.

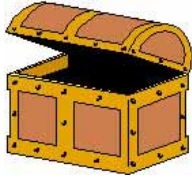
Finally, you can view your ceiling as merely a fifth wall, with which you can have a lot of fun!

#5

In photo #5 (right), the ceiling and the two walls adjacent to the bed have been painted in completely different colors to create a playfully romantic look.

Since our eye is always drawn to light, the wall behind the bed gets our primary focus, performing the function of a traditional headboard. The ceiling acts as an accent color for this analogous color scheme, pulling in a hue directly from the bedding. It works!!





Ancient Wisdom

While slanted ceilings have a practical purpose - a slanted roof allows precipitation to run off - the design actually has origins of a deeper meaning.

This structural shape goes back to the Egyptians, who created roofs to point toward heaven in an attempt to make a link between heaven and earth!

9.6 Make a Splash!: An Overview of Passionate Paint Finishes for Walls

*"Painting isn't an aesthetic operation;
it's a form of magic."
~ Pablo Picasso*

Don't worry, we're not expecting you to be Picasso, or even to LIKE Picasso! But we thought that the above quote was a good way to start this section.

Of course, successfully completing a decorative paint finish certainly requires mechanical know-how. But just as important is the joy with which you approach your "canvas" (you know, that wall that's just begging for some color!)

Undertaking a decorative painting project means having a sense of humor, a lot of patience, and the mental space to go slowly. It means being open to learning as you go along, and trusting yourself to make good decisions when you get to a crossroad.

It means letting go of all your fears about "not being an artist". We don't care if you can't even draw a straight line...**you CAN make your walls beautiful!**



Coffee Break

In this section, we're presenting the five main decorative paint finishes that you can use on your walls, along with descriptions on how each look is achieved. Once you master these five, the sky is the limit! We also will provide a more comprehensive list of the other most popular decorative paint finishes, along with the decorating styles for which they are most effective.

As you look through the following pages, have your journal ready in case any ideas come to you. You may see one of our photographs of a dry brushing technique with orange paint, and wonder what it would look like in purple...and it would be a pity to lose out on that brainstorm because you forgot about it!



Marney's Memo

Having basic knowledge about decorative painting is a helpful tool to keep in your imagination's toolbox. Even if you don't think a faux finish is for you...you may find that in the right situation it's the perfect solution.

There have been times when I have painted a wall and found the color was too bold. As much as we can try to visualize a color on walls or furniture, sometimes it surprises us. My solution? Soften it up with a faux finish technique such as sponging, colorwashing, or stippling.

You can even use some techniques, like sponging or glazing, over wallpaper to tone down color or give the wallpaper an antique look! So keep an open mind, you never know when one of these techniques might come in handy!



A soft faux finish on the walls softens a room filled with bright colors.

Please Note: Instructions for preparing surfaces will be given in section 9.8, *You're On a Roller!* We highly recommend following those instructions prior to beginning any of these paint projects.

1.



#1. COLORWASHING

The technique of colorwashing involves distressing color to create the illusion of faded plaster walls.

It's a wonderful technique to use on walls with flaws such as cracks and bumps. It also adds interest to smooth surfaces.

The Steps:

1. Apply two coats of base coat and after you are done, let the wall dry for at least two hours. Your base coat should be white latex paint in flat or satin finish.
2. Dilute your colorwash paint (latex paint, satin finish) with water: 1 part paint to 1 part water. The watered down paint is translucent, which will allow each coat to show the coat below. You can also mix the latex paint with wallpaper paste (1 part paint to 1 part paste) instead of water to create a more textured finish.

Stir the mixture until it is mixed well, and pour into a paint tray.

3. Apply the diluted paint in random crisscrosses with a 3" or 4" latex brush, until there are no areas of the base coat showing. Diluted paint is very runny, so be sure your floors and furniture are well-covered. Work quickly to keep the mixture wet as you apply it, which will ensure a soft textured effect.

If you are painting a large area, work in sections of about 3' x 3', overlapping each section with crisscross strokes by about 1 inch.

(Colorwashing steps, cont.)

4. (optional step to add a second color) Dilute another color paint and add a second colorwash layer on top of the first.
5. If you are painting a bathroom, kitchen, or hallway, protect the finish with a coat of clear varnish.

Note: *You also can use a roller to create the crisscross strokes for the colorwash. This goes very fast and is fun!*

2.



#2. **SPONGING**

Sponging involves applying latex paint with a sponge directly onto the wall. Different sponges produce different results -- a household sponge gives a different effect than a sea sponge. You also can use sponge rollers, available at [Home Depot](#), to make this job go very quickly.

You can sponge with one color over a base coat of a different color. In this case, the base color will be seen on the surface. For a subtle effect, you can use two colors in the same family: one for the base coat, and one for the sponged surface. Using the same sheen in the two coats will provide a subtle effect, as well.

For a more dramatic effect, choose two colors that contrast well - one for the base coat, and one for the sponging. They can be different shades of the same color, or two different colors, such as a pastel pink over a pastel yellow base. If you use two different sheens for the two coats, you will add even more depth to the finish.

You can also bring in a variety of tones by laying down the base color, and then sponging with two colors, instead of one. The sample (above) was achieved by sponging orange and yellow together over a white base coat. The two colors were blended with a sponge while they were still wet. For a look that is less blended and more defined, you can sponge with one color, let it dry, and then sponge with the other color.

(Sponging, cont.)

The Steps:

1. Apply two coats of latex paint as your base coat and after both coats are painted, let the wall dry for at least two hours.
2. Dilute the paint you will be sponging with water (generally 2 parts paint to 1 part water) to the paint you will be sponging. You can also use a glazing medium to dilute the paint by following the instructions on the product. Dip one side of your sponge into the diluted paint and blot the excess on paper towels. (For a more rustic look, do not add water or glazing medium to the paint or wet the sponge before applying the paint.)
3. Dab the sponge in an even pattern covering about 65%-75% of the surface. When you are working in small corners, tear off a piece of the sponge to work in small areas and avoid splotches on trim.
4. If adding a second color, use a clean sponge to apply the color. Remember that the last sponged color will be the most dominant.



*A highly-textured wall created by sponging **four** colors. (Wall color is a combination of Mesa Sunrise, Chimayo Red, Flaxen, and Chamois, all by Ralph Lauren, available at [Home Depot](#); armoire is from [Seaman's Furniture](#); faux-distressed bookcases were originally unfinished pine from [Gothic Cabinet Craft](#). For furniture distressing techniques, refer to our easy instructions for [antiquing furniture](#) .)*

3.



#3. **DRAGGING (also called strié)**

This effect is created when a dry brush is pulled through a colored glaze. In doing so, the base color is revealed in very fine lines, which make the walls look like silk fabric.

Dragging is most effective in soft colors, such as pastels, over a white base coat. You can also use a cream or off-white base with tan or taupe colors to create a “vintage” look.

THE STEPS:

1. Apply two coats of a latex base coat (white or off-white). After painting both coats, let the wall dry for at least two hours.
2. Mix satin latex paint with latex glazing liquid according to the instructions on the package of the glazing liquid.
3. Apply the colored glaze to a workable length of the surface.
4. Start at one end and pull a 4” dragging brush (or any long-bristled paintbrush) through the wet glaze. You also can perform this technique using a dry rag. Repeat several times to get the desired effect. Keep your hand as steady as possible as you drag.

Note that if you are working with the full height of a wall from ceiling to base-board, you can use a very wide brush, such as a wallpaper brush or even the end of a wide broom.

5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 on the next area. Clean the dragging brush on a rag before dragging the next area.
6. If applying the dragging finish to woodwork or trim, apply a coat of varnish after the finish is dry.

4.



#4. STIPPLING

Stippling gives a delicate, subtle finish with a mottled effect. It is a wonderful way to add texture and dimension while still maintaining a very finished, polished appearance of the wall.

It should be noted that this technique can be quite tiring to complete as the brush has to be dabbed over the surface many times with even pressure. We recommend a specialty stippling brush to make the job go faster.

An alternative to a stippling brush is a large wallpaper pasting brush. This will create even more dimension because the coarseness of the bristles will be thicker than with a stippling brush.

THE STEPS:

1. Create a mixture of 1 part paint to 1 part wallpaper paste and mix thoroughly.
2. Brush on a thin and even coat of the mixture over an area of about 2 square feet.
3. Take your paint brush or stippling brush and dab over the surface with the tips of the bristles until the effect is even. Continue until there are no obvious seams between painted areas, and the effect looks soft and mottled.
4. Repeat these steps on the next area of the wall.

As an alternative, you can stipple with a brush loaded with a dark color that has been mixed with a glazing liquid.



Stupendous stippling provides a dramatic and tailored background. (Paint color is Opera House Red by [Behr](#); armoire is from Clements Antiques in Forney, TX.)

5.



#5. DRY BRUSHING

Dry brushing uses very little paint, as only the tips of the bristles are dipped in the paint, and as much paint as possible is removed.

The technique is similar to colorwashing but the paint does not cover as much surface and therefore creates a more textured effect.

It is perfect for a rustic setting such as an outdoor room or kitchen, but do keep in mind that this technique tends to emphasize imperfections in walls, so select your space accordingly.

THE STEPS:

1. Paint the wall in a base coat, bearing in mind that some of it will show through.
2. Dip the tip of a large household paintbrush into undiluted paint and scrape off as much as possible. Brush on to the wall in varying directions.
3. Continue working in the same way, adding more paint to the tips of your brush only when very little paint is released when you are brushing. Continue to brush, adding tiny bits of paint until you are pleased with the effect.



"A Dry Brushing Makeover Story"....before, without color....



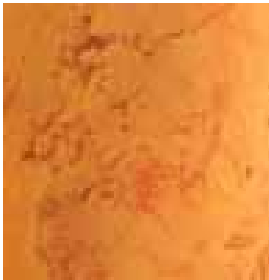
...and after! Dry brushing gives this casual office the texture of sunbaked adobe.

6.



#5. **FROTTAGE**

The name for the texturizing technique, frottage, stems from the French verb, *frotter* (meaning “to rub”). This is a very easy technique that anyone can do in a very short amount of time.



Frottage involves placing sheets of paper (such as brown kraft paper) onto a surface that has been painted with a glaze, and then removing the sheets to release subtle lines and creases.

Frottaged walls have a “soft suede” appearance that is very sophisticated. Alternatively, you can use large plastic bags (garbage bags are perfect) to create the lines and creases that are even more defined, a technique referred to as **bagging**.

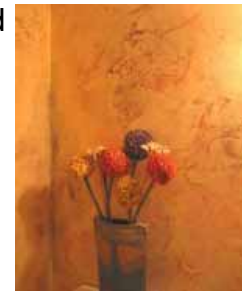
THE STEPS:

1. Paint the wall with two coats of the base color. Then let the wall dry for at least two hours.

2. Mix a color of latex paint (semigloss or satin) with water-based glazing liquid according to the directions on the latex product. The color should be about three shades darker than the base coat.

3. Working in sections that are slightly smaller than the paper or plastic you will use, apply the glaze to the edges of the section with a brush and then fill in the box you have made with a roller.

4. Immediately lay the kraft paper or plastic bag over the wet glaze and smooth it out with your hands. Remove the paper or plastic to reveal the design. Repeat these steps for subsequent sections of the wall. An optional coat of semigloss varnish on the complete wall will add depth.



Frottage and bagging results in fantastic textured effects. (Designs are by [Sandra Gustafson](#).)

AN INDEX OF OTHER PAINTING TECHNIQUES

- ➔ Ragging is similar to sponging, except the dabbing is done with rags torn into approximately 12-inch-square pieces
- ➔ Ragging Off and Sponging Off is the reverse of ragging and sponging, in that the rag or sponge is used to *remove* paint from the surface instead of adding paint to it.



The painted surface is very wet due to a glazing liquid that has been added. When you remove the glazed paint from the surface with a rag or sponge, the base color shows from underneath. It produces a more subtle effect than regular ragging or sponging.

- ➔ Flogging is created with a long-hair bristle brush, known as a flogger, which is similar to a dragging brush. After a color glaze is applied to the wall, the finish is produced by flogging, or striking, the surface with the sides of the bristles.
- ➔ Fresco is the ancient art of painting on wet plaster using pigments and water. The look is created by applying several colored glazes randomly over a wall surface and then blending them together with a soft brush.

After the glazes have dried, a whitewash (thin coat of diluted white paint) is brushed on top of the glazes, and then rubbed off with a rag to create a faded, time-worn look.

- ➔ Striping refers to any kind of finish that involves painting solid stripes of any size onto a surface. Stripes can be applied with paint brushes, solid sponges, window washing squeegees (our favorite for easy uniform tiny stripes). Masking off unpainted areas with paper or tape ensures that the stripe lines remain clean and even.
- ➔ Cissing is a technique that creates a chemical reaction between a glaze and a solvent, whereby the solvent eats holes in the glaze and makes a pattern to reveal the base coat underneath.

- ➔ Tartan is an effect similar to striping, but the finished product is a plaid design, rather than a striped design.
- ➔ Combing is an effect created by dragging a comb of any size or shape through a wet glaze. The teeth of the comb release the glaze in a specific pattern to reveal the base coat underneath.
- ➔ Tiling is any effect that simulates terra cotta, stone, or wooden tiles. Similarly, stone blocking is a finish that simulates a wall of stone blocks. A modified version produces faux bricks.
- ➔ Antiquing (also called distressing) is any technique intended to age a surface with multiple layers of chipped-away paint or symptoms of wear and tear from years and weather.
- ➔ Crackling is a technique that involves applying a crackle glaze to a painted surface to achieve lines and cracks that simulate aging. Crackle lines can also be painted freehand.
- ➔ Faux finishes are techniques that simulate looks such as marble, granite, tortoiseshell, malachite, agate, lapis lazuli, copper, wrought iron, pewter, steel, aged bronze, verdigris, plaster, patina, gilding, and leather. While these techniques are most often found on furniture or décor items, they can also be used on walls.
- ➔ Faux wood finishes are techniques that simulate woods such as mahogany, birdseye maple, oak, beech, pine, and burr walnut. Again, these are most prevalent on furniture items (for examples, see our previous [instructions for a faux wood built-in cabinet](#)), but can be used to create faux panels or used on trims or moldings.
- ➔ Stamping refers to a design that has been created by using foam, rubber, or hand-cut stamps to impress and replicate a repeated image.
- ➔ Stenciling refers to a design that has been painted using a **stencil**, which is a piece of plastic or other sturdy surface in which a design has been cut out. Paint is applied to the cutout areas and the design remains when the stencil is removed from the wall. **Overlays** are multiple stencils placed on top of one another to create new painted layers.



Sit 'n Summarize

Here's a quick look at the decorating styles and our suggestions for decorative paint finishes that will make the styles shine!

European Country - ragging, dragging, antiquing, stippling, colorwashing, stenciling, faux wood, stamping, verdigris

American Country - stenciling, colorwashing, sponging, ragging, faux woods, drybrushing

Casual Contemporary - colorwashing, faux granite or marble, sponging, ragging, frottage, tartan, stippling

Formal Contemporary - stenciling, ragging, combing, faux plaster, gilding, tiling, tartan

Rustic - colorwashing, antiquing, stamping, faux plaster, stenciling, verdigris, drybrushing

Traditional - colorwashing, ragging, antiquing, flogging, stucco, crackling, stamping, combing, cissing, faux woods

Casual Romantic - colorwashing, ragging, sponging, dragging, fresco, antiquing, crackling, stenciling, drybrushing

Traditional Romantic - ragging, frottage, antiquing, crackling, patina, cissing, gilding, stenciling

Spiritual - colorwashing, stenciling, dragging, fresco

Eclectic - *all of the above!!!*

9.7 The Mystique of Murals

Perhaps no paint finish can capture our imaginations like murals can. The french word **trompe l'oeil** (pronounced "tromp loi") literally means "trick of the eye" and refers to the art of creating murals that make you do a double-take.

Murals needn't be life-like, however. Murals can be bold, abstract, whimsical, and downright funny. Why don't you take a stroll through our "gallery of possibilities":



A trompe l'oeil mural creates a pastoral atmosphere in a hallway. (Design is by [Sandra Gustafson](#).)



A trompe l'oeil mural surrounds a spiritual dining room, calling upon Asian influence.

AYID...Enlivening the Box



A sporty mural...



A swirling mural...



A skyscape mural....



A psychedelic mural!!!



Marney's Memo

When you consider adding a mural to an area in your home, there are several things that you should consider before you begin.

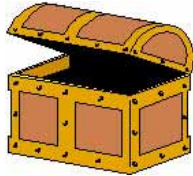
First, make sure that the mural fits in with the theme and color scheme of your home. For example, a trompe l'oeil mural of a southwestern desert would not be the best choice for a room decorated in Traditional Romantic style....nor would its rustic color scheme coordinate well with a Formal Contemporary color scheme of magenta, mauve, and black. This is an exaggerated example, but I'm sure you see my point. Just make sure that your mural will fit in with the "whole" of the atmosphere you are planning.

Second, keep in mind the vantage point from which the mural will be seen. This will be helpful in determining its placement. For example, if you would like to create a design of swirls in a family room and make it a focal point in the room, it may be most effective to place it on the wall that you see directly when you walk in the room, rather than on the wall next to the doorway. However, the latter may be more effective, if you'd like the mural to serve as a spontaneous hidden surprise.

Finally, consider the size of the area you will be painting. I have to confess, I once made a big boo-boo and painted an abstract cubist mural (right) on the full length of a wall in a very small bathroom, only to find that the disproportion of scale (a larger-than-life design in such a small space) was rather overwhelming.



It didn't work, and I knew it. But what can I say...that's why I love paint, it's so easy to correct! (And the bathroom is now a tame yellow wrapped in a garland of hand painted daisies.) So, with my mistake in mind, take scale into consideration as you plan a mural project. Large-scale designs will work best on large walls in large rooms. Likewise, smaller designs are more effective in small rooms to ensure that they will be noticed and not, literally, "lost in space"!



Ancient Wisdom

The art of creating murals dates all the way back to 3800 BCE, and continued through African civilizations, ancient Egypt, and classical Greek civilization. The Rococo style, which originated in France in the 18th century, took murals to the next level. It showed that murals could create illusions and special effects and thus set the stage for *trompe l'oeil*, which involves painting a flat surface to resemble a realistic, three-dimensional scene.

9.8 You're on a "Roller": The Nuts and Bolts of Painting

If you've visited your paint, hardware, or home improvement store, you've probably already realized that there are some extra steps in between choosing a paint color and getting the paint on the wall.

You may be asking questions like, What kind of finish do I select? How much paint do I buy? Do I need a primer? What kinds of brushes do I need?

Well, look no further, your answers are right here!

To frame this discussion, first we'll introduce the five steps involved in painting a wall. We call them the "Five P's", and they serve as the nuts and bolts of the process. To get you from clueless to colorful, we will walk you through each one!



1. Prepare
2. Prime
3. Primary base coat
4. Painted finish
5. Protective top coat



Coffee Break

So you're ready to paint your walls. Great!!

But before we move ahead with our recommendations for the first "P" - Prepare, take a moment and examine these questions, making note of your answers in your journal.

By making a note of the situations that apply to the walls you intend to paint, you'll be able to go right to the information in the following pages that pertains to your situation.



Are the walls currently painted?

If so, is there dirt and dust on the wall?

Is there grease on the wall?

Is the existing paint peeling?

Does the wall have cracks and holes in it?

Does the existing paint job have a glossy finish?



Are the walls currently covered in wallpaper?

Does the wallpaper have bubbles or loose seams?

Do you hear crinkling sounds when you run your hand over the wall's surface?

Do you know if the wallpaper is strippable, peelable, or neither? (If not, don't worry...we'll tell you how you can find out in the following pages!)

With your answers in mind, read through the following pages. You should keep your journal handy so you can write notes about products you may need to purchase or steps you will need to take to prepare your walls properly.

9.9 The First “P” of Painting: Preparing Your Surface

Preparing your walls basically consists of two parts: cleaning the wall and making any necessary repairs.

Cleaning the wall is essential because paint will not bond to dirt, grease, dust, or to a shiny surface. Additionally, there may be existing glossy paint or wallpaper that needs to be dealt with.

Repairs are done mainly for aesthetic purposes, to ensure that the wall appears flawless before you begin your paint job. This can take a little time, but it is worth it in order to achieve a fully professional result.

If you are creating a highly textural finish, such as dry brushing, it is less important to complete every single repair exhaustively, because this technique hides imperfections very effectively.

Cleaning Dust and Dirt: To clean walls of dust and loose dirt, you can vacuum the wall gently with a vacuum cleaner or use a soft cloth or brush.

Cleaning Grease: If the walls are greasy, wipe them down with a damp cloth and a mild cleaning agent. Our favorite recipe for such a cleaning agent is to mix a bit of ammonia with dishwashing detergent and then add about two tablespoons to a quart of warm water. Be sure to go over the walls again with another clean cloth, this time using only plain water.

Do not wash raw wood or unpainted plaster. Continue reading for instructions for preparing these surfaces.

Repairing Peeling Paint: Using a scraper, scrape off any portions of paint that are peeling, loose or that have bubbles. When scraping an area, stop where the old paint is holding up well.

Then, you will need to add a thin coat of spackling compound to the spots that you have scraped away. This will eliminate the ridges between a scraped surface and the old paint that remains. When the spackling compound dries, sand the area using medium sand paper, and then give the area a brushing with fine grit paper to finish it off.

Repairing Cracks and Holes: Brush away loose paint and debris from holes and cracks with a dry rag. Wet the rag slightly and moisten the edges around the hole or crack, and then fill with spackling compound using a spackle blade to smooth it out.

You may need to apply more than one coat, once the spackling compound dries. When the final coat is dry, sand it with a piece of fine sandpaper.

Preparing a Glossy Surface: Oil-based paint (also called oil-based enamel, or alkyd paint) surfaces are very non-porous and it is difficult to adhere paint, or even primer, to them. One option is to use a sanding block (a piece of sandpaper wrapped around or glued on a block of wood) and work in a circular motion along the wall, trim, and woodwork. After you have sanded, wipe down the walls with a damp cloth and allow them to dry thoroughly.

Another alternative is to wash the surface with the same [recipe for cleaning grease](#) walls that we recommended on the previous page. Then use a primer specifically formulated for glossy surfaces. We recommend [Bulls Eye 1-2-3](#) by Zinsser. *(Keep on reading for more information about primers!)*

Preparing to Paint Over Wallpaper: You can paint over wallpaper as long as the wallpaper is not peeling and the seams are adhered well. There must not be any wrinkles, creases, or tears in the wallpaper before you paint. You also cannot paint over latex, embossed, or textured wallpaper.

You will also need to apply several coats of paint to create a thick enough finish to completely cover the paper.

The number of coats you need to apply will depend upon the shade of your paint. If you are painting over wallpaper, you will likely need to apply 2-4 coats.



On ANY surface, darker colors, like the rich navy in this hallway, will always need more coats of paint in order to provide full coverage. (Soft sculpture, "Couple on Bench" is by Darryl Norem.)

Before painting a whole wall, be sure to test an area with several coats of paint to make sure that the weight of the paint won't cause the wallpaper to peel.

Even after applying several coats of paint, it's likely that you will still see a seam underneath the paint. With decorative painting techniques such as ragging, colorwashing, dry brushing, and sponging, this is not of high importance, unless small imperfections will bother you.

On the other hand, even the most subtle seams could potentially detract from a wall painted in a solid color, as well as one with a more polished finish such as dragging, fresco, stamping, or stenciling. In these cases, it is highly recommended that you remove the wallpaper before painting, using one of the methods described below.

Keep in mind that paint will seal the surface and make the wallpaper almost impossible to remove in the future. If you are painting a wall that you may consider wallpapering at some point in the future, we recommend that you remove the wallpaper prior to painting.

Removing Strippable Wallpaper: There are several methods to remove wallpaper from your walls. Remember that it usually takes a full day to strip wallpaper from an average-size room.

Many new wallpapers are strippable, which means they can be removed without chemicals or water. To check if your wallpaper is strippable, use a putty knife (or a dull kitchen knife) to pull up at the corner of a seam near the bottom of the wall.

Does the paper pull away easily as you gently pull it with the knife? If so, you have strippable wallpaper and should say a quick prayer of thanks to the wallpaper goddesses, because your job will be easy!

To remove the paper, grab the lower corner of a strip and pull it away until both corners of the strip are free. Hold the bottom edge with both hands and pull until the whole strip is off the wall. Repeat until you have removed all strips. If the paper is not coming off easily in some places, use a razor knife to make a series of horizontal strips in the wallpaper, about 10 inches apart from one another. Then you can loosen the smaller section of paper and pull it off.

The walls in most homes that are less than 50 years old use **drywall**, also called **plasterboard**, which are sheets of chalk-like substance covered with thin cardboard.

When you remove strippable wallpaper, the paper surface of the drywall may come up. If this happens you should stop immediately because it means that the drywall was not properly sealed. If you find yourself in this situation, glue down any loose pieces with regular white glue.

Then, fill in the uneven areas with spackling compound and sand the finish to make it smooth.

Note that there is a difference between peelable wallpaper and strippable wallpaper. While strippable wallpaper can be stripped completely in pieces, peelable wallpaper has a vinyl top coat that can be peeled off, while the backing remains on the wall.

This backing must be removed with the technique for removing washable wallpaper, which is described below. Even if the backing is in good condition, do not leave it on the wall. Neither wallpaper glue nor paint will adhere to it.

Removing Washable Wallpaper: This job is messy but with older wallpapers, it is the only way to get the job done, except to rent a steamer to steam-strip.

(If you are interested in steam-stripping, you can rent a steamer at major home improvement stores, or look up “Wallpaper Removal” in your phone directory to find local companies that either rent steamers or will come and do the job for you.)

In order for water to penetrate the paper when you remove it, you have to break through the plastic film that covers the wallpaper by using a scoring tool to make small holes in the wallpaper. After making these holes in the paper, spray the paper liberally with a spray bottle until the paper is soaked.

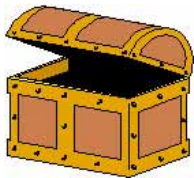
Spray water directly into the slits so that the water can saturate behind the plastic film. After soaking for about 10 minutes, you should be able to scrape off the paper with a putty knife. Finally, be sure to wash down the walls to remove any residue from the glue before you paint.

Removing Wallpaper with a Stripping Solvent: You can buy wallpaper removal solutions from a home improvement store such as [Home Depot](#) or [Lowe's](#). These solutions will save you time if you are facing a large room, or if you are dealing with multiple layers of wallpaper to strip.

There are many different kinds of removal solutions, but the majority of them are mixed with hot water and then applied to the wallpaper with a broad brush or sprayer. You should plan to wear gloves and goggles when working with these chemicals.

You usually have to wait about half an hour for a solvent-based stripping solution to become fully absorbed through holes you've made in the wallpaper. When pieces of the wallpaper can be scraped off with your fingernail, you will know that it is ready. At that point, use a spackling knife to scrape off the paper until you have a smooth surface.

When the wallpaper is removed, sand the surface with medium grit sandpaper before applying your first coat of primer. For an even finish, create a sand block by gluing a piece of sandpaper to a block of wood, and sand in a circular motion.



Ancient Wisdom

In 1801, Parisian architects Charles Percier and Pierre-Francois Leonard Fontaine wrote in their book *Chateau de Malmaison*:

“The structure and decoration must be closely connected --
if they cease to appear to be so there is a defect in the whole.”

It's really true - preparing your walls properly ensures that your paint job will heighten the advantageous elements of the wall, and detract from the aspects of the wall that you don't like.

Preparing for Safety: 

One more thing to mention before we move on to priming, and that is the importance of creating a safe work space. **Here is a checklist to use any time you are beginning a painting project:**

- Is your furniture moved out of the way? This will allow you to have room to navigate and not have to keep stopping your work to move furniture.
- If you are using a ladder, is it safe and sturdy?
- Have you covered your floors? We recommend investing in painter's drop cloths. You can use plastic sheets or plastic bags, but keep in mind that they are slippery and you must use extra caution when walking. If you lay down newspaper, be sure to put down at least 4 layers, as paint will seep through.
- Is your furniture covered? Use plastic covers or old sheets to cover any furniture that you have left in the room.
- Is your area well-ventilated? Open windows and bring in fans to aid ventilation.
- Do you have gloves to wear? We recommend medical latex gloves, which can be bought in bulk. For regular paint, this is not a necessity, but it will save your hands from mess and possible minor irritation.
- Have you reviewed the instructions on all products such as tools, paints, and glazes? This will ensure that you are taking the necessary precautions.
- If you are sanding, working with spray paint, or working with a wallpaper stripping solvent, be sure to wear a dust mask and goggles to protect your eyes and lungs. You can find these at most drug or hardware stores.



Marney's Memo

If you prepare your surface well, the rest of the job will be much easier and the final result will be of top quality. It's tempting to skip the first two steps of preparation and priming, but they are essential for a professional result.

If your surface has a base coat of paint that is not peeling, cracking, or bubbling, and if there are absolutely no holes or cracks to repair, you can skip the priming step, but you still should prepare the wall by washing it, according to our suggestions on the previous pages.

There are very few situations that call exception to my emphatic "you must always prepare and prime" plea! Here's one: If you have just moved into a brand-new house, there is most likely no preparing that you need to do, provided that there is a base coat on the walls and no repairs for holes or cracks need to be made. You probably don't even need to wash the walls in this case, provided the builder has left the home in good condition.

The other exception is if you are interested in a "quick fix" only, which should not be mistaken for a high-quality, polished result. Here's an example: if you have lofty plans for a room's new décor, but aren't able to carry it out to completion right away, you may want to paint your walls for a dramatic "quick fix".

Another example: you want to try out a new color in the room and want to paint a full wall (or even two) so you can sit with it for a few days and see how it looks in different lighting and times of day.

Painting can go very quickly and it's clearly the easiest way to change a room's look in a weekend. But only skip the preparation steps if you intend to change the wall decor before long.

If you plan to keep a painted surface for any substantial amount of time, we can't say it enough -- it's definitely worth your while to take the time to prepare and prime before you paint!

9.10 The Second “P”: Applying Primer

As we’ve said, applying primer is very important because it creates a bond between the paint and the surface you are painting.

If you are painting on a raw surface, one that you have repaired, or one that has a glossy finish, your paint job will be uneven and coverage will be spotty if you don’t prime your surface. Priming ensures that the paint will be absorbed evenly.



Coffee Break

It’s time to check, again, this time to determine your priming considerations. There are many different primer products and these questions will help you select which one is right for you, as you read the following pages.

- Are you painting over a new or raw surface?
 - If so, is it new drywall?
 - Is it concrete?
 - Is it new plaster?
 - Is it raw wood?
 - Is it new wood?

 - Are you painting over existing paint? If so, do you know if the existing paint is water-based or oil-based?

 - Are you priming over a surface to which you’ve made repairs or from which you have removed wallpaper?

 - Are you painting on a non-porous surface, such as metal, shiny existing paint, laminate, glass, formica, vinyl wallpaper, or a varnished surface?

 - Are you painting over a wall that is badly stained?
-

Primer is available in different varieties and each one has a specific purpose. We've given you some of our recommendations, but keep in mind that there are many different brands available for each type of primer. You can ask for recommended brands at your home improvement store.

Priming new drywall or concrete: If you are painting over new drywall or concrete, you must use a latex primer, which is water-based. If you use an oil-based primer (also called an alkyd primer), the surface of the drywall will be too bumpy to create a smooth paint finish.

Priming raw wood: If you are painting over raw wood (wood that has not been "cured" or dried out), use shellac as a primer. Shellac is a heavy-duty, alcohol-based sealer that will seal the resins in the wood. If they are not sealed, the resins will bleed through the paint finish. We recommend [B-I-N](#) by Zinsser, which is a stain-blocking shellac.

While other primers are applied in the same way as regular paint, you should apply shellac using a foam brush. Be sure to get plenty of shellac on the brush and apply good coverage over knots in wood. Also, remember that shellac is toxic, so be sure to work in a well-ventilated area.

Priming new wood or plaster: Use oil-based primer, also called alkyd primer, on new wood (wood that has been "cured" but not stained or painted), as well as on plaster. Do not use latex primer, as it is water-based and will soak into the wood and raise the grain, making an uneven surface.



Priming is your best insurance that your finished walls will be evenly covered, smooth, clean, and of the professional quality such as shown in this breakfast nook.

Priming surfaces with existing paint: There are two reasons to prime a surface that has existing paint. If you have made any repairs to peeling paint, holes, or cracks, you will need to apply latex primer before applying your base coat. (Refer to the previous section on [repairing peeling paint](#), as well as the subsequent sections that follow.)

Most walls with old paint need some kind of repair in the preparation stage, and therefore fit in this category.

The second reason to prime over existing paint is if the existing paint is alkyd (oil-based) and you will be working with latex (water-based) paint.

Don't know if the existing paint is oil- or water-based? Try this:

1. Apply a small patch of latex paint to the wall in question.
2. Let it dry overnight.
3. The next day, try to scratch the paint off with your fingernail. If it comes off easily, it is oil-based, and you will need to apply primer before painting.

As we mentioned previously, to apply primer on oil-based paint, you have two options. You can either sand the surface before applying a latex primer, or you can clean the surface thoroughly and then apply a special primer intended for glossy surfaces, such as [Bulls Eye 1-2-3](#), a water-based primer by Zinsser. This product also works well for priming glass, tile, and formica.

Priming surfaces to which you have made repairs: Refer to the previous section on [repairing cracks and holes](#), sand your surface, then apply latex (water-based) or alkyd (oil-based) primer. Matching latex primer to latex paint, and oil primer to oil paint makes for easier cleanup, but it is not essential.

Taking the time to prime with a flat alkyd primer before applying latex paint provides a better seal for the paint. Painting professionals swear by oil primer if they use latex paint, but in our opinion, the combo of latex primer and paint is the most viable, easy option for the do-it-yourself painter.

Priming surfaces from which you have stripped wallpaper: Follow the previous [tips for removing wallpaper](#) and then apply latex (water-based) or alkyd (oil-based) primer, as explained above.

Priming non-porous surfaces: Priming surfaces to which glossy latex paint, vinyl wallpaper, or varnish have been applied requires a high-adhesion acrylic primer, such as [DTM Bonding Primer](#) by Sherwin-Williams. It's manufactured to be a metal primer, but it can be used to prime any non-porous surface.

High-adhesion primers are relatively new on the market and are excellent time savers because they save you from stripping these paints, wallpapers, or varnishes from the surface.

Priming metal: [Vinyl Etch Primer](#) by Resene is another great metal primer. You must remove all rust from metal prior to priming it.

Priming laminate: If you want to paint over laminate, the best option is to use a metal-adhering primer such as [Vinyl Etch Primer](#) by Resene. Note that it is not practical to paint over laminate countertops because the wear and tear they receive will not hold up to any primer on the market. You can, however, paint laminate cabinets.

Priming a Stained Surface: Water, smoke, crayons, and grease can leave bad stains that need to be handled with a specialized primer. Use a stain-killing primer for these surfaces. We recommend [Cover Stain](#) by Zinsser. It comes in a can, as well as in an aerosol spray, which is great for "spot priming" bad stains.



Marney's Memo

I love to use a deep and dark color on a wall. However, it can try my patience, since it usually takes many coats of paint to get the coverage even and balanced, and the color deep enough to make me go "ahhhh".

A trick is to tint the primer to half of the formula of the paint color to reduce the number of coats that you'll need to apply to get a deep and saturated coverage. Your salesperson at paint or home improvement stores will do this at no extra charge!



Tinting your primer saves time when painting with dark colors.



Sit 'n Summarize

Here's "cheat sheet" to help you select your primer:

concrete:	latex (water-based) primer
formica:	bonding acrylic primer, i.e., DTM Bonding Primer
glass:	bonding acrylic primer, i.e., DTM Bonding Primer
glossy painted surface	bonding acrylic primer, i.e., DTM Bonding Primer
laminate:	etch primer, i.e., Vinyl Etch Primer by Resene
metal:	etch primer, i.e., Vinyl Etch Primer by Resene
new drywall:	latex (water-based) primer
new plaster:	oil-based (alkyd) primer
new wood:	oil-based (alkyd) primer
oil-based painted surface:	primer for glossy surfaces, i.e., Bulls Eye 1-2-3
raw wood:	shellac, i.e., B-I-N by Zinsser
repaired painted surface:	latex or alkyd primer
stained surface:	stain-killing primer, i.e., Cover Stain by Zinsser
tile:	bonding acrylic primer, i.e., DTM Bonding Primer
vinyl wallpaper:	bonding acrylic primer, i.e., DTM Bonding Primer

and remember....

latex = water-based
(think of lake = water)

alkyd = oil-based
(think of alkyd = "ahl", which is, of course,
the Southern U.S. pronunciation of "oil"!!!!)

9.11 Choosing and Purchasing Paints and Supplies

While there are really only two kinds of paint - **latex** (water-based) and **alkyd** (oil-based), there are endless varieties when you start accounting for the different finishes and specialty versions of each type of paint. If you've visited a home improvement store lately, you know what we mean!

Which to choose? We're simplifying the puzzle for you by giving you the pros and cons of latex and alkyd paints.



PROS:

Latex paint:

- +dilutes with water
- +relatively odorless
- +very easy cleanup; brushes and tools can be washed in soap and water
- +large variety of colors from which to choose
- +dries quickly
- +inexpensive
- +better for the environment than alkyd paint



CONS:

- dries too fast for some decorative finishes
- doesn't bond to a shiny or oil-based surface
- does not have the depth or durability of alkyd paint

Alkyd paint:

- +very smooth and easy to apply
 - +provides excellent coverage that is deeper and smoother than latex
 - +is more durable; "purists" insist on it for trim and moldings
 - +can be applied over oil- or water-based paint
 - +drying time is longer, which aids some decorative finish projects
- has a very strong odor
 - does not dilute with water
 - time-consuming cleanup; can only be cleaned with paint thinner or turpentine
 - is slow-drying; each coat takes 2-4 hours to dry
 - is more expensive than latex paint

Paint Finishes: Both latex and alkyd paint are available in different **finishes**. Each finish refers to the amount of sheen, or gloss, that will show on your surface.

Most manufacturers provide four finishes. Although each manufacturer may name its finishes differently, the range of finishes generally includes the following:

A **matte** finish (sometimes called a **flat** finish) is a totally flat finish that is used mainly on ceilings. It absorbs light and therefore is good for hiding imperfections. However, it is not very durable and scuffs very easily.



An **eggshell** finish (sometimes called a **satín**, **pearl**, or **velvet** finish) provides a subtle sheen and is very popular for walls because it is the “happy medium” between matte and gloss. It is the best choice if you are planning to mix paint with a glazing liquid.

A **semigloss** finish (also referred to as a **semigloss enamel**) is most commonly used for furniture, trim, and woodwork. It is durable and reflects light, which makes trim and woodwork in this finish appear crisp and clean. Marks and cracks on the surface, however, are very visible.

If you are going to apply a decorative finish using a glaze, semigloss is the best choice for a base coat, as it is easier to control glaze on top of a shiny surface.

A **high-gloss finish** is the most durable of the finishes, and for this reason it often is used for exteriors and doors. It is also used on interior doors, baseboards, and trim to add depth and shine.



The semigloss closet doors in this home office reflect the light that pours in from a skylight. (Wall color: Peaceful Green by [Sherwin-Williams](#).)

Other Paint Products: If your project is a decorative finish, you may be using other paint products besides latex and alkyd paints, so here's a list for your referral:



Artist's acrylic paint is sold by the tube and has the consistency of toothpaste. It is expensive and is not economically practical for covering large surfaces.

If you are tinting a glazing liquid, artist's acrylics allow you greater freedom than using latex paint, since you can mix colors to arrive at the perfect shade.

Artist's oil paint comes in tubes of creamy, concentrated color and is most often used by professional painters to custom-mix colors. It can only be mixed with oil-based paint and oil-based glazing liquid. Some colors are extremely toxic.

Spray paint allows you to create a smooth finish without brush strokes. Acrylic and alkyd paints are available in spray varieties, as are faux stone finishes, metallic finishes, and lacquers.

Stencil paints are specialty paints used when working with stencils. They are extremely quick-drying which prevents paint from seeping below the stencil. In addition, they allow you to move a stencil without smearing your work, and add shading and layered colors immediately.

While you can use any paint for stenciling, one of the specialty stencil paints or a quick-drying paint will ensure a more professional result.

Other products used for stenciling and stamping include ceramic paint, fabric paint, oil-based creams and crayons, and rubber-stamping dyes and inks.



Glazes are liquids that, when mixed with paint, turn the paint color from opaque to translucent. When you apply a tinted or colored glaze, the base color will show through the layer of glaze.

Another purpose of a glazing liquid is to slow down the drying time so that you can blend colored glazes to achieve decorative finishes.

All glazes used to be oil-based, but water-based glazes are now readily available. They are better for the environment, provide easier cleanup, and can be mixed with water instead of being mixed with paint thinner or turpentine.



Water-based glaze

Mix 1 part water-based glazing liquid to 1 part latex or acrylic paint, and then add enough water until you reach the consistency of syrup.

Oil-based glaze

Mix 1 part oil-based glazing liquid to 1 part alkyd paint, and then add enough paint thinner or turpentine until you reach the consistency of syrup.

The more glazing liquid you add, the more translucent the mixture will be; the more paint you add, the more opaque it will be.

Purchasing paint: By this point, you should have an idea of whether you are interested in latex or alkyd paint. But don't be afraid to ask your salesperson at the paint, hardware, or home improvement store for advice or help.

You can explain your specific needs, ask questions, and hey - you'll actually KNOW what they are talking about, since you are reading this book!

If you can, select the best paint that your budget allows. Cheap paint is thin and runny and you'll have to apply many more coats than with a high-quality brand paint.

Generally speaking, one gallon of paint will cover a 350-400 square foot room, but double-check the coverage on the paint can. Of course, if you are doing a decorative finish, you usually will need less paint.

Purchasing Painting Tools: It's important to purchase the best quality brushes that your budget will allow. Refer to this list for guidance:

Synthetic-bristle paintbrushes are best for latex and acrylic paints.

Natural-bristle paintbrushes are best for alkyd paints. Do not use natural-bristle paintbrushes with latex paints or the bristles will soak up the paint and bunch together.

Paint rollers are used to paint an area quickly with an even coat of paint. Non-spattering paint rollers are available that will cut down on spills (which cuts down on stress and cleanup)!

Paint rollers come in short-, medium-, and long-nap roller pads.

Short-nap roller pads are used to apply glossy paints to smooth surfaces.

Medium-nap roller pads are used for all surfaces, and give flat surfaces a slight texture. For most walls, medium-nap roller pads are recommended, unless you are aiming for a very smooth finish, in which case you should use a short-nap roller pad.

Long-nap roller pads are used to cover surfaces that are already textured. These areas would normally take longer to cover, but a long-nap roller pad makes the job go much more quickly.

The paint roller is attached to a **roller frame**, which is the metal arm and handle that holds the roller pad in place. An **extension pole** allows you to reach high portions of the wall, as well as ceilings and floors, easily.

Avoid paint rollers with cardboard cores, as they absorb moisture and crumble when they are washed.

Purchasing Specialty Applicators: For any painting project, we highly recommend investing in an **angled brush**. It's a *must* for a professional finish to corners and trim.

If you are planning a decorative finish on your wall, such as the one on the wall pictured here (right), you will need to purchase other applicators.

Speciality paint applicators can be expensive, but there are viable alternatives to the "professional" options, as we have listed below:



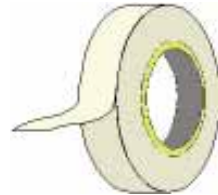
If you are planning a decorative finish, such as the sponged finish shown in this dining nook, make sure you use the appropriate paint applicators for the job.

<u>Professional</u>	<u>Alternative</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
artist's brush	narrow paintbrush	used for small, detailed work
badger-hair brush	soft bristle brush	softening and clouding paint in faux marble and other finishes
dragging brush	long-hair bristle brush	long brush with thick bristles that leave drag marks in the paint
fitch	standard 1" paintbrush	natural bristle brush with angled corners, used for corners
rubber comb	comb you make from foamcore	tool with teeth of different widths, used for wood graining and combing
sea sponge	kitchen sponge that has been torn	a natural sponge with irregular pores
stencil brush	kitchen sponge	flat-ended brush used for stippling and swirling paint onto a stencil
varnishing brush	foam sponge brush	natural brush designed so as to not leave brush marks in the varnish

Purchasing Miscellaneous Paint Supplies: Aside from your paint, brushes, and applicators, there are a few more things you need. Here's a list:

1. **A paint can opener** - Used to open the paint. You can pick up a paint can opener at the store where you purchase your paint, or wedge a flathead screwdriver to open the can.
2. **A paint stir-stick** - Again, you can pick this up at the paint store, usually at no charge. Otherwise you can use a large plastic utensil or the end of a paintbrush. When you open a can of paint, you'll need to stir it well, as colors settle and oils separate.
3. **A paint tray** - There are many different sizes of paint trays...everything from those designed to be used with rollers, to small ones with handles that are easy to carry when painting trim. Avoid the cheap plastic roller trays because they break extremely easily. It's better to invest in an aluminum tray.

4. **Tape** - This is used to mask off edges to keep paint splatters from getting on trim, appliances, floors, and ceilings. Low-tack painter's tape will not peel off fresh paint when you remove it, as regular masking tape will.



Regular masking tape is good for baseboards and shiny woodwork, which are places low-tack painter's tape will not adhere.









5. **A hammer and nails** - When you first open your paint can, it's a great idea to make nail holes in the edges of the rim, so that the paint that drips into the rim automatically is returned to the can for reuse. (Dutch Boy offers [Twist & Pour paint](#), which we think is the future wave of paint cans! These nifty cans have an easy side handle for carrying, a pour spout, and a twist-off lid.)
6. **A bucket** - If you are mixing colors together, you should mix it all at once in a large bucket. Even if you use the same recipe when mixing a second time, there may be slight variations in the color the second time around.

7. **A pencil, yardstick, and level** - Good tools to have on hand for measuring and marking places to begin and end paint strokes.
8. **Dropcloths, rags, and paper towels** to reduce accidents and ease cleanup.



Sit 'n Summarize

THE BIG DON'Ts when purchasing paint and painting tools:

-  **DON'T** buy a natural-bristle brush to use with latex paint.
 -  **DON'T** buy the cheapest latex paint you can find - it's not worth it.
 -  **DON'T** buy paint rollers with cardboard cores.
 -  **DON'T** plan to use regular masking tape to tape on areas with fresh paint.
 -  **DON'T** rely on one size brush for all paint jobs. Most stores sell a package of 3-5 brushes of different sizes for an economical price.
 -  **DON'T** spend more than you can afford on brushes...if the professional quality brushes don't fit in your budget, select alternatives, such as those we mentioned in the [previous paint applicator chart](#).
 -  **DON'T** skimp on paint - you'll need to have enough to finish the job, including future touch-ups.
 -  **DON'T** forget to buy a dropcloth. They are superior to using newspapers, plastic bags, or corrugated cardboard, and will make accidents less likely.
-

9.12 “P’s” Three, Four, and Five: Applying the Primary Base Coat, Paint Finish, and Protective Top Coat

Painting: The Procedure: Believe it or not, this is the easy part! The hardest part is choosing your products and choosing them well. The rest is a piece of cake! Just follow these steps. If you are applying a primer, follow these steps first with the primer, and then with the paint:

1. If you are not wearing gloves, you can rub your hands with baby oil to help remove the paint from your hands afterwards.
2. You will paint the ceiling first. This is so you can apply the paint with a roller without worrying about spattering completed walls. If the ceiling is going to be a different color than the walls, use either a 2”-3” brush or an **angled brush** (which has angled bristles) to apply paint around the edges where the wall and ceiling meet.
3. An extension roller makes painting the ceiling very easy. Begin by painting a large letter “M” with the roller.
4. Fill in the “M” with parallel horizontal strokes. For best results, make your strokes as long and continuous as possible, and continually roll into the wet surface to eliminate roller marks.
5. Finish the area with light vertical roller strokes.
6. After painting the ceiling, you will paint the walls, so that the paint can be applied using a roller without having to worry about spattering completed trim. Use painter’s tape on places where the wall meets trim, windows, and doors. Press down firmly on the tape so that paint does not seep underneath it.
7. Use an angled brush to apply the wall color around any windows or doors.



If you are using several brushes, it's a good idea to organize them in a large cup or coffee tin, so they are accessible when you need them.

8. Paint the corners (which is called “cutting in”) before painting the largest part of the wall. To cut in, create a 3” border from each edge toward the center of the wall. This becomes a frame, which you will fill in with the roller. (*Note: Cut in as you progress around the room, not all at one time before painting the room.*)

9. Just as you did with the ceiling, use the roller to create a large “M” and then fill in, according to steps 3-5 on the preceding page.

*(Note: If you are **not** using a roller, simply apply the first paint strokes in a sweeping arc pattern and then fill in with finishing strokes. Either apply all the finishing strokes horizontally in the same direction, or all vertically in the same direction.)*

10. Allow your base coat to dry for 2-4 hours. What you will do at this point depends on your project. If you are creating a decorative finish, you may begin immediately, or your instructions might lead you to paint a second coat of the base coat.

For a solid finish, you most likely will need to apply at least one more coat of the same color. (However, if your color has provided good coverage, or you are using a single-coat paint, such as [BEHR 1-Coat](#), subsequent coats may not be necessary.)

11. When the walls are complete, paint the trim next. Professional painters paint the window trim first, followed by the doors and door trim. To reduce the potential for mistakes, apply painters tape to the the dry walls, window panes, and around the trim, and use an angled brush for precise coverage.
12. After completing the trim, you will paint any moldings, from the top down. This prevents the potential for kicking into or dripping onto finished trim while you are up on the ladder. So, paint cornice moldings first, then plate rail moldings, then chair moldings, and then baseboard moldings.
13. If you are painting the floor, it is the last part of the room to be painted. Be prepared to touch up baseboards after completing the floor.

14. When all coats of your paint finish are completely dry, you can apply a protective top coat if you like. Types of protective top coats include varnishes, shellac, and lacquer.

A top coat is recommended in high-traffic areas such as hallways, or in rooms with a lot of moisture like bathrooms and kitchens.

A protective top coat is also recommended if you have used a diluted water-based paint as your finish (as with colorwashing or fresco techniques), or if you have stenciled, stamped, or hand painted a design with acrylic paints.



To preserve a hand painted design, apply a protective top coat when the paint is dry.



The saturated redwood effect on this chest was achieved by applying a stain lacquer to unfinished pine.

If you are covering a design with varnish, you should use a matte varnish, which dries invisible, unless you want a glossy finish.

You also may want to coat natural or painted wood with a shellac or lacquer. Lacquers and shellacs are spirit- or alcohol-based varnishes used to seal wood or create a slick final finish on surfaces such as trim and furniture.

Lacquer can be clear, or some products, such as [Minwax Polyshades](#), contain both a colored stain and a lacquer top coat.

These all-in-one products can be used to deepen the color of natural wood, create a simulated wood grain, or add color to a piece of unfinished wood.

To apply a lacquer containing stain, be sure to use long, steady strokes to simulate the look of grain. You will need to apply multiple coats of lacquer to your surface.

Since it is a very thin varnish, sand the surface in between coats with extra-fine steel wool or 400 sandpaper.

Cleaning Up: **Synthetic brushes used with latex paint** can be cleaned with warm water and a mild soap. Follow these steps for quick and easy cleaning:

1. Remove excess paint from the brush, and then wet the brush well.
2. After wetting, swirl the brush against a bar of soap until the bristles are sudsy.
3. Rinse and flex the bristles under water until the water runs clear.
4. Squeeze the bristles with your hand to remove excess water.
5. Do NOT soak synthetic brushes; instead, hang them on nails or hooks, or place them face-up in a storage container to dry.

Natural brushes used with alkyd paint are cleaned with solvent, such as paint thinner or turpentine. (Turpentine is stronger and makes the cleaning go faster, but it is more expensive).

To clean your brushes, follow the instructions on the product. Make sure you clean with solvents in a ventilated area, as they are toxic. (*Our tip: Work the solvent through the bristles into the center of the brush. Make sure that the solvent gets down under the ferrule, which is the metal band at the end of the bristles.*)

Rollers should be scraped to remove as much paint as possible. Then, run under water (for latex) or cleaned with a solvent (for alkyd) until the paint is removed. Store washed rollers on their ends to avoid flattening the roller nap.

Remove dried splatters on areas such as floors, woodwork, and your shoes with a chemical cleaner, such as Valspar's [Goof Off](#). Even latex paint, when it is completely dry, must be cleaned up with a chemical cleaner. Test your chemical cleaner on an inconspicuous area first, to make sure the area is colorfast. Apply the cleaner to a paper towel or dry cloth and rub in small, quick strokes.

9.13 Ten Tips for Hiring Professional Painters

1. If possible, hire professionals who have been recommended to you personally. Ask around to find customers who were happy with their results AND happy with the overall work experience.
2. Organize a visual reference of what you like from magazines, brochures, or from this book. You don't go to a hairstylist without pictures of the hairstyle you want, do you? Be prepared so you can convey your vision.
3. Don't ask a professional painter to come to your house without expecting to pay a consultant's fee. Some painters perform this for free, but don't assume until you know for sure. Otherwise, you can visit them in their office or headquarters to discuss a potential arrangement.



4. Whether you are considering hiring an interior painter for standard paint jobs, or a decorative painter for elaborate finishes, be sure to see pictures of his or her previous work. Any professional painter should have a portfolio ready to show.
5. Be sure that you have discussed all of the following: what paint type will be used, what paint finish will be used in what areas, if trim and/or moldings are included in the job, and other details.

(Note: If you are hiring professional painters, we strongly recommend going with alkyd paint. While latex paint is an excellent choice for any do-it-yourself job, any good professional painter is comfortable with alkyd and he or she knows that the overall quality is superior. Get your money's worth and go for the best! Also request that caulking be applied as seams around the baseboard and trim - a true professional touch!)

6. Before any work begins, go over all costs and make sure there are no questions. Be sure you understand how any and all extra costs outside of your agreement would be determined.

7. Follow your gut instinct. If there is something about the painter(s) that doesn't feel "right", stop the deal before signing a contract. Don't tolerate someone who is late to appointments, discourteous or condescending. Also, don't commit to a painter who is out of your budget.
8. Have your agreed-upon fees be put in writing in a letter of agreement or a contract. The painter should draw up this letter or contract containing a thorough outline of the work to be done, the costs, the work schedule, and the payment schedule.
9. If the painters are bringing their own paints, nothing should be ordered until you approve it. Once materials are ordered, don't change your mind unless you are prepared to pay for it.

Most likely, you will save money by picking up your own paints at the paint or hardware store. Just make sure to find out how much paint they need you to have on hand.

10. Expect to make allowances for unforeseen problems, both regarding time and fees. It's impossible to know what may happen during the duration of a paint job. For this reason, it's important that you are working with someone who is trustworthy and who will not take advantage.



Marney's Memo

Want to know my three favorite tips for painting projects?

1. When you remove electrical outlets to paint a wall, write the paint color(s) you use on the inside of the outlet. You'll have a record of them right there in the room if you need it later for touch-ups, or to paint adjoining rooms and furniture.
 2. Keep all your painting supplies organized in a dollar store plastic caddy...it will save you a lot of time if you don't have to scramble to find the supplies you need!
 3. Play some great music while you're painting. This makes all the difference!
-

10.0 Beyond Paint: Other Ways to Cover Walls

10.1 Selecting Wallpaper for Your Decorating Style

As we said earlier, wallpaper is an excellent choice for covering your walls with a pattern that you love, and doing it very quickly! There are wallpaper patterns for just about every decorating style or mood you'd like to create. In fact, there are **so** many choices that the task of selecting wallpaper can be overwhelming.



Wonderful wallpaper...from whimsical...



...to classical!

The best way to start looking for wallpaper is to go to a home improvement or wallpaper store and quickly flip through wallcovering books. From a brief glance, you'll be able to tell which books you will want to study more carefully.

AYID...Beyond Paint!

The fact that you already have selected your color scheme makes your life much easier. Just as naming a decorating style or styles provides a grounding base for your future decorating decisions, knowing your color scheme focuses your eye as you look through wallcovering books.



Coffee Break

Before you go shopping for wallpaper, take a moment and return to your responses to the [Interior Interviews](#) at the beginning of this book.

What kinds of patterns stand out in your answers? Are there patterns you loved as a child? Are there patterns you loved in another home, or in a magazine or catalog?

If a particular pattern or type of pattern comes to mind as a powerful image, create a “mission statement” that combines the image of that pattern with your color scheme.

For example:

“I am looking for a large floral pattern in hunter green and dusty rose.”

“I am looking for some kind of vertical design to add height to the room, and I want it in yellow and white.”

You may get to the store (or to the Web site, if shopping on-line) and find that something completely different strikes your fancy. But having a vision in your head gives you somewhere to start, and readies your head and heart to find a wallpaper that you absolutely love!

Don't settle for just any wallpaper. You'll be living with this pattern for a while, so wait until just the “right” wallpaper makes itself known to you. You'll know it when you see it! Your walls are the biggest surface area in a room, so you want something that sets the tone for the room, perfectly. Then, you can create the rest of your room to complement it effectively.

AYID...Beyond Paint!

It is very important to judge samples of wallpaper in the room where they will be used. To do this, simply tape the wallpaper samples to the wall where it will be hung.

If you are also using paint in the room, tape paint chips next to the wallpaper sample for comparison purposes. We recommend that you tape together at least two paint chips of each color you plan to use and stand them upright to duplicate the way light strikes a wall surface (right).



Tape wallpaper and paint chips and observe how they interact with light for at least 24 hours.

Live with these samples for at least 24 hours and observe them at different times of the day. Also observe them under different lighting conditions.

This “testing” process is very important, as wallpaper will look differently in your home from the way it looks in the decorating center or online.

Bear in mind that furniture, woodwork, and floors reflect their own colors onto the walls, changing their appearance.

10.2 Never Become Unglued!: The Nuts and Bolts of Wallpapering

The process of covering a wall can be broken down into four easy steps. Keep in mind that this process is much, much easier if you have another person to help you. So, if at all possible, arrange to complete this task with a “partner-in-crime” (with your sense of humor readily accessible!)



1. Measure and cut
2. Prepare, glue, and book
3. Position and trim
4. Roll seams and rinse

AYID...Beyond Paint!

Measure and Cut: With a yardstick or tape measure, measure the width of the wallpaper roll. Next, measure from one corner of the wall to the distance equal to the wallpaper width. You may want to start in a hidden or inconspicuous corner as practice, until you get the hang of it. Starting from the ceiling, use a pencil to make several marks vertically down the wall. The marks should be equal to the width of the wallpaper and be about 10" apart. Check with a level to make sure the line is even.

If you will be papering around a large focal point, such as a fireplace or window, you should mark your walls starting at the center of the focal point. Using the yardstick, draw a vertical line that corresponds to the middle of the focal point. Then, mark the wall on each side of the focal point to indicate where the wallpaper strips will extend on either side.

Before you cut, hold the wallpaper strip against the wall to make sure that it there is a full pattern at the ceiling line. The strip should overlap the ceiling and baseboard by about 2". Take the strip off the wall, with your partner's help, and cut it to appropriate length length with scissors.

Prepare, glue, and book: These days, most wallpaper is prepasted, and is much easier to handle. To prepare the wallpaper and release the glue, fill a water trough (available at home improvement stores) full of lukewarm water.

Take the strip that you have cut and roll the strip loosely, starting with the patterned side on the inside of the roll (the glue side facing out). Place the roll in the trough and soak for one minute, or according to the instructions on the wallpaper packaging.

Hold one edge of the strip with both hands, and lift the wallpaper from the water. Your partner can help by keeping the wallpaper straight as you lift it out of the water. Check to make sure that all areas of the strip are sufficiently wet.

To glue unpasted wallpaper, lay the strip on a large flat surface, with the pattern side down. Use a paint roller to apply wallpaper paste to the strip. Be sure to wipe off your work surface before you lay the next strip down.

After preparing and pasting the strip, you should fold the wallpaper using a technique called "booking". (Be sure to read the instructions on the wallpaper packaging, however, because some wallpapers should *not* be booked!)

AYID...Beyond Paint!

To book the wallpaper, start with the pasted side up and then fold both ends of the strip to the center. Do not crease the folds but let them lay loosely. For prepasted wallpapers, you should let the book sit for about ten minutes, so the glue can “cure”, unless the directions on the packaging indicate otherwise.

If you are covering a ceiling or hanging a wallpaper border, you should very loosely fold the glued paper into an “accordion” book. This means that you should fold the strip back and forth with the pasted side up (like folding a fan out of paper). This makes long strips easier to handle. Again, let the strip cure for about ten minutes, unless otherwise directed.

Position and trim: Unfold the booked strip and position it against the wall so that its edge is against the marks you made when measuring. Having several marks allows you to place the wallpaper correctly as you move from ceiling to floor.

If you are placing the first strip at a corner, cut the top corner of the strip so that the wallpaper wraps around the corner without wrinkling.

Place your palms flat on the wall and slide the strip into precise place. Use a smoothing brush or a large, dry sponge to smooth the wallpaper at the top of the strip. Then, work the brush or sponge to smooth the wallpaper from the center, moving in both directions.

As you smooth, look for bubbles and make sure the seams are flush with your measuring marks. At this point, if it needs to be repositioned, you can pull the strip away from the wall and place it again.

Trim the excess wallpaper at the ceiling and baseboard with a sharp razor knife. We recommend using a wide blade, made especially made for wallpapering, or an X-acto knife.

If you have wallpapered the ceiling, crease the edge of the wall strip with a knife, and then trim along the crease with scissors to avoid punctures.

To hang wallpaper around electrical outlets and switches, remove the switchplate, turn off the power, and then hang the wallpaper over the outlet or switch. Make small diagonal cuts to cut out the area where the switchplate goes and trim back the edges with your xacto knife. Return the switchplates when the wallpaper is dry.

AYID...Beyond Paint!

Roll seams and rinse: After positioning the strips, let them stand for about half an hour. Then roll over the wallpaper seams with a seam roller or rubber brayer. Don't roll with too much pressure or the glue will seep out from under the seam.

If you are hanging foil, fabric, or embossed wallcoverings, don't roll the seams but gently tap the seams with your smoothing brush or sponge.

After rolling the seams, use clear water and a clean sponge to rinse the glue from the surface of the wallpaper. Do not use water on embossed or fabric wallcoverings.

Hanging subsequent strips: Take the wallpaper roll and find where the pattern matches with the previously hung strip. You may have to cut off quite a bit of excess paper in order to get the strips to match.

Measure with your yardstick to make several marks on the wall, as you did for the first strip. Place the wallpaper on the wall and match the patterns. Then, measure and cut, adding about 2" excess on each end.

Repeat the previous instructions to hang the strip.



You may face common wallpaper quandaries, such as papering around an inside corner, around windows and doors, around appliances or light fixtures, or on ceilings. For easy-to-follow solutions, we recommend the free [wallpaper hanging tutorial](#) offered at the Web site for Lowe's Home Improvement Warehouse.

A professional finish: When the wallpaper is completely hung and the paste is dried, you can apply a thin line of clear silicon caulking with a caulking gun (which looks like a large syringe). Apply caulk at the edged areas such as baseboards, chair and plate rails, and tiles (if wallpapering a bathroom or kitchen).


While this step is not essential, it does ensure that the paper will not unravel and curl up at a later date. It is quite easy to do and gives the papering job a professional, clean finish.


10.3 WAY out of the Box: Unorthodox Wall Treatments

There are other ways to enhance your walls besides paint and wallpaper. Here's where you can get really creative and add an element of unique surprise to your home.

If you'd love to hear visitors to your home say something like, "This room is amazing - I would have never DREAMED of doing that to a wall!" then an unorthodox wall treatment may be for you.

To get your creative muscles working, here's our list of favorite unorthodox wall treatments. Refer to our e-books, *Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts* and *Creative Stamping for Walls & Furniture*, for instructions on how to complete several of these projects.









 Hang fabric on your wall, either covering the entire wall or hung in panels, with coordinating paint showing between each panels.

 Cover a wall with an unusual collection of items, as illustrated in the the photo below. Consider hanging old hats, neckties, plates, teacups, appliances, cookie cutters...use your imagination and any collection can be a wall treatment!



A collection of old kitchen appliances serves as an eye-catching and artistic wall treatment in this breakfast nook.


AYID...Beyond Paint!


-  Dye or paint bedsheets and hang them on the wall. You can tack them down (with tacks or staples) so they hang taut against the wall, or attach them at the top of the wall and allow them to fall freely, creating “curtains” on your wall!
-  Hang a quilt on your wall for a cozy, sentimental look, or hang an oriental or other ethnic rug for a sophisticated flair.
-  Install several magnetic refrigerator covers or magnetic bulletin boards solidly across the wall, and cover with magnets.
-  Find a few old doors at flea markets or garage sales and paint them in colors that are complementary to your room. Hang them separately to simulate large panels, or hinge them together for a more solid look.
-  Color eggshells using egg colorings or other dyes and crack them. Then, apply a thin coat of wallpaper paste or acrylic glaze to your wall and place the eggshell pieces in the wet paste or glaze. When it is dry, the eggshells will remain in place. Be sure to cover with a matte or glossy varnish to protect your design.
-  Glue a wide ribbon made of velvet or another interesting texture onto your wall at chair rail height.
-  Create an artificial window by attaching window shutters to your wall, adding a wooden baseboard at the bottom, and inserting a mirror between the shutters, as shown in this photograph (right).
-  For a flirty faux chair rail or cornice, glue on items such as rhinestones, buttons, beads, or seashells in horizontal strips on the wall.



A faux window is a wonderful window treatment that can make a dramatic difference in the perception of a room's light and space!

AYID...Beyond Paint!

 If you already have moldings on the wall, cover them with a fabric in a contrasting color from the rest of the wall. This is very effective when the wall is painted in white, cream, or another neutral color.

 Cover an entire wall with a mirror, as has been done in this entry hall (right).

Originally a small space, the hall takes on a bright openness that makes a dramatic impression upon entering.



*Using a mirror as a wall treatment
DOUBLES the size of the room!*



Marney's Memo

I think mirrors are magic-makers when it comes to filling a room with the added perception of space. In fact, I rarely finish a room without adding a mirror!

While a wall-length mirror, like the one in the photo above, is stunning, the large size and scale of impact may not be your style.


No problem! You can still expand your space with mirrors of any size. The mirror in this living room (above right) is not overwhelming, but it does bring more light and openness into a small area.


And the art of Feng Shui decorating (to be discussed later) promotes the use of mirrors to reflect inner worth and magnetize financial prosperity. More space, light, and prosperity, all from an item you can find at garage sales? A good deal!



Mirrors of any size draw light and spaciousness into a room.

AYID...Beyond Paint!

 For an ambitious project, build your own wall to divide a room or as a backdrop for artwork (below left) by adhering bricks together with mortar. Both bricks and mortar can be purchased at a home improvement store or lumber yard.) For an alternative version, cover an existing wall with stones or chips of broken bricks using grout. Look back and read our handy dandy [instructions for creating mosaics](#) to master the technique.


 Use rubber and foam stamps to create multilayered, interesting designs with techniques such as embossing, masking, and pigment blending (below right). We show you how in our e-book, *Creative Stamping for Walls & Furniture*. You'll even learn how to carve your own stamps!




A walk of bricks makes an impression in this living room. An empty frame of a stained glass window from a church heightens the unusual impact.



Color creative stamping adorns a stairwell wall.

 Drape silk scarves vertically so that they cover the entire wall.

 Adhere simple resin or wood ornamental reliefs (available at [A.C. Moore](#)) on your wall, and then paint the entire wall in a solid color or use a faux plaster or fresco technique. Most often used as decorative touches on furniture, such as bureaus, coffee tables, or vanities, ornamental reliefs can add a unique depth to a wall.

AYID...Beyond Paint!



Decorate built-in cabinets with a repeated pattern to resemble wallpaper. For example, in the kitchen pictured below, the upper and lower cabinets and counter tiles have been painted in a repetitive pattern, thus creating a three-dimensional “wallpaper” that “covers” the kitchen wall.

You can create a similar effect using actual wallpaper, covering any furniture piece that is set against the wall (bookcase, armoire, table) with wallpaper, matching up the patterns from piece to piece so that the furniture piece blends into the rest of the wall.



Decorate your cabinets - or any furniture piece that is set right up against a wall - as if it actually WERE the wall, itself!




Buy unfinished wood letters of any size (available at [A.C. Moore](#) and [Michaels](#)) and paint or stain them to match colors of your room. Use them to spell out words, poems, and sayings.



Beaded curtains (also called “door beads”) were popular in the 70’s, but they don’t have to look retro. Hang solid-color silk panels on your walls, and add one or two beaded curtains for dramatic emphasis. (Look for wood and plastic beaded curtains at [DidYouSay.com.](#))

AYID...Beyond Paint!





-  Paint a favorite quote -- or several quotes -- on the wall, as has been done in this dining area (right). This is a great way to put some of your own personality in a room, and it's a fantastic conversation piece! Want inspiration for quotes? We recommend Quoteland.com.




Eye-catching window treatments draw attention to the painted quote that spans three walls in this dining area.





(Window treatment fabric is from Rag Shop; wall sculptures are from Expo Design Center; chairs are from Carl's Furniture.)


-  Frame old photographs that you found in your grandmother's attic, at an antique store, or on Ebay. Make a solid wall out of these photographs, perhaps accenting the wall with a brightly colored solid stripe at chair-rail height.
-  Paint several old ladders and place them, closed, side by side right against a wall. Place items that you would normally hang ON the wall, on the ladder, instead! Have some fun experimenting with different levels to see where these items are most effective.
-  Bring out your bookish side and cover your wall with book pages (pages from old children's books are a lot of fun), book covers, and even the books, themselves! Buy a handful of old books at a flea market, open them to their halfway point, and nail or screw them directly in the wall.
-  If you live with children, consider allowing them to take hold of a wall in an informal room, such as a recreation room, den, or breakfast room. Give them some paints and perhaps a theme and see what they come up with! Life-sized family portraits designed by children are especially sweet and sentimental.

AYID...Beyond Paint!

 Tear pieces of a wallpaper and hang them, collage-style, on the wall. If you use prepasted wallpaper, it's as easy as soaking the pieces in water and then sticking them on the wall. This is most effective with wallpaper that doesn't have a repeating pattern, such as wallpapers that are solid, textured, or those that simulate a paint finish.

 Bring the outdoors in and cover your wall in a natural material such as moss, straw, dried flowers, or bamboo. Or buy artificial silk ivy garlands and hang them to cover a wall. Twist in garlands of berries for accent.

 Pin or decoupage an arrangement of postcards and photographs from a favorite vacation. (**Decoupage** is the process of gluing paper to a surface and then building up a varnish to make the surface completely smooth.)

 A variation on this idea is to decoupage with thematic papers. In this bathroom (right), sheet music has been decoupage on the wall, while covers from concert playbills are framed to emphasize the theme.



Sheet music is the perfect backdrop for a modern black and white color scheme! Here, it is accented by red bath rugs and a red puddled velvet curtain.

A whimsical tone is set in this kitchen (below) by the vintage menus decoupage on the drop-ceiling area over cabinets, referred to as the **furring**.



Decoupage menus are topped by a wallpaper design of jolly waiters! (Wallpaper border is by York, and is available at [AC Moore](#).)



Marney's Memo

In our e-book, *Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts*, we present lots of unexpected ways you can use decoupage techniques, but I'll give you the basics right here, right now!

To decoupage, you need five things: a surface, paper items to adhere to the surface, decoupage medium, a paint or sponge brush, and a varnish. In my opinion, the best value for decoupage medium is Mod-Podge by Plaid, which comes in glossy or matte finishes. If you are doing a project that will receive a lot of sunlight, you might want to splurge for the more expensive brand, Royal Coat. (Both are available at craft stores such as Michaels and A.C. Moore.)

#1



STEP ONE: Using a paintbrush or sponge brush, apply the decoupage medium to the back of the paper item you want to glue to the surface (photo #1).

#2



STEP TWO: Place the glued item to the surface, and smooth it out with your hands. If there are air bubbles, smooth them carefully or pop them with a small pin. Pay special attention to the corners to make sure they are glued down.

If you are placing an item against an edge and want to cut off excess, use your fingers to crease the paper down under the edge (photo #2) and then cut off the excess with an X-acto knife or scissors.

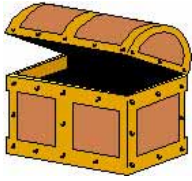
Continue gluing down your papers in a collage to your liking. Feel free to overlap pages to create an interesting design.

#3



STEP THREE: When you have glued down all of the papers in one section, paint a thick coat of decoupage medium on top of the entire design (photo #3). It goes on white but will dry clear.

Repeat with 3-5 coats on top of the papers, depending on how high you want to build up the finish. Lightly sand between coats to ensure that the final surface is smooth. Finish with a coat of varnish for protection and shine (or use a matte varnish for a clear finish).



Ancient Wisdom

The practice of decoupage dates as far back as the 12th century. Chinese peasants were creating paper cutouts in vivid colors to decorate windows, lanterns, gift boxes and other objects. This Chinese practice and expertise with scissors is thought to have come from Eastern Siberia, where cutout felt figures and designs were decorating objects in the tombs of Siberian nomads.

However, it is the late 17th century lacquer work that we tend to associate with today's decoupage. Lacquered objects became fashionable in Europe and, since demand quickly exceeded supply, Venetian cabinet-makers and lacquerers began to produce fake lacquer work by cutting and pasting designs on furniture.

Later, in the 18th and 19th centuries, the art formed flourished, as Victorian ladies passed many hours cutting, coloring, and pasting papers onto items to decorate their homes.



Coffee Break

It's time for a bit of reflection about your ceilings, walls, and moldings. Look back through the information in this section and see which pictures and ideas strike you. Take a moment and write two or three (or more!) ideas that made an impression on you.

Was it outlining your room in white moldings? Painting a dado with stripes? Adding height to your room by painting your ceiling two shades lighter than your walls? Creating a frottage technique on one of your walls? Painting a quote on your walls?

Go back to your original affirmation and see if these ideas resonate with where your heart was at the beginning of this process. Do you need to adjust your affirmation to match the new ideas that have sprung from your most recent reading?

11.0 On Your Way to Fantastic Floors!

11.1 The Softer Side of Flooring

There are three main categories of flooring: soft flooring, resilient flooring, and hard flooring. It's pretty obvious where carpet fits - it's a soft flooring and is very popular in homes for its comfort, acoustic absorption, and pleasing appearance.

For something that is so standard in so many homes, carpet is wonderfully versatile. It can be a subtle, soothing backdrop to your room's color scheme, or it can punch the room with unforgettable color.

To illustrate carpet's versatility, look at these two photographs of informal rooms. In the photograph of the office (right), the lush, forest green carpet becomes a focal point in and of itself in a room with neutral walls.

The use of intricately-patterned upholstery on the desk chair contributes to the intensity of the carpet, drawing our eye downward.



A luscious carpet can make your toes want to dance!

On the other hand, the other den (left) illustrates the way in which carpet can take a back seat.



Neutral carpet calms a casual sitting room. (Coffee table and caned walnut side chair are from [Freed's Furniture](#); desk is antique, circa 1860-70.)

The neutral gray carpet lays a unifying foundation. However, it does not draw attention from the rich woods of the antique furniture and the splashes of color in the sofa and throw pillows.

11.2 There's More to Carpet Than Meets the Foot!

Carpet fibers are usually made of nylon, polyester, polypropylene, or wool. But what does this mean to you?

Well, you should know that synthetic carpets (made from the first three fibers listed) are more stain-resistant than wool carpets. However, wool carpets last longer and are considered to be of higher, and more authentic, quality.

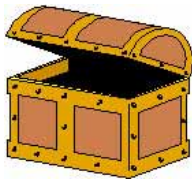
Several specifications refer to a carpet's durability, and these include face weight, yarn ply, and stitch count. Higher numbers mean that more yarns were used per square inch in order to create a stronger carpet.

There are three main varieties of commercial (not man-made) carpets:

Cut pile refers to a carpet with yarn loops sheared off at the top. More durable cut pile carpets will have a higher number of twists in the carpet yarn.

Loop pile (sometimes called **level loop pile**) is a compact weave of uncut yarn loops. You should push the loops aside to see how densely the tufts are attached to the backing as a check for durability. Higher density means higher quality.

Cut and loop pile (sometimes called **tip sheared pile**) combines sheared and uncut yarn loops.



Ancient Wisdom

The carpet industry in the United States began in 1791 when William Sprague started the first woven carpet mill in Philadelphia. Today, the carpet industry yields a total output of more than \$9 billion!

**Our advice:
a quick carpet
consultation**

When selecting carpet for your home, you can follow this general advice: use soft and thick-cut pile carpets in bedrooms and dining rooms where they won't be worn out as quickly.

High-traffic rooms, like family rooms and hallways, should be carpeted with a highly twisted pile or dense loop pile.

Of course, these "words of wisdom" will only take you so far, but it is a good place to start. Shopping for carpet can be quite confusing. There are lots of numbers to consider, and you also have to put your aesthetic, emotionally-based response in there as well!

Shopping for carpet is a lot like shopping for jewelry. There are two basic types of shoppers. The first is the emotional shopper, who falls in love with a carpet or a piece of jewelry first, and then measures its quality specifications (i.e., strength and durability) against its attractiveness and price.



The second is the practical shopper, who asks the salesperson to present the strongest carpets or jewelry in his or her price range. After seeing the choices, he or she then makes an aesthetic selection from what is available.

Think about the jewelry metaphor - you probably know immediately which type of shopper you are, right?

Well, no matter which category you are in, you will find it helpful that almost all carpet and home improvement stores carry free brochures that outline the different specifications that are involved in determining the carpet's quality. We also recommend the the Carpet and Rug Institute's [information on carpet selection](#). And certainly, ask your salesperson questions regarding quality and durability.



And then...follow your heart!



11.3 The Rundown on Rugs

Rugs are the other type of “soft flooring”. Rugs can be divided into commercial carpet area rugs, handmade rugs, and natural rugs.

Carpet area rugs are manufactured carpets that only cover part of the floor. The standard sizes range from 2' x 3' to 12' x 18'.

You can have any carpet cut to size for an area rug, but the edges of the carpet need to be taped in order to prevent fraying. By selecting a tape in a contrasting color, you can add dimension around the edges of the area rug.

Another way to add dimension to an area rug is to add a decorative tapestry border to it. You can do this by hand or most carpet stores have sewing services and will attach a border for a fee.

Adding a border to an area rug is a great way to make it look like a handmade rug, as opposed to a cut-down piece of carpet.

Handmade rugs are made by individual craftspeople from all over the world. If you are buying an expensive rug, you should obtain a written guarantee regarding the rug's construction.

While some people are passionate rug collectors and prize the finest rugs on the market, there are plenty of alternatives that are less expensive, including manufactured rugs that simulate the look of handmade rugs. [Pier 1 Imports](#) and [Bed, Bath, and Beyond](#) are very good sources for affordable, high-quality manufactured rugs that look like handmade rugs.

Whether a rug is commercial or handmade, using one is a great way to dress up bare or unattractive floors without installing a carpet or new flooring. They soften the “hard” look and feel of stone or ceramic tile. Rugs also are a great way to introduce additional color and texture in a room.

Rugs have practical advantages, too! They reduce noise levels, keep dirt at the door, and soften the wear and tear on hard floors, stairway treads, and carpet.

AYID...On Your Way to Fantastic Floors!

If you are using an area rug on existing flooring, here are some tips for the size and placement of the rug:

- * To create more contrast between the flooring and the area rug, the first step you take into a room should be on the flooring, with subsequent steps taken on the area rug.
- * In a room such as a living room or family room, if the furniture is arranged near the center of the room, you should place all legs of the furniture on the area rug. If furniture is arranged around the edges of the room's perimeter, place the front legs of the furniture pieces on the rug.
- * In a dining room, all chair and table legs should be on the area rug even when a chair is pulled away from the table.

Refer to section 13.0, *Home is Where the Hutch Is!*, for information about furniture placement that will help you determine the best size for your rug!



A braided area rug dresses up the bare floor of this dining room, while breaking up the visual monotony of furniture and floors of the same color wood.



A woven kilim rug unifies the colors of furniture in this den, while adding punch to a neutral carpet.



Sit 'n Summarize

Here's a brief list of different types of area rugs and the decorating styles that are associated with each of them:

Knotted rugs are tied to a woven backing and fibers are individually knotted. This method is used for oriental rugs, which often find their place in Traditional or Casual Contemporary style.

Woven rugs are made by weaving fibers very tightly on a hand loom. Flat rugs such as kilims are made using this method (*see the photo on the right on the previous page for an example of a kilim rug*). Kilims are popular in both Traditional and Rustic style.

Hooked rugs are made from uniformly cut strands of yarn that are hooked through a mesh backing. The yarns are different colors and create a pictorial design. The "kitsch" rugs from the fifties are a popular kind of hooked rug. Hooked rugs make themselves at home in Casual Romantic and Casual Contemporary homes.

Braided rugs are made when narrow strips of cotton or synthetic fabric are braided together, and then wound around its own center to form a circular or oval rug (*see the photo on the left on the previous page for an example of a braided rug*). Traditional style homes with an emphasis on Colonial style often use braided rugs.

Needlepoint rugs are made of wool yarns stitched in and out of a canvas to create florals or other patterns. Needlepoint rugs are often associated with European Country homes and Traditional Romantic homes.

Felt rugs are made from wool fibers that are fused together. These rugs are very soft to the touch and most often create an eclectic, ethnic ambiance related to Rustic, Formal Contemporary, and Eclectic styles.

AYID...On Your Way to Fantastic Floors!

Natural rugs, sometimes referred to as **matting**, are the third category of rugs and cover a variety of designs and styles. Natural rugs are economically friendly and are an effective way to bring the outdoors in or create a simple and earthy feeling in your home.

Natural rugs include rugs made from husks, bushes, and grasses. Coir, jute, seagrass, raffia, rice straw, and sisal are often used as underlays to other rugs, as well as for area rugs or wall-to-wall “carpeting”.

11.4 Resilient and Hard Floors

Resilient floors are neither soft nor hard. Resilient floors include linoleum, vinyl, rubber, leather, and cork. Resilient floors are comfortable to stand on, and are easy to repair and clean. It is a sensible choice that is available in a wide range of prices to fit your budget.

Hard floors include wood, stone, granite, marble, brick and tile floors. **Tile floors** include terra-cotta tile (below left), porcelain tile (below right), and ceramic tile. Glazed ceramic tiles achieve a look very similar to porcelain tile, for a fraction of the cost.



Terra-cotta tile adds warmth to this cozy breakfast room.



White porcelain tile is accented with a black border and sunburst pattern in a Formal Contemporary entryway.

AYID...On Your Way to Fantastic Floors!

Wood floors are popular for their simple attractive lines and streamlined earthen beauty. Wood floors are also practical because they have some of the elasticity of resilient flooring, as opposed to the hard density of the other hard floors listed above.



The airy and light side of wood flooring.

While one might think that woods make for neutral flooring, it's far from the truth. Woods bring a binding color to a room in the same way that carpet does.

In these photographs, notice the difference between the floors that are set in light and dark woods.

The light wood opens up this hallway (above) to feel more spacious while maintaining elegance.

The darker wood floor in the living room (right) boasts a luxurious coziness while creating effective contrast with the white ceiling and beams.

Soft woods, such as pine, are less expensive but they dent easily and don't wear as well. However, soft woods are often chosen to recreate the look of old American and European farm houses.

Hard woods, such as oak, birch, and maple, are the best materials for highly durable wood floors.

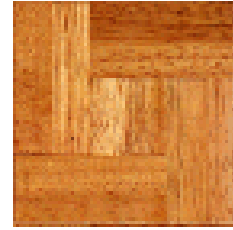


Oak parquet hard wood floors bring a charming intensity and stirring depth to this family room. (Chaise is from [Gabberts Furniture](#).)

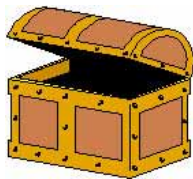
AYID...On Your Way to Fantastic Floors!

Parquet floors are made from squares of wood which are fitted together with tongue-and-groove joints. The squares can create a variety of patterns for an elegant, formal look.

A current trend in ecologically-conscious homes is to install natural cork tiles in a parquet pattern, such as those manufactured by [Eco by Design](#).



The lovely lines and impeccable tongue-and-groove construction of parquet flooring.



Ancient Wisdom

The first known decorated parquet floor was a sunburst motif in the entryway of a Parisian Hotel in 1775. This pattern then became a popular motif in the Neoclassic era.

Like the parquet look but can't afford to replace your existing wood floors?

Transform your wood flooring into faux parquet!! Here's how to do it! (*Note: These instructions are for a hexagon design. You can adjust the template to create whatever design you like.*)







1. Make a template in the shape of a hexagon of the desired size on a piece of posterboard, and cut out the template with scissors.
2. Find the center of your floor. Trace your template with a pencil, beginning at the center and repeating the pattern as you work out toward the walls. This is more reliable than working from the walls inward, since walls are frequently irregular.
3. After the design has completely been penciled in, use a sharp X-acto knife and a straightedge to score over the pencil lines to a depth of about depth of 1/16". Then move the straightedge slightly and score each line again to create a groove.
4. Remove excess wood with an awl. This prevents the stains or paints from leaking outside their boundaries.
5. To color the design, either use water-based stains in contrasting colors or acrylic tube colors diluted with water and mixed to give appropriate shades. Make sure either color mixture is diluted enough for the wood grain to show through. Alternate colors from hexagon to hexagon to create contrast. Let dry thoroughly overnight.
6. Apply black acrylic paint to the floor in the grooves between the hexagons and immediately wipe off with a damp cloth.
7. To "age" the floor, use medium grit sandpaper to give it a rougher texture.
8. Seal using an eggshell or clear acrylic varnish.

See our e-book, [Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts](#), for more step-by-step decorating projects!

11.5 “Flooring” Your Friends, Neighbors, and Yourself!

Just as we introduced unorthodox wall treatments in the previous section, we’d like to entice you to consider some unusual flooring alternatives.

Take a look at some of our favorites:

-  Create a hand painted floorcloth by painting on artist’s canvas or plain vinyl flooring. You can use any leftover paint you have from painting the walls, or use acrylic paints in colors that contrast with your room. Be sure to complete the cloth with two coats of polyurethane to protect it. Refer to our e-book, *Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts*, for great floorcloth painting tips and designs.
-  Instead of carpeting a staircase, stain or paint alternate steps in contrasting colors. Or, paint the step treads (the part you stand on) in one color and add a patterned design on each rise (the vertical part of the step).
-  Paint a freehand design or use stencils to decorate a floor-length sisal rug. Sisal rugs are made from Mexican agave plants and their tight and well-tailored weaves hold the paint well. If you can’t find a sisal rug to cover your entire floor, buy several of them and line them up next to one another. Secure them with carpet tape so that they don’t slip. Paint them in contrasting colors as if you were painting large tiles!
-  Cover a floor with something other than carpeting or rugs...try heavyweight fabric fastened down with decorative upholstery tacks.
-  Use a wallpaper border around the border of the room by adhering it to a freshly painted or refinished wood floor with wallpaper paste (or by simply dampening it, if the border is pre-pasted.) Seal the floor with two coats of water-based polyurethane to protect it.
-  Use the [decoupage techniques](#) we presented earlier on your floor! Create a collage of favorite items as a border or as a complete covering. Or, select pictures of floor swatches from a flooring catalog, enlarge them at a copy center, and decoupage them on your floor!

12.0 Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!

12.1 Reveling in Texture and Pattern

A discussion of texture and pattern goes hand in hand with evaluating and making decisions about furniture. They are topics to be considered in tandem with one another.

As we've already discussed, decorative painting finishes, wallpapers, alternative wall treatments, and flooring can bring texture and pattern to a room.

However, most often texture and pattern are manifested through the selection of fabrics used in a variety of ways, including:

- upholstery on furniture
- linens
- window treatments
- decorative accents
- tablecloths
- slipcovers
- throws
- pillows



There are two things you need to know in order to use fabrics effectively. You need to know the types of fabrics that are available and the purposes for which they are most suitable.

You also need to know how to mix and match fabrics to create a dimensional design in your room. Yes, stripes CAN go with florals, as long as the scale and color balance are on target.

Four different fabrics adorn a playful daybed with dimension and punch. (All fabrics are from [Hancock Fabrics](#). Daybed is from [Mattress Giant](#). And check out our [different look](#) for this daybed!)



Coffee Break

Before we proceed to discussing the different fabrics that are available, take a moment with your journal to answer the questions below with a "yes" or "no" response. On the next page, we'll tell you which fabrics will work best for you.

1. Are you concerned about having “busy” patterns in your room?
 2. Are you worried that having only solid-color fabrics will look boring?
 3. Are you mainly interested in organic fabric made of natural fibers?
 4. Are you looking for durable, easy-care fabrics?
 5. Are you operating on a tight budget?
 6. Are you looking for lightweight fabrics that will cool down a sunny or hot-climate room?
 7. Do your fabrics need to be very sun-resistant?
 8. Are you looking for heavier fabrics that will warm up a cool room?
 9. Are you interested in covering furniture with slipcovers?
 10. Are you looking for fabrics that will lend themselves to a casual atmosphere?
 11. Are you looking for fabrics that will create an elegant atmosphere?
 12. Are you looking for fabrics that have a lot of natural texture?
 13. Are you looking for fabrics that are smooth to the touch?
-

12.2 Finding Your Ideal Fabrics!

By answering the questions on the previous page, you have a solid starting point for selecting fabrics and understanding their properties.

Isolate the questions to which you answered “yes”, and examine our grid. The numbers across the top of the grid correspond to the questions you answered. In the columns, an “x” indicates which fabrics are good choices. For the questions to which you answered “yes”, circle all the x’s in that column. Then, for each fabric, total up the number of circled x’s in the row and enter it in the final column. Refer to the following pages to read our definitions of each fabric.

#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total Number of Circled X's
acrylic				x		x	x			x				
barkcloth	x							x		x				
batik		x							x	x				
bouclé								x			x	x		
brocade		x									x			
burlap			x		x			x						
calico		x				x			x	x			x	
challis						x					x			
chambray						x				x				
chenille								x				x		
chintz		x				x			x					
couduroy	x							x		x		x		
cotton			x		x	x			x					
crepe	x					x					x			
damask									x		x			
denim	x			x	x			x	x	x				
flannel								x		x				
gingham										x				
lace						x				x	x			
leather								x		x			x	
linen			x	x		x	x			x				
matelassé								x			x	x		
moiré	x					x					x			
muslin						x				x				

AYID...Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!

#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total Number of Circled X's
nylon				x						x				
paisley			x			x					x			
percale					x	x			x					
plissé							x				x			
polyester	x						x	x	x					
rayon						x				x	x			
satin		x				x					x		x	
silk		x		x		x					x		x	
ticking			x					x		x				
toile						x			x		x			
velour								x		x			x	
velvet								x			x			
wool								x		x	x	x		



Sit 'n Summarize

Take a look at the fabrics that had the most circled x's, above. These are likely good choices for your main and accent fabrics. See how they compare with our suggestions for fabrics that work with different decorating styles:

European Country: chambray, chintz, crepe, damask, lace, leather, linen, matelassé, moiré, toile, velvet

American Country: calico, denim, gingham, lace, linen, muslin, percale, ticking

Casual Contemporary: acrylic, calico, courduroy, cotton, flannel, leather, paisley, velour, wool

Formal Contemporary: bouclé, brocade, chenille, crepe, leather, rayon, silk

Rustic: burlap, leather, muslin, suede, wool

Traditional: brocade, damask, linen, matelassé, moiré, paisley, rayon, toile, velvet, wool

Casual Romantic: chambray, calico, chenille, cotton, crepe, lace, silk, velour

Traditional Romantic: bouclé, chintz, damask, lace, matelassé, moiré, satin, silk, velvet

Spiritual: cotton, crepe, flannel, linen, percale, silk

12.3 A Glossary of Fabulous Fabrics

Now that you've identified some of the fabrics that may be just right for your home, take a look at our glossary of the fabrics included in the grid.

Make any relevant notes in your journal about the fabrics in which you are most interested!

Acrylic is a synthetic fiber that can be used alone, but most often is combined with other fibers to make a fabric. Acrylic provides the warmth and feel of wool with less expense. It is very resistant and durable and wears well.

Barkcloth is a heavy cotton fabric with a nubby texture. It can be a solid color but it is usually associated with large printed floral sofas from the 1950's.

Batik is a dyeing method that originated in Indonesia. Batik fabrics are usually cotton and when they are dyed, wax is placed in patterns so that the dye "resists" the waxed areas. Wonderful for an informal, ethnic look.

Bouclé derives its name from the French word for "curled". It is a textured wool-like fabric made of curly looped yarns. It has a wintry, elegant feel.

Brocade is a fabric woven on a loom and is known for the lights and shadows in its raised patterns. It is a traditional and formal fabric that can be used as upholstery or as a window treatment.

Burlap (also called **hessian**) is a coarse, stiff, plain-weave fabric made from jute, hemp, or cotton. Because it is scratchy, it is often not the most comfortable fabric for upholstery, but is good for draping, wall covering, or on small accent items, such as throw pillows.

Calico is a plain-weave cotton percale (see *percale*) which is usually printed with bright, small patterns. It is often used for quilting to achieve an early American look.

AYID...Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!

Challis is a soft, fine, lightweight fabric made from wool fibers. It was originally used in India for shawls, and is available in solid colors or in intricate designs, such as paisley (see *paisley*).

Chambray is a fabric that is similar to denim (see *denim*) but it is lightweight with a plain weave. It is typically used for bed linens.

Chenille is a terrifically lush fabric that has the appearance of velvet but a distinct texture that inspired its name, which is French for “caterpillar”. It is soft and provides an understated elegance.

Chintz (also known as **polished cotton**) is a glazed cotton fabric that is coated with wax to give the fabric a lovely sheen. It is the epitome of European Country style, and usually is printed with nature scenes and florals.

Couduroy is a cotton or synthetic fabric characterized by soft vertical lines known as wales. It is informal, soft, and heavyweight and adds tremendous warmth and texture to casual rooms.

Cotton is a natural plant fiber that has been used in fabrics in the United States since the 1700s. It is spun and woven into many different fabrics of different weights which are durable and easy to care for.

Damask is a firm and lustrous fabric that is similar to brocade but with flatter patterns on the surface. It has a matte weave in the background with a stain-weave pattern that contrasts from the background.

Denim is a twilled cotton fabric that is very durable and comes in a variety of colors, beyond the traditional blue jeans. It is the ultimate casual fabric and is very easy to maintain.

Flannel is a fabric with a slight nap in texture, and is made by varying weights of wool or cotton. It is soft and warming and is popular in colder climates.

AYID...Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!

Gingham is a plain-weave cotton fabric that is dyed and woven to create stripes, checks, or plaid patterns.

Lace is an open-weave fabric used for decorative ornamentation. The pattern in the lace is formed by webbing natural or synthetic threads.

Leather is the skin of an animal that has been processed by tanning. It can come in its own natural color or it can be dyed. It shows natural wear and tear but that is part of its pleasing character. However, it does not hold up well in situations of extreme hot or cold.

Linen is a smooth plant fiber originating from flax. Linen wrinkles easily but is strong and durable and very resistant to chemicals. It is completely fade resistant in sunlight and wonderfully cooling.

Matelassé is a thick cotton fabric with quilted texture, most often used for bedspreads. It gets its name from the French word for “padded.”

Moiré is a distinctive ribbed fabric of silk, cotton, or rayon that has a watermark pattern engraved in its surface. The name comes from the French word for “watered.”

Muslin refers to a number of plain-weave cottons, including gauze, mosquito netting, and scrim. Most upholsteries have a tightly-woven underlay of muslin.



Gingham seat covers and pillows, along with wispy curtains made from cotton bedsheets, create a breezy atmosphere on this country porch.

AYID...Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!

Nylon is a popular synthetic fiber that most often is blended with other fibers to create strong, flexible, and resilient fabrics.

Paisley is a most often a wool challis (see *challis*) or cotton fabric with a very specific woven pattern which repeats highly decorated shapes that look like teardrops. Paisley is usually a lightweight fabric, but the design can also be found on other fabrics such as flannel and courduroy and is at home in both formal and informal settings.

Percalé is a plain tight-weave cotton used in calico (see *calico*) and other fabrics. It has a non-glossy finish and is similar to muslin, but with a finer texture.

Plissé is a lightweight fabric that is shrunken into crinkles or pleats. The name comes from the French word for “pleated”. Plissé is most commonly used for curtains.

Polyester is a very strong synthetic fiber that often is blended with natural fibers to create fabrics that are quick-drying, durable, and resistant to shrinking, stretching, wrinkling, and fading.

Rayon is a manufactured fiber that is made from natural wood pulp. Rayon can be dull or shiny, depending upon the way it is processed. It can be manufactured to resemble a number of fine fabrics at a much more economical price.

Satin is a silk, cotton, or synthetic fabric with a glossy, light-reflective look. It is lush and opulent and is great for formal draperies.

Silk is a tough, elastic fiber produced by silkworms and then woven into lustrous fabrics. It's the strongest of all natural fibers and it is very receptive to color dyes.

Tickings is a heavy cotton twill fabric characterized by stripes of colored yarn. It is excellent for casual upholstery, with its extreme durability and fun, striped designs.

AYID...Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!

Toile (short for *Toile de Jouy*) is a traditional cotton fabric printed with scenes of French country life. For more information, see our [previous reference to toile](#).

Velour is a smooth, dense fabric that looks similar to velvet (see *velvet*) but less formal and much more durable.

Velvet is a luxurious fabric made of cut or uncut looped piles. It can be embossed, crushed, or patterned for interesting textures. It quickly shows signs of wear and should not be used in high-traffic areas.

Wool is a natural fiber sheared from animals such as sheep, goats, or llamas. It has wonderful warmth and heft and is the best fabric for warmth in beddings. As upholstery, it can be a bit rough to the touch, especially in warmer months.



Marney's Memo

Well, we've given you a lot to read about fabrics! Hopefully, by now you've gotten a good idea about the practical nature of different fabrics, and how they can work to your advantage.

But there's no substitute for going to a fabric store or upholstery warehouse and actually getting acquainted with these great fabrics yourself. Take yourself on a little play date and spend some time touching a variety of different fabrics - even ones that you aren't necessarily drawn to at first.

What draws you in more - the visual pattern of a fabric or the way it feels to the touch? What would it be like to have different fabrics in your home? Remember that you needn't use fabrics in huge quantities -- a small moiré pillow may be just the touch to lift up your casual bedroom.

Are you ready for some great ideas on how to use fabric? Read on!

AYID...Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!

12.4 Tips for Fabric Shopping

Shopping at fabric shops can be limiting if you are looking for fabrics that you will use primarily for upholstery.

The focus of these shops is on apparel, and while heavy-duty fabrics such as velvets, courduroys, cotton canvases, and denims will work for upholstery, they may not come in wider upholstery widths. You also won't be able to find fabric with built-in stain-, moisture-, or flame-resistant finishes.



If you shop at fabric factory outlets and discount stores, you may be able to pick up some hot bargains, but be sure to inspect all of the yardage you are buying. If you look further down the bolt, there may be imperfections. On the other hand, it may be at an outlet because it just didn't sell...and therefore could be in perfect condition! Just be sure to check before you buy.

You can also find good bargains on bin ends (the leftover yardage on the end of a bolt). But make sure there's enough fabric to complete your project, because it's unlikely that you will find the same fabric again!

12.5 From Fun to Fancy: Great Ways to Use Fabrics!

Now that you've gotten an idea of the fabrics that are most suited to your needs, we'll discuss the ways that you can use fabrics in your home. You already know about upholstery, window treatments, tablecloths, and bed linens...so here are a few more ideas to keep in mind as you select fabrics for your fantastic room!



Make slipcovers for furniture items you aren't reupholstering. (To find out how to do this, check out our e-book, *Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts*). Think beyond sofas and easy chairs, and consider slipcovering unexpected items, like formal dining room chairs or the headboard in your bedroom!



Add a colorful dust ruffle to peek underneath your bedding. Choose a brightly-colored luxurious fabric for extra impact.

AYID...Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!



Cover several picture frames with fabric for accessories that utilize small amounts of your favorite fabrics. To make the fabric stand out more, hang or place the frames next to one another.



Use fabric to make a mantel scarf to make your fireplace a colorful focal point in your room.



Cover shoe boxes, cigar boxes, and wooden crates with fabric to create storage options that are not only practical, but lovely tie-ins to the decor of a room.



Fabrics can be used as unifying agents in any room...pulling in colors from the wall and floors to make a cohesive color scheme. Believe it or not, you can use your bathroom towels as unifying “fabric” agents, to!

This bathroom (below) is a fabulous study of patterns in action; the shower curtain, wallpaper, and tile all descend from the same color scheme, while the bath towels serve as accent fabrics to tie all the colors together!



A variety of patterns in a unified color scheme creates an interesting, balanced design. (Wallpaper is by [Eisenhart Wallcoverings](#); shower curtain is from Martha Stewart Everyday Collection from [Kmart](#).)

AYID...Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!



Add a fabric-covered room divider to any room of your house to separate different areas within a room, provide privacy, and add yet another splash of color and/or texture to the space!



Place multiple throws over the backs of sofas, chairs, long horizontal tables, coffee tables, and beds.



Cover the inside of a bookshelf with fabric that coordinates with the room.



Decoupage fabric to the slats and seat of an old rocking chair. You can decoupage fabric following the same steps as when [decoupage paper](#).



Add a bountiful splash of pillows to any area in your room -- sofas, chairs, tables, mantels, or on chests, shelves, or small stools. Select your favorite fabrics in your color scheme and add trims or baubles to them. (We've got great instructions for such pillows in our e-book, [Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts](#).)



Make fabric rosettes to add to window treatments, pillows, or lampshades.



Cover a plain or unattractive table - or even a bathroom sink - with a floor-length table skirt. For added dimension, make the table skirt out of two or three coordinating fabrics, each draped at different lengths.



Cover a lampshade with a coordinating fabric as a great room accessory.



Coordinate a small piece of fabric with fabric used on a large furniture piece, or in a rug, as demonstrated in the two photos on the right. Place the small piece underneath a vase or other decorative accessory for an instant cohesive design!



A small piece of woven tapestry fabric...



....echoes an oriental rug!

12.6 Mixing Fabrics: Mastering Emphasis

So, now you know some of the great things fabric can do...it's time to discuss some methods for mixing them together. Let us reiterate, these guidelines are **TOOLS, NOT RULES!**

These are not hard-and-fast regulations that you must follow, but some hints and tips to ground you as you make your decorating choices. These general statements share a bit about what generally works and doesn't work in design, but they are just that -- general statements -- and are not intended to be the "final answer".

With that being said, we'll move forward with introducing tools to help you understand fabric's place in a room. Fabric is characterized by three qualities: its hand, its textural quality, and its patterning.

Hand refers to the way a fabric feels. Is it smooth, rough, thick, or thin?

Textural quality refers to the factors that bring texture to the fabric. Does it have tufts, bumps, nubs, or reliefs?

Patterning is the design on the fabric, whether it is interwoven or printed. Is it bold, narrative, repetitive, or random, and what color is it?

Most distinctive patterns have a motif and a repeat. The **motif** is the running theme of the pattern, such as a recurring color, shape or subject that repeats itself. The **repeat** is the point at which the completed pattern starts to repeat itself.

There are two things to keep in mind as you select your fabrics, and it's no accident that they are factors we have already emphasized when discussing wall coverings. They are emphasis and scale.

The first factor is **emphasis**. Colors, patterns, and shape can be used to create emphasis, and it's your job to decide where you want to place emphasis and where you don't. In decorating, this is called selecting a **focal point**.

Furniture pieces often are the focal point of a room, but more often than not, their importance is the result of the pattern in the upholstery, and not necessarily of the actual shape of the piece.

AYID...Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!

Intuitively, it makes sense that items with patterned fabric are bolder than those in solid colors. However, this is not always the case.

If you want to emphasize the *shape* of a piece - for example, a contemporary chair with interesting lines - a solid color upholstery will define the furniture's shape more than a pattern will. The patterned fabric actually can detract from the line of the chair, which could make it get lost in the room.

The pivotal goal in interior design is **balance** -- that is, to strike a happy medium between items that are emphasized and items that blend in harmoniously.

It's kind of like throwing a party -- if every single guest is noisy, loud, and pushy, the environment would probably be rather overbearing. Conversely, if every guest was quiet, shy, and withdrawn, it wouldn't be a very interesting occasion.

But let's take this metaphor a bit further. Even if the guests were well mixed, more likely than not, the loud and outrageous guests would be talking with their counterparts, and the quiet ones would be hanging out with the other wallflowers. That could lead to too many separate conversations going on - which could be confusing and distracting. A newly arriving guest would not know where to direct her attention!

So how do you throw a good party? Invite 10 of your boisterous co-workers, and then invite 4 or 5 other people...a couple of friends from your book club, your sister, and some quiet new neighbors you've just met.

Well, our solution may not be the best one for your social circle - hey, we never said we're event planners - but it IS the best solution for selecting the patterns in your room.

Keep your patterns well-connected within a space (and this is especially important in small rooms). Don't pour on lots of thin soft-edged stripes and miniature florals with an equal amount of large plaids, solid color blocks, and brilliant paisleys.



One old tried-and-true decorator's query is, "does it look like the same person could have drawn and colored each pattern?"

AYID...Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!

The answer you're looking for is, "YES, one person could have drawn and colored all the fabrics in my room....except for the small roll pillow on the sofa in front of the other pillows..."

OR

...except for the scarf that sits under the candle

OR

....except for the valance on the window.

Yes, it's all about **contrast!** Select fabrics that "match" one another, but throw in one or two small items in the room to mix it up and keep it interesting.



The best way to achieve a balanced look is to add an element of contrast, like this wingback chair! (Sofa, chair, and bookcases are from [Ethan Allen](#).)

Take this Traditional-style living room (above). In a room dominated by various shades of blue, a single wingback chair with a red dotted upholstery creates the kind of contrast we're talking about.

The chair is emphatic, in that it is exactly where our eyes go. The room would be much less interesting without it!

AYID...Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!

Here's another view of the same living room (right). The chair breaks up the blue tones in the room, not only because of its color, but also because of its attention-grabbing dotted pattern.

Let's examine the same concept in a totally different style of room.



Here's an aerial view of the same living room....and the dotted wingback chair is still singing her unique song!



This daybed is covered in casual, cheerful patterns in rustic colors. The fabrics are mostly cotton, though the chenille pillow on the far right adds some tactile luxury to the area.

However, it is the pillow with the green moiré panel on the far left that creates the interest and contrast. Not only is the color contrasting, but so is the fabric style!

Add a contrasting throw pillow to break up patterns and colors with pizzazz! (Fabrics are from [Joann Fabrics](#); daybed is from [Mattress Giant](#); throw pillow with moiré panel is from [Crate and Barrel](#); sunflower is from [Home Goods](#).)

AYID...Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!

Since the first living room we showed is more formal, the contrasting wingback chair seems like an “effective design choice”.

In the second living room, the pillow with the green moiré panel is fun and quirky. It looks like the result of a spontaneous and heart-driven decorating decision.

Guess what? BOTH of these approaches are just right! The mood you want to create in your room will largely determine how you utilize contrast to create a balanced room.

12.7 Mixing Fabrics: Mastering Scale

The other tool we'd like to introduce is **scale**. Scale is probably one of the easiest no-brainer tools in interior design: In large areas, use large patterns; in small areas, use small patterns.

You will remember how colors can “move” a room? Warm colors advance and cool colors recede. Well, similar to what was said in our discussion of wallpaper, fabrics with large patterns advance and fabrics with small patterns recede.

Thus, an oversized floral pattern makes an upholstered sofa appear larger. A small dotted pattern makes it recede into the background more easily.

And, just like our discussion on paint and wallpaper, horizontal stripes on the same sofa will make it appear longer, and vertical stripes will make it look taller and narrower.

Small and intricate patterns will get lost on a large furniture piece, unless it has accent pillows or a throw on it to grab our attention. Very busy patterns typically don't work well on small areas, unless they are repeating a pattern used in a larger area, elsewhere, as demonstrated in this photo (right).



Repeated fabrics unify a room as easy as 1, 2, 3! (Sofa is by Kraus Sofa Factory; fabric for window treatment and throw pillows is by [Calico Corners](#).)

AYID...Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!

12.8 The “Ground Up” Method: Picking Patterns, Step-by-Step

Now that we’ve discussed the importance of emphasis and scale when selecting your patterns, we’ll get down to the nitty gritty and take you through the process, step by step.

There are lots of ways to start the process of selecting fabrics and other uses of pattern. You could see a photo of a room you like in this book or another source, and set out to find fabrics to replicate the look.

Another method is to purchase furniture pieces that you like, one at a time. You could then gradually figure out the best way to unify the fabrics, perhaps pulling from the ideas we presented in section 12.5, *From Fun to Fancy: Great Ways to Use Fabrics*.

We call the method we’re presenting here the “Ground Up” method. While this is not the only way to select patterns, we hope it will provide guidance if you don’t know where to start.

In following these steps, you’ll start with one fabric that you love and build your fabric palette from there. Think back to the process of creating a color scheme, presented earlier in this book. We gave you information to help you to select one color you really wanted to use in your room, and then we gave you some tips on how to build on that color to make an inspiring scheme.

Well, this process works just the same way.

Step One

Start with one fabric. It could be an existing fabric you already have in your room, a fabric already existing on a new piece of furniture, or one you’ve selected from a fabric store or a designer’s showroom. Though technically not a “fabric”, you could also select a rug or patterned carpet to be the one pattern on which you want to build upon. It doesn’t matter where the pattern comes from, what matters is that you KNOW you want it in the room.

We’ll call this your “Absolute YES” pattern.

Step Two

Decide where you would like this fabric or pattern to be. Do you want it to be your focal point, or do you see it more as a delightful accent?

If you want it to be your focal point, then figure out the best way for that to happen. Does the room have an impressive window? Then that fabric might be best used as the window treatment. If the pattern is a large pattern and you have a large piece of furniture, such as a sofa, the fabric may be a perfect choice for reupholstering or a slipcover.

Step Three

After deciding where your “Absolute YES” pattern will go, it’s time to take a look around the rest of the room. The first thing to examine is the room’s size.

First, take note of the room’s size. If your room is on the small side, we recommend you use a minimal number of patterns in the room. Think of **1-3 focal patterns**, and perhaps **1-3 accent patterns**. In the sitting room pictured here (right), the oriental rug and the sofa’s upholstery are considered **focal patterns** because they cover large areas. The patterns of the three throw pillows are considered **accent patterns** because they cover small areas.



The “Ground Up” method in action.

Let’s examine this room further to see the “Ground Up” method in action. The kilim rug is the “Absolute Yes” pattern around which the rest of the pattern scheme was built. Because the room is small, a subtle geometric pattern that complements the rug was selected for the sofa. Placed next to the sofa is a solid blue chair, which instantly balances the room, ensuring that it is not overwhelmed by conflicting patterns.



A solid blue chair instantly grounds the room.

The next layer of pattern is added by placing interesting throw pillows on the sofa. The pillows break up the solid color of the sofa, and the white and beige striped pillow brings in a very pleasing sense of contrast.

AYID...Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!

On the other hand, if the room is large, it's a good idea to introduce varying patterns to keep it interesting. Anywhere from **2-5 focal patterns** is appropriate. Notice that we recommend a *minimum* of 2 patterns in a medium- to large-sized room. Decorating with only one pattern (for example, using an all-matched set) can really overwhelm the eye. It is far more interesting to use multiple patterns throughout the room to keep the room from becoming one-dimensional.

In the spacious living room pictured below, two focal patterns are at work - the floral used in the window treatments, and the bold stripes used on the wingback chairs. You see how the room would be less appealing if only one of those patterns were missing.



Two emphatic patterns bring a sense of balance to this large living room (Window treatment fabric is from [Calico Corners](#).)

Another note about larger-sized rooms is that the most effective focal patterns (i.e., patterns found on large pieces of furniture or on long, draping window treatments) are patterns with a large design.

Looking again to this living room (above), you can imagine how differently the window would look if the window treatment were made with a small-scale floral instead of a larger-scale floral. A small pattern would likely make the dramatic window fade into the wall, rather than bring the focus to it.

AYID...Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!

This is not to say that you shouldn't use matching fabrics in a room. By all means, repeating a pattern in a room is a wonderful unifying tool. In this bedroom (below, left and right), a fabric used for a table drape is repeated on the other side of the room, where it is used for throw pillows. This ties the room together and creates a balanced flow that allows you to appreciate the overall look and feel of the room.



Using the same fabric in different corners....



unifies a room harmoniously.

If you don't want to initiate other patterns, or if the room doesn't contain much opportunity for varying patterns (as is often the case with kitchens or any rooms with little furniture), the best way to handle matching fabrics is to make sure there is plenty of space between where the fabric is used. This allows the eye to "rest" in between these areas, so the fabric can really shine in its best light, as is demonstrated in this kitchen (below, left and right).



*Inserting space between matching fabrics...
(Dinette set is from Stool & Dinette Factory in Tempe, Arizona.)*



makes this room feel lively, yet balance. (Fabric is by Stanley King Studio for [Fabricut](#).)

AYID...Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!

Here's another example of an effective way to repeat a single pattern. In this romantic bedroom (right), a single fabric is used for a dramatic headboard curtain, as well as for throw pillows and a bed ruffle. But the generous use of solids - red, white, and yellow - creates the necessary balance that keeps the floral pattern from overwhelming the room.



Implementing solids with a repeated pattern ensures that the room doesn't get "lost".

In both large and small rooms, you can also add accent patterns to the mix to bring about a sense of "movement" in the room.

Previously, we showed you how accent patterns were used in throw pillows in a small sitting room. Accent patterns can appear in more places than throw pillows, however...try throw blankets, artwork, placemats, coasters, footstools, china and dishes, decorated pottery, you name it!

As we said before, in small rooms, 1-3 accent patterns work very well to accompany 1-3 focal patterns. But in a medium- to large-sized room, you should feel very free to experiment with lots of different accent patterns...the number of which depends on your personal taste.

You may be the kind of person who likes to add a lot of "punch" to the room, so you may respond to the energy and feel of many patterns within a room. Wonderful! We would just recommend that your decorating space is not a small one (otherwise multiple patterns will overwhelm and compete with another), and that you keep your focal fabrics to five or fewer. Remember, also, that you are working within a color palette, and so all the patterns should "fit" in that scheme.

On the other hand, you may be happier with a "quieter" feel, concentrating on only a couple of focal patterns. Just make sure that there is enough variety in the room by creating a bit of contrast in small areas. As we stated earlier, we recommend creating a room in which it looks like the same artist could have drawn or painted all the patterns...except for one!

(We'll discuss the "less is more" vs. "more is more" approaches to decorating when we discuss **accents** - the personal touches you bring to a room beyond furniture, walls, and floors - in section 14.1, *Accents are the Icing on the Cake!*)

AYID...Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!

Step Four

Next, examine your choice for walls. If your walls already have a lot of colorful patterning (stippled walls, stenciled borders, any highly-patterned wallpaper, or an alternative wall treatment such as those we discussed in section 10.3, *WAY Out of the Box: Unorthodox Wall Treatments*), it's a good idea to keep the fabrics in the room simpler.

You can still use patterns, but you should ensure that the transition between walls and your fabric choices is smooth. If you do have patterns on your wall, be especially careful when adding any noticeably patterned fabric to a horizontal piece of furniture, such as a sofa. If you have very pronounced, visually-active patterns on a vertical surface, such as a wall, stick other pronounced patterns on other another vertical surface (i.e., a tall wingback chair), rather than on a horizontal surface (i.e., a sofa).

If your walls are painted or wallpapered in solid colors or in subdued finishes, you have more leeway in choosing your patterns because there is a low risk for competition.

The low-profile textured finish on the walls of this bedroom provides a perfect backdrop to the varied assortment of pattern in the throw pillows on the bed, as well as the intricate pattern introduced by the folding screen.



Patterns become perfectly prominent when set against a neutral wall. (Bed, side tables, and folding screen are from [Ethan Allen](#); bedding is by [Ralph Lauren](#).)

Step Five

Now it's time to make a list of the different places in your room that provide opportunities for pattern.

Your list might include upholstery for specific furniture pieces, rugs, throw blankets, tablecloths and table drapes, bedding, tapestries, throw blankets, lamp shades, and window treatments (which are covered in the section 12.9, *A Room With a View: The Eight Functions of Window Treatments*). You list also may include non-fabric pattern sources, such as wallpaper.

AYID...Fun (and Functional) Fabrics!

Keep in mind that it is absolutely acceptable to match “unconventional” patterns together, ***provided that they work in your color scheme.***

Look at the assortment of fabrics shown (moving clock-wise, from top left):

1. a mid-sized floral
2. a small floral
3. a mustard solid
4. a multi-colored stripe
5. a sheer floral
6. a mid-sized leaf pattern
7. a two-tone twill upholstery.



(All fabrics are from [JoAnn Fabrics.](#))

Because these patterns all adhere to the same color scheme, they work together as effective elements for collaging a room in pattern.

Combining interesting patterns is more than just mixing florals and stripes. You can even combine patterns that would appear, on their own, to represent a single decorating style.

Take Michael’s living room (right). The oriental rug is a traditional pattern, but the contemporary animal print throw pillows give this room a real edge.

Had Michael not experimented with patterns, he would not have found the right ingredients for this dynamic, eclectic atmosphere.



Combining unconventional fabrics can stir up a stylish sense of adventure! (Armoire is from [Pier 1 Imports](#); oriental rug is from Just Rugs in Boca Raton, FL.)



Sit 'n Summarize

Here's our "cheat sheet" to keep on hand as you plan your pattern selection:

- ~Consider bolder patterns to place emphasis in the focal point of the room.
- ~If you want to emphasize the shape of a piece of furniture, a solid color fabric will be more dramatic than a patterned fabric, which may lose the lines of the piece.
- ~Create contrast by selecting fabrics that coordinate well, but then throw in one or two small items in the room with a pattern that stands out as very different from other items in the room.
- ~Keep the size of furniture pieces in mind as you select patterns. In general, on or in large areas, large-scale patterns work best. On or in small areas, small-scale patterns are most effective.
- ~Fabrics with large patterns advance and those with small patterns recede. Use this to your advantage by selecting patterns that will make items appear larger or smaller, whichever is desired.
- ~If the room is small in size, limit your patterns to a small number (i.e., 1-3 focal patterns, with 1-3 accent patterns).
- ~If the room is large, use several varying patterns throughout the space to keep it from being monotonous. (i.e., 2-5 focal patterns).
- ~Use matching fabrics or all-matched sets with special care, placing them so that there is plenty of space between them.
- ~If your wall is highly patterned, use subtle, smaller patterns throughout the rest of the room, especially on horizontal pieces, such as sofas.

Step Six

With your list from Step Five and our "Cheat Sheet" from the previous page in hand, jot down what you would like to achieve for that item. Then, write down the kind(s) of pattern that might help you get there. These aren't final decisions, it's just a way to organize your thoughts so that you have a goal in mind when you go shopping.

It could look something like this:

Absolute YES fabric - yellow floral on red background, use on curtains for picture window

fabric for sofa - would like it to look bigger, maybe another large floral? Could use the same one as the windows, since there is plenty of space between the windows, or perhaps reverse it...like a red floral on a yellow background

fabric for pillows on sofa - would like to bring in some variety, want to mix fabrics. Should keep the scale small to contrast from the large pattern on the sofa...small stripes? ticking? small flowers?

fabric to use as a table drape - it's a really small area, it would be good for a contrasting color...maybe a complement of red or yellow...violet would be really nice, I think. To emphasize, probably just keep it solid, although if I could bring in some bright white to it, even just in a small pattern, it might work nicely with the white ceramics may put on the table.

side slipper chair - I'd like to use a fabric in the throw pillows on the sofa, here. Perhaps the one that is the most subtle. And pull in the window treatment fabric with a throw cushion or maybe the lampshade by the chair??

Step Seven

You've got all the information you need, now, to take your shopping trip(s). Successful pattern shopping requires a shrewd combination between thinking practically about the issues we've outlined in the "Grand Up" Method and following your heart. Just as in choosing colors, knowing a bit of the "nuts and bolts" is helpful data to make your shopping trips less overwhelming. The important thing is to keep your mind open to the possibilities...and to have fun!



Marney's Memo

If you're motivated by budget concerns, you can still decorate with fabrics by selecting one small area of your room where you can indulge in something special...you know, that fabric that makes you sigh and swirl inside. Then, keep your general areas more simple and practical.

Here's how this could work: choose a plain, practical fabric for your sofa, and then dress it up with a throw or pillow you've had quilted in your "oooo ahhhh fabric". Throw pillows use very little yardage so you'll save money.

Finishing with fancy and exciting trims make them look even more luxurious!

If you are more motivated by saving time and energy (and maybe you're even a little skittish to commit to reupholstering) then you can use quilts, shawls, throws, and blankets as quick and easy cover-ups. Tuck throws deep into the seams of sofas and chairs, if you want to preserve the shape and contours of the piece. You also can drape throws loosely over the back of a sofa or over a chair arm, which is a good trick for softening a "boxy" piece of furniture.

Our e-book, *Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts*, has more throw pillow ideas than you can imagine...lots of homemade slipcover ideas...and an easy fabric technique: furniture wrapping!



Throw pillows are a wonderful, easy way to add fascination to a room.

12.9 A Room with a View: The Eight Functions of Window Treatments

One of the most exciting ways to use fabric is for window treatments. Our e-book, *Window Treatments Made Simple*, focuses entirely on the ways that window treatments can help you create rooms with a view...no matter WHAT is outside your window!

Window treatments can serve several purposes, and we've outlined many of them here. Each purpose is illustrated by a photo of a fabric- or non-fabric window treatment.

1. Provide light control

Horizontal blinds (right) allow this homeowner to control the amount of light that filters into her bedroom.

Blinds can easily be tweaked to create different moods, or adjust to different times of the day.



(Bedding is from Martha Stewart Everyday Collection from [Kmart](#); quilt rack is from Weirs Furniture in Dallas, TX.)



(For sheer draperies, we recommend the extensive collection from [Plow & Hearth Country Home](#).)

2. Frame a beautiful view

The window treatments in this beautiful bathroom (left) don't serve a "practical" purpose - rather, they provide a soft and lush frame to the view of a quaint private garden.



(Refer to our companion e-book, *Window Treatments Made Simple*, for instructions to create fabulously fancy curtain designs, like this one.)

3. Detract from an unattractive view

In this guest room (left), a stylish cross-over treatment, coupled with a shade, hide a less-than-perfect view.

With such an eye-catching window treatment, you don't even notice nor care what's outside the pane.

(Also take note of how the fabric is repeated on the throw pillow.)

4. Influence a room's perceived structure or shape

Full-length curtains of a fabric with a vertical pattern (right) elongate this wall to create the impression of a more distant ceiling.

The elaborate valance also contributes to the illusion of added height.



(Sofa, side table, and bookcase are from [Ethan Allen](#).)

5. Create privacy

Privacy is an important function of window treatments, especially in bedrooms.

This treatment (right) provides a sheer underlay topped by a decorative frilly curtain that adds to the feminine charm of the room.



(For romantic American Country bed linens, we recommend [Plow and Hearth](#).)



(Leather chair is from Geneva Home in W. Chicago, IL; coffee table from Walter E. Smithe in Geneva, IL; fabric for draperies from [Cutting Corners](#).)

6. Provide climate control

In this living room, heavy-weight draperies insulate the room from wintry weather.

Conversely, on hot sunny days, the drapes can be pulled to instantly cool off the room.

7. Soften the hard edges of a window

Window treatments can embrace angular and uninteresting windows with a striking softness.

The gathered curtain, topped by a hard cornice frames this bedroom and softens what might otherwise be severe lines.

Also notice the repeated cornices atop the doorways to the adjoining sitting room.



(Bed and bedside tables are by [Drexel Heritage](#); fabric for bedding and window treatments is from [Joann Fabrics](#).)



(And yes, those are sock monkeys congregating on a chair behind the right doorway!!!)

8. Contribute to the decorative concept of a room

Finally, window treatments can enhance a theme, color scheme, or concept inherent in a room's design.

In a corner of this American Country breakfast room, the vintage lace curtains are the perfect backdrop for a collection of antiques.



(For vintage lace and other collectibles, try browsing on [Ebay](#). For modern made home decor accents, we recommend [Linens 'n' Lace](#).)

For a comprehensive view of window treatments, refer to our e-book, *Window Treatments Made Simple*.

13.0 Home is Where the Hutch Is: Welcoming Your Furniture Home

13.1 An Interactive Inventory of Your Furniture

The next element we'll be discussing is your furniture. While it's possible that you will be buying an entire room of new furniture, it's more likely that you will be integrating old pieces and perhaps supplementing them with new pieces. Therefore, the first step in making furniture decisions is to evaluate what you already own, and pinpoint what you need.

On the following page is a list of furniture items that typically are associated with specific rooms. Print out the page (or make a similar chart in your journal) and indicate, for each item, if you already own it, and if so, if you like it. If you don't own it, indicate if you would like to include such an item in your room. Print out additional pages, if necessary, to use for multiple rooms (i.e., if you have more than one bedroom, or if you have a living room as well as a family room).

Don't worry right now if having such an item is *possible* - instead, focus on what you would like to have to make your dream room complete!



Coffee Break

Now that we've got you out of "information mode" and back into "dreaming mode", it's a good time to go back and review your answers from section 2.0, [*The Designer Within*](#).

Review what your initial responses were when we encouraged you write about your ideal decorating visions. Highlight or circle any of the items in your journal that seem especially significant, now that you've learned some of the "nuts and bolts" of decorative and design elements. This gets you in a proper mindset to evaluate your furniture from an intuitive point of view.

Own and Like Own and Dislike Would like to Own

**Living Room,
Family Room,
and Den:**

Sofa			
Easy Chair			
Loveseat			
Coffee table			
End table			
Bookshelf			

Bedroom:

Bed			
Dresser			
Bedside table			
Vanity			
Wardrobe			

Dining Room:

Dining table			
Dining chairs			
Buffet table			
Hutch			

Office, Study, or Den:

Desk			
Desk chair			
Filing cabinet			
Computer desk			
Storage space			



Own and Like Own and Dislike Would like to Own

Kitchen:

Kitchen table			
Kitchen chairs			
Cabinets			
Work area			
Appliances			

Bathroom:

Storage area			
Fixtures			

Other room 1:

Other room 2:

Other room 3:

13.2 Sofa or Settee?: The Only Furniture Index You'll Ever Need

Before we guide you through making furniture choices (that is, deciding which items to keep, and which items need to be purchased), we thought it would be helpful to provide you with an alphabetical index of furniture items, to which you can continue to refer throughout this section.

Accent pieces: when referring to furniture, these are portable accessories such as trolleys, carts, and magazine racks; can also refer to decorative items in the room

Air bed: a mattress filled with air and motorized to control firmness

Armoire (photo #1): a freestanding wardrobe (see *wardrobe*)

Banquette: see *Window seat*

Bar stool (photo #2): a high backless stool

Bench (photo #3): a long seat without backs or arms, or a simple unupholstered seat that does have a back and arms

Bookcase: a free-standing storage unit with shelves

Built-ins (photo #4): any furniture that is constructed directly against a wall; most often a bookcase or cabinet

1.



(Armoire is from [Seaman's Furniture](#)).

2.



(Bar stool is from [Home Goods](#).)

3.



(Stool is from [Ethan Allen](#).)

4.



(For decorative painting technique shown on built-ins, see our previous [instructions](#).)

Butterfly chair: a low chair with a simple, contemporary-looking frame and a canvas seat that takes the shape of the person sitting in it

Canopy bed (photo #5): any bed with a fabric that hangs over the bed, attached by vertical beams or poles

Captain's bed: a bed with a mattress, usually without a box spring, that is set on top of a tall wooden platform with built-in drawers underneath (also called a **platform bed**)

Chair-and-a-half (photo #6): a very wide chair with one oversized seat, with room for one person curled up on it with room to spare

Chaise: a long chair (it's French name, *chaise longue*, literally means "long chair") that is long enough to stretch your legs out on

Closet organizers: a term that refers to any item used in a closet for organization purposes, such as plastic hanging bags with inner shelves, standing units made up of deep drawers, or cubbyholes

Coffee table (photo #7): any low table, or two or three adjacent low tables, placed in front of a sofa to provide a resting place for books, magazines, drinks, etc.

Computer desk: a desk specifically designed for work with computer equipment

5.



(Photo of canopy bed is courtesy of VictorianStation.com)

6.



A cozy chair-and-a-half.

7.



(Coffee table is from Freed's Furniture.)

Console: a narrow table, often placed behind a sofa to keep items handy, or showcase decorative items (also called a **sofa back table** when placed behind a sofa)

Convertible sofa: see *Sofa bed*

Daybed (photo #8): a narrow piece designed for lounging rather than sleeping; can be used as an alternative for a sofa

Desk: refers to any furniture item that can be used as a work surface

Dining chairs: an easy chair with a higher seat and narrow width; can have arms or be armless; can be solid wood or upholstered

Dining table (photo #9): a term for any table used in a dining room or eating area; can be any shape or size, from rectangular, square, and oval to triangular, hexagonal, or octagonal, and can range from very formal to informal

Director's chair: a contemporary folding chair with a detachable, replaceable canvas seat

Drape table (photo #10): any kind of table, often a round one, that has been covered in a draped fabric skirt; smaller drape tables are occasional tables, and larger ones are display or dining tables

Dresser (photo #11): a piece bedroom furniture with several drawers used for storing clothing and other personal items

8.



(Daybed is from [Mattress Giant](#).)

9.



A formal dining table.

11.



(Fabric on drape table is from [Joann Fabrics](#).)



An antique dresser.

Easy chair (photo #12): a chair that is designed primarily for comfort, often with extra pillows and stuffing

12.

End table: a small occasional table placed at the ends of sofas and chairs to keep items conveniently within reach

Entertainment center (photo #13): A large unit designed for televisions, stereos, and storage of books and media-related items



Footstool (photo #12): a small stool; can be used as an ottoman (see *ottoman*), or on its own as a decorative accent

(Easy chair and ottoman are from [Seaman's Furniture](#).)

13.

Four poster bed (photo #14): a bed with posts on each of its four corners

Futon: a type of sofa bed that has a slatted wooden frame that comes with a thin, pliable fabric-covered mattress that drapes over the back and seat of the frame; a futon also refers to the mattress itself

14.



(Bedding on iron four-poster bed is from [Ralph Lauren](#).)

Hanging rack: a simple steel frame on casters (wheels) that can be used behind a screen as an alternative to a closet

Hassock: see *Ottoman*

Hutch (photo #15): a cabinet used to store and display china or other decorative objects



An all-in-one entertainment center and bookcase.

15.



A cherry wood hutch.

Kitchen chair: a dining chair (see *dining chair*), but usually less formal in style

16.

Loveseat (photo #16): a small sofa, generally with two seats so two people can sit next to each other



Murphy bed: a bed that is stored vertically against a wall and housed behind closed doors

Occasional table (photo #17): a term that refers to any small, low portable table to distinguish it from larger, high tables (Loveseat from [Levitz Furniture.](#))

17.

Ottoman: a low stool designed to rest feet upon; can also be used as a coffee table (also called a **footstool** or a **hassock**).



An occasional table.

Platform bed: see *Captain's bed*

Portable wardrobe: a hanging suitcase that is wider and set on casters so that it can roll from one location to another

Recamier chaise (photo #18): a chaise (see *chaise*) with one arm

Recliner: an easy chair that reclines to reveal a foot stool, allowing you to lay back with your feet up

18.



Secretary (photo #19): a furniture piece with a cover that lifts up or folds down to reveal a desktop

19.



A secretary desk.

Slipper chair: a straight-backed upholstered chair, either armless or with thin arms; does not have the stuffing and fullness of an easy chair (Recamier chaise from [Gabberts Furniture.](#))

Slipper chair, high backed (photo #20): a slipper chair with a high back, most suitable for dining

20.

Slipper chair, high seated: a slipper chair with a high seat, similar to a bar stool but with a back

Slipper chair, low backed (photo #21): a squatted slipper chair with a low back, most suitable for relaxation

Slipper chair, scroll backed (photo #22): a slipper chair with a decorative top to the back in the shape of a scroll, suitable for dining or relaxation



A high backed slipper chair.

Slipper chair, tufted and/or buttoned (photo #23): a slipper chair with an upholstered back that is pinched into ties and/or buttons

21.

Stool: a high chair with or without a back (see *Bar stool*)

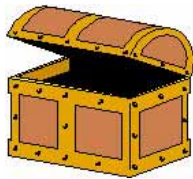


A low backed slipper chair.

Sofa back table: see *Console*

22.

23.



Ancient Wisdom

The use of decorative chairs that were called "thrones" dates back to Cretan palaces in the early 14th Century.

It began as a necessity for comfort and poise, but became a symbol of affluence and power!



A scroll backed slipper chair.



(Tufted and buttoned five-legged chair is from [Gabberts Furniture.](#))

Sofa bed: a term for any sofa that is a combination of a sofa and a bed, whereas the sofa can be converted into a bed in a variety of ways

Sofa, buttoned back: a sofa with an upholstered back that is pinched into buttons **24.**

Sofa, full-sized: a sofa with three seats (a sofa can also be called a **settee**, a **divan**, a **couch**, or a **davenport**)

Sofa, looseback (photo #24): a sofa with loose cushions on the back, and loose or tight seat cushions



A full-sized, looseback sofa.

Sofa, modular: see *Sofa, sectional*

Sofa, sectional (photo #25): a sofa with as many seats as you choose or have room for; comes in sections or components, and most often includes a couple of armless sofas and chairs, with curved corner sections (also called a **modular sofa**)

25.



A sectional, or modular, sofa.

Sofa, semiattached (photo #26): a sofa with partially attached cushions on the back

Sofa, tightback (photo #27): a sofa with a tight upholstered look, with no back cushions

26.



(Semiattached sofa is from [Ethan Allen](#).)

27.



A traditional tightback sofa.

Sofa, tufted back: a sofa with an upholstered back that is pinched into ties and/or buttons

28.

Stacked tables: a series of stackable end tables in a progression of sizes

Sleeper: see *Sofa bed*

Tub chair (photo #28): an easy chair with a rounded back and a low, bucket-like seat



A tub chair.

Two-poster bed (photo #29): A bed with two vertical posts attached to the headboard

Vanity (photo #30): a dresser with an attached mirror, used in a bedroom or dressing area

Wardrobe: a built-in or freestanding closet used for storing clothes or other items; when freestanding, it is called an **armoire**

29.

Water bed: a vinyl mattress filled with water

Window seat: a seat built into the corner of a room or in the alcove of a window, with the surrounding walls used as backs and cushions added on the surface of the seat



(Two-poster bed is from [Ethan Allen.](#))

30.



An antique vanity.

Wine cellar: a special refrigeration unit or cool cellar space that is suitable for wine storage

AYID...Home is Where the Hutch Is

Wine rack (photo #31): a unit with slots for storing bottles of wine horizontally

Wingback chair (photo #32): a slipper chair with protrusions at the top of the back that frame the chair with “wings”

31.



A freestanding wine rack.

32.



(Wingback chair is from [Ethan Allen](#).)



Marney's Memo

It's really easy to get tripped up on all the fancy names for furniture, but in fact, many of the names are regionalisms -- words that are spoken in different locales to mimic the “Joneses”. For example, a sofa, couch, settee, divan, and davenport are really all the same thing....just depends where you live and what's the trendiest label!

13.3 Inexpensive Furniture Alternatives to Make Your Wallet Sigh!

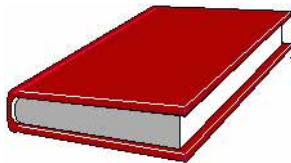
If you are limited in budget, THIS is the section for you!!

And even if you aren't on a tight budget, this section is packed with information for approaching your home with a unique slant.

Now that we've given you an index of furniture pieces, it's time to go back to the [inventory chart](#) you filled out earlier in this section.

Look at the list of items that you would either like to own, or do own, but don't like. Which ones are you most interested in acquiring? And did any of the pieces of furniture in the index catch your eye, as well?

Take your journal and make a list of the furniture items that seem most exciting to you. And then use our handy Furniture Resource Reference below to get ideas of original alternatives for traditional furniture items! This list includes items that can be purchased inexpensively at retail stores, as well as found at garage sales and flea markets!



Furniture Resource Reference

Living Room, Family Room, and Den:

- sofa -- daybed, window seat, futon, slipcovered or reupholstered sofas, wicker or patio furniture
- easy and slipper chairs -- floor pillows or cushions (photo, next page), rolled rugs, slipcovered chairs, stepladders
- loveseat -- daybed, futon, wicker or patio furniture
- coffee table -- chest, crate, countertop, wagon wheel on a stand, old door, headboard, picket fence length with glass or wood on top
- end table -- birdbath, stack of books, a draped crate, a draped stool, music stand, suitcase
- bookshelf -- a ready-to-assemble wardrobe, a freestanding cabinet, wallpaper border with "book" design attached to wall and framed with wooden borders

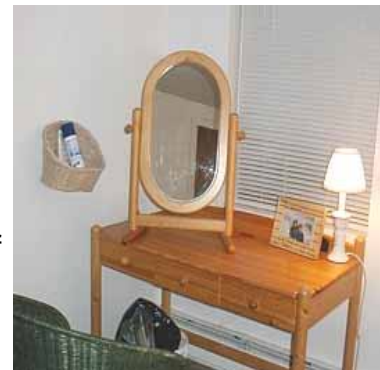
AYID...Home is Where the Hutch Is



Floor cushions and a chest serve as comfortable “easy chairs” and a “coffee table”!
(Floor cushions from [Pottery Barn](#); chest from [Gothic Cabinet Craft](#).)

Bedroom:

- ➔ bed -- trundle bed, murphy bed, single mattress with lavish bedding, futon, daybed
- ➔ headboard -- old shutters, painting a design on wall behind bed, curtain or blanket hung on rod behind bed, garden gate, fireplace mantel
- ➔ dresser -- closet organizer, stacked crates, file cabinet
- ➔ bedside table -- stack of books, birdbath, crate, footstool, small lattice, stack of suitcases (photo next page)
- ➔ vanity -- mirror placed on a desk or old dresser (right)
- ➔ wardrobe -- replace broken doors or panes of an old wardrobe or cabinet with wire mesh



Give an old desk a mirror and you've got a vanity!

AYID...Home is Where the Hutch Is



A stack of suitcases makes an eccentric, interesting nightstand!

Dining Room:

- dining table -- several trays placed together, large desk, end table, ottoman, card table, kitchen table, headboard
- dining chairs -- bench, desk chair, stool, director's chair, stepladder
- buffet table -- ironing board, fireplace mantel
- hutch -- feed cabinet, armoire or wardrobe, open shelves, stacked crates

Office, Study, or Den:

- desk -- kitchen table, bookcase, cabinet, old card table, old door on pillars, countertop on file cabinets (right)
- desk chair -- stool, bench
- filing cabinet -- a filing frame in a deep drawer, trunk, chest
- storage spaces -- hat boxes, standing lattice, decorated shoe boxes, trunks, crates, closet organizers, chests



*A formica countertop on file cabinets = a great modern desk!
(Color on wall and counter back is Desert Sunrise by [Glidden](#); countertop is from [Lowe's](#).)*

Kitchen:

- ➔ kitchen table -- kitchen island, microwave cart, butcher block, countertop
- ➔ kitchen chairs -- director's chair, slipper chair, stepladder, bench
window seat, desk chair, stool
- ➔ cabinets -- pot racks, hanging grid, open bookshelf, old window, armoire,
replace broken doors or panes of old cabinets with wire
mesh
- ➔ work area -- countertop on base, old store fixture, butcher block



A feed counter from a general store makes a very unique kitchen island!



*A metal plant stand serves as shelving in a bathroom.
(Plant stand is from [Frank's Nursery and Crafts.](#))*

Bathroom:

- ➔ storage area -- crates, trunks, planter stand, baker's rack, lattice
- ➔ towel rack -- hat stand, hanging birdcage or birdhouse, old chandelier,
standing lamp base, stool
- ➔ sink base -- ladder, draped table, cart, or desk

13.4 A Second Look!: Tips for Reviving and Altering Furniture

In addition to using unusual elements in place of traditional furniture pieces, altering old furniture is yet another way to save money (and make your house look fantastic, in the process!)

Here are some great ideas to coax your creativity to come out and play. (And don't forget...for steps to many of these projects, consult our e-book, *Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts!*)

We offer this list with a toast to your burgeoning imagination -- CHEERS!!!



Make a colorful kitchen table out of an old card table by painting the legs a different color than the table, and then make a tablecloth using a coordinating fabric.



Cover a folding screen with a colorful fabric and place it behind a breakfront or open piece of shelving to reveal a pattern instead of a blank wall (below).



Paint each post of a wooden chair a different color to make a whimsical statement (right).




For an instant sofa, make a twin bed into a daybed by placing one long edge against the wall. Add large king-sized pillows and throw pillows in coordinating colors.





Combine stained and painted wood on the same piece. For example, stain the base of a coffee table in a warm wood color, and then paint the top in an intense warm color, such as orange or red.





A fabric-covered screen adds a splash of pattern behind a breakfront, and a kitty enjoys a spritely painted chair!


 Repaint wicker furniture to give it a makeover. Paint it a dark solid color to make it look like wood furniture (right), or cover it with brightly-colored stripes.

 Consider dyeing wooden pieces of furniture with fabric dyes, instead of painting or staining them. When you dye a wooden piece, the grain shows through.

 Apply self-adhesive decals or wallpaper cutouts to furniture. Both are available at craft stores such as [A.C. Moore](#) and [Rag Shop](#). Decals look like realistic hand painted designs (right) but no skill and very little time are required!

 Decoupage small pieces of fabric or paper napkins to add details to a furniture piece, as has been done with a red and white checkered napkin on this chair (right).

 Cover drawer fronts of bureaus or chairs with leftover fabric. Attach the fabric pieces with spray adhesive, either covering the entire drawer, or in slightly smaller than the drawer to create a faux “panel”.

 Use leftover wallpaper from a room you've finished to cover a small furniture piece, such as an end table. A very easy way to unify a room!



A spray-painted wicker bedside looks just like wood! (Wicker bedside table is from [Pier 1 Imports](#); comforter is from [Horchow](#), wall color is Mushroom by [Sherwin-Williams](#).)



A chair gets the ultimate makeover in a kitchen. (Wallpaper cutouts are by [Wallies Designs](#).)



Add wonderful embellishments to any piece of furniture - either wood or upholstered. Embellishments include tassels, buttons, shells, millinery flowers, ribbons, trims, charms, costume jewelry, and fabric swatches.



Alter the look of a door by decoupageing its doorknob with pretty patterned papers.



Embellish an ordinary chair with plaster relief to create a unique classical focal piece of fine architecture.



Add metallic paint to any furniture piece for eye-catching glitz (right).



Add a skirt to any piece of furniture - a table, a bathroom sink, chair, sofa or - of course - a bed. Experiment with different styles of bedskirts - ruffled, tailored, sheer, heavy, etc.



Paint or wallpaper your current headboard.




Place cookie cutters - or any other decorative item that has a flat side - between two glass panes for a fun look as a breakfast or kitchen table.





Add warmth to a room by staining a piece of furniture in a warm wood tone, such as oak. To lift a dull and heavy room, stain a piece in a mahogany finish. Or, to add lightness to a dark room, stain a piece with a beech finish.





An end table gets a new look with metallic paints!


 Paint an unfinished or beat-up furniture piece to resemble an upholstery pattern (top right).

 Add silver- or gold- leaf to the edges of a formal table or chair to simulate the look of gilt.

 Add emphasis to the back of a chair with a wreath made from dried flowers or seashells.

 When reupholstering a piece, select three fabrics and create a "collage" - one fabric for the body of the piece, a second for the skirt, and a third for the cushions.

 Rescue a hutch by painting it a new color and etching the glass panes using a do-it-yourself etching product such as the etching kits by [Armour Etch](#) (below right).


 Make tiles out of polymer clay to edge a countertop, dining room table, or coffee table. Or use the clay to make really fantastic drawer pulls!





A secondhand dresser takes on the personality of its neighbor, the easy chair! (Chair is from [Seaman's Furniture](#).)





A beat-up antique hutch takes a feminine curtsy in a "Shabby Chic" kitchen (Hutch is from Jot 'Em Down in Sunnyvale, TX.)


 Folding screens are a great way to divide a room or create privacy. Use one to make a decorative statement! Take a screen with muslin backing and light it from behind, and then hang sheer draperies on it to simulate a window (near right)...

 ...or add excitement to a room by painting the screen in an abstract design of your favorite colors (far right).

 Use a curtain or a folding screen to hide storage shelves, bookshelves, or entertainment centers.

 Add strings of Christmas-tree lights to the backs of chairs or around the perimeter of a table. String lights now show up in all kinds of motifs!

 Tie a fluffy bed pillow to the back of a slipper chair to round out the shape and add comfort!

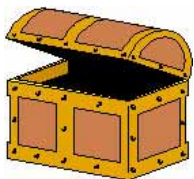
 Add family photos or other cherished possessions on the *inside* of chair backs.



Light projected behind a screen bakes a room in faux sunlight! (Drapes are 'Tiny Leaves' pattern by Blueprints, available at [Expo Design Center](#).)



A swirling sixties-esque screen makes the quintessential conversation piece!



Ancient Wisdom

In old Italian monasteries, designs were painted on the inside of chair backs, so that the monks would see them as they sat down to eat. The designs were sacred in nature, and were said to invoke a prayerful mood.



Place a board game under a glass tabletop and set it on a wooden cube for an attractive den or game room table.



Use a vintage quilt or chenille bedspread as a shower curtain to add charm to your bathroom.



Capitalize on a beaten up garage sale furniture piece and “antique” it to look like it has been passed down for generations (right)!

Instructions for antiquing/distressing a chair

There are several techniques for antiquing furniture. The chair pictured here (right) creates the look of several coats of paint that have been built up through the years, as the chair has been redecorated from family to family.



Antiquing gives a garage sale chair an altered, rustic look!

THE STEPS:

1. The wood itself will show through in some areas of the chair, so if you don't care for the wood's color, stain the color all over in a finish you like.
2. Rub Vaseline in specific areas on the chair, especially corners and edges, which are the parts of the chair that would receive the most wear and tear over the years. The Vaseline will act as a “resist” when you apply future coats of paint and stain (the paint won't stick where the resist is applied).
3. Paint the chair in the base color. The chair shown here was painted in a light orange color.
4. After the paint has dried, take a blunt knife and lightly scrape away at the chair in different areas. Where you applied the Vaseline, the paint will scrape off easily to reveal the natural wood (or color of the stain) underneath. Also scrape away at other areas to suggest random wear.
5. Apply more Vaseline to areas of the chair, including areas where you previously scraped the base coat off, and paint the chair with a colored stain that contrasts with the natural wood color or original stain. You also can apply another coat of paint, instead of stain.
6. When the stain is dry, make additional scratches in the surface until you are satisfied with the result. Build up subsequent coats, if desired.



Marney's Memo

If you are at all intrigued by the ideas we've just presented to you, chances are that you'll be on a secondhand furniture treasure hunt before long!

I thought I'd share some tips that you can bring along with you....keep 'em in your back pocket, or at least in back of your mind!

1. Pay special attention to pieces that can do "double duty". If the piece doesn't work out in the way you intended, you can still get your money's worth by using it for another purpose.
2. If you find a piece with great lines and interesting features, such as carvings or embossed inlays, grab it! Those features make a painted piece really exciting.
3. Test a piece of furniture to see if it wobbles. If it wobbles and you can tell that it needs loose screws or pegs tightened, no problem. If there's something more, you'll need to do some construction work to make the chair safe and useable, so you should only buy the piece if your heart is set on it. If it is, I recommend the book, *Furniture Repair and Refinishing* by Brian D. Hingley and Timothy O. Bakke.

And by the way -- to pound pegs back into their holes, just use a wood mallet or a hammer with a block of wood placed over the peg. Pound gently to avoid further injury to the piece.

4. Painting a furniture piece is easier if all the surfaces are smooth. That includes the legs, back, underside, etc. If they aren't smooth, it's okay, but know ahead of time that you'll need to sand the piece.
5. When examining doors and drawers, hardware that is screwed in is of higher quality than hardware that is simply nailed in. The latter can be tough to repair if the hardware comes out and splits some of the wood surface.

6. If you are using the piece for its original purpose, avoid buying used furniture pieces that have missing wooden parts, pieces that are cracked, or pieces that show obvious signs of failed attempts at repair. But if, for example, you're buying a dining room chair to act as a decorative hanger for your silk scarves, then it won't matter that the top of the seat back is missing...you will just hang the scarves on the exposed pegs!

7. Keep in mind that not all pieces of used furniture need refinishing. Some just need to be cleaned. You can rub the dirtiest area of the piece with furniture cleaner to see if the spot comes clean to reveal the wood grain underneath.

8. Keep your lifestyle in mind as you shop. Think about how a particular piece of furniture will work with children or pets -- will the used divan you're crazy about be impossible to clean? Think it over before buying.

9. A wooden piece with dents in it can be absolutely lovely because it shows character and adds texture to the wood. If, however, you're not into that look, you can fill dents with putty, let them dry, and then sand them smooth. So if you're looking for high-quality furnishings, don't pass over an interesting piece just because it has dents.

10. An overstuffed sofa with loose cushions is a great coup to find, even if you absolutely can't stand the fabric. It is incredibly easy to slipcover or wrap in a variety of ways (refer to our e-book, *Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts*, for more ideas along these lines).

11. A wing chair is another great find, if you come across one. They are almost always well-made, and the classic shape looks great in any décor.

12. Most importantly, remember to have some fun! Treat your shopping excursions as adventures, even if you're just visiting the neighbor's garage sale. Now, really, how often do you take time for yourself these days? Make this a time for just you and your fabulous decorating dreams!

Let your mind wander as you traipse through old and used items...make up histories for the pieces ("This coffee table must have belonged to an old professional whose wife died...and she never taught him how to dust!") and visualize the fun you could have with them!

13.5 Furniture Placement: Practicality First

Back in section 5.3, *Planning Makes Perfect*, you completed a floor plan of your room. While one purpose of this plan was to initiate an honest evaluation of your room's structure, we also did promise that you'd get to play with furniture pieces later on.

Well, that time has come! We created templates of furniture pieces, found in [Appendix D](#), that you can print, cut out, and place on your floor plan to experiment with different positions of furniture.

This method is a lot easier than moving all that furniture around a dozen times. Furthermore, since you drew the floor plan in an aerial view, you can really get a good idea of how the furniture works.

There are several things to keep in mind as you arrange your furniture. The considerations to keep in mind are both practical and aesthetic, but generally speaking, you should formulate the practical concerns in your mind, first.

A beautiful room isn't worth much if it's not livable - and focusing on your individual needs will ensure a very livable and effective space.

Consider these questions:

- ? For what purpose is the room used?
- ? Does it fulfill more than one purpose?
- ? How many people typically are in the room?
- ? What is the maximum number of people in the room at one time?
- ? At what time of day is the room most often in use?
- ? Are there parts of the room that are rarely used? Do you want to keep it that way, or encourage activity in those areas?

AYID...Home is Where the Hutch Is

No matter the purpose of the room, one of the most effective ways to arrange a room is to create “inner rooms” that are associated by task, and emphasized by décor choice.

There are three ways to approach the “inner rooms” arrangement: an open plan, a closed plan, and by unifying décor element.

Consider the study in this photograph (below).



A spacious study arranged into several “inner rooms”. (L-shape desk is made from two desks: long desk is from [Mecklenburg Furniture Co.](#) in Charlotte, NC; small “pub table” is from [Home Decorators catalog](#); leather chair and ottoman are by [Hancock and Moore](#); writing desk on right is vintage 1944; desk chair is from Weirs Furniture in Dallas, TX.)

The room is sectioned into clear, task-oriented areas:

The computer area is on the far left of the photo, and, moving clockwise, the room progresses into an individual reading area, a letter-writing desk, followed by a sitting area with two chairs.

The sections are defined, but no sections are closed off. Thus, it is an **open plan**.

AYID...Home is Where the Hutch Is

The family room pictured here (right) also is arranged by task, but it is a **closed plan**.

The area on the left side in the picture is a sitting area with a sectional sofa and chair that face an entertainment center.

Behind the chair, a game table is situated as a convenient work or eating space.



A family room delineates "inner rooms" in a closed plan.

The difference between this room and the study on the previous page is that these "inner rooms" are closed off from one another by the furniture placement.

The back of the sofa creates a barrier between the "relaxation/TV-watching/reading" area and the "work/game playing/eating" area.

An oriental area rug that only covers that area behind the sofa accentuates this division even further.

A third way to organize "inner rooms" is to **group furniture by a unifying element**, such as the material in which it is made. This allows you to mix and match materials in a room -- wicker, metal, wood, and so on -- which is a very popular look right now. By grouping pieces of similar material together, you create a decorative structure that unifies the room.

An easy way to begin arranging your "inner rooms" is to start with your chairs. If you have several to use in the room, you can break them up into different areas to provide more options for seating, as well as a more interesting arrangement. Try placing two at a drapery table, one at a desk, and two behind a console table.

Here are some other practical furniture arrangement factors to consider:



If you are arranging furniture in a room used for social occasions (be they social gatherings or simply visits from family) aim to place seats no more than eight feet apart. This encourages intimate conversation where everyone can be seen and heard, but still maintains the ever-important “personal space”.



You should consider these **recommended general dimensions** for spaces between furniture items and the people who will interact with them. These aren’t unbreakable rules, by any means, but they may be helpful if you’re having difficulty arranging your furniture.

(If someone who lives in your home is larger or smaller than the average person, make adjustments to these measurements.)

traffic lanes around a room	24-36”
knee space between a sofa and coffee table	9-18”
depth for knees under a table or desk	21-21”
height difference between an end table and a sofa arm	+ or - 1”-2”
height difference between the knees and the underside (apron) of a table	6-7”
distance between chairs at a table	12-18”
distance between place settings at a table	20-30”
distance allowing for a chair to be pulled back from behind a table or desk	24-36”
width of a doorway	24-36”
height of a doorway	80-84”
clearance for the arc of an opening door (equals the width of a door)	30-36”



If you are decorating a room that will be occupied primarily by men, selecting large furniture pieces is practical and also creates a more masculine design environment. Conversely, smaller-scale furniture pieces are more feminine in nature and may be more comfortable in a space occupied primarily by women.



An **L-shape** seating arrangement is a tried-and-true method for placing furniture. Place any combination of a sofa, loveseat, or chair(s) in an L-shape, with a coffee table in the middle, as shown in the family room pictured here (upper right).



The classic L-shape furniture arrangement. (Sofa and loveseat are from [Gabberts Furniture](#); coffee table is from [Restoration Hardware](#).)



Another popular arrangement that is both practical and attractive is the **H-shape**, in which any combination of a sofa, loveseat, or chair(s) are placed across from one another, with a large coffee table in the center.



The H-shape lends itself to comfortable conversation and relaxation in this Traditional Romantic sitting room. (Photo courtesy of Judith and Martin Miller and [VictorianStation.com](#).)



Marney's Memo

I like to conduct furniture arranging research by inviting people over. Notice, do they move the furniture around in any way? Do they bring in a chair from another room so they can sit and talk in a specific area? It's a great way to pick up helpful clues (and have some party fun while you're at it)!

13.6 Furniture Placement: Tricks to Make it Look Great!

Once you've isolated your individual needs, and taken practical factors into consideration, furniture arranging gets really fun, as you play with a lot of techniques to make the room look lovely and thoroughly inspiring.

As you consider our ideas (and come up with ones of your own), be sure to make your **focal point** clear. Just as there should be a dominant color that jumps out at you when you walk into a room, there should also be one place that the eye is automatically drawn to. There are no rules about what this object should or should not be -- it's entirely up to you!

Sometimes, a piece of striking furniture is the focal point, as is the case with the unusual curling sofa in the living room shown in the two pictures on the left.

The focal point does not always need to be a furniture item...it could be a painted wall, a dramatic piece of artwork, or a fireplace. **But furniture placement is still important, as it channels direction to the focal point.**



An unusual sofa....



is the clear focal point in this room!

In the living room in the picture on the right, the fireplace, along with the captivating artwork that sits on the mantel, is the focal point.

The traditional L-shaped furniture arrangement ensures that fireplace maintains its role as the "visual climax" in the room.

Attention is drawn to the fireplace area upon entering the room, as well as when seated on the sofas. Candles placed on the coffee table enhance the ambiance in the fireplace area.



The L-shape draws focus to the fireplace in this peaceful living room.

Consider some of our tips for furniture arrangement with aesthetics in mind:



If you have a nice view out of your bedroom, arrange your bed so you see it immediately when you wake up in the morning. Similarly, arrange a kitchen table and chairs so you can have a window view while having your breakfast and morning coffee.



In a bedroom with limited wall space, the most appealing design often is to place the bed at an angle in one corner. That makes the bed the focal point of the room, which gives the impression of greater space.



Make corridors or hallways seem more inviting with a comfortable chair in the corner, or a vase of flowers on a table.



Look at the furniture pieces on your diagram. Are there too many rectangles? Introduce some rounder pieces for variety and contrast, such as an ottoman, a round coffee table, a tub chair or other round back chair, or round end tables.



While placing furniture against the wall around the perimeter of the room is good for traffic flow (there's a reason that it resembles a dance floor!) it usually isn't very interesting visually, and it also makes many tasks and conversing more of a challenge.

To remedy this, try placing some pieces behind others. Place a cabinet behind a sofa, angle a piece in a corner, move a sofa away from the wall to the middle of the room, etc.




Keep an idea out for empty holes in the room -- in design terms, these are called negative spaces. If you have large gaps in the floor plan with no furniture to fill them, you should consider adding another inner room. It can be as simple as adding several plants and grouping them in that area, to create an organic-themed "inner room".





Contrasts to consider: a room full of furniture makes a room feel smaller, and a room with little furniture makes a room feel larger. A room with large and heavy furniture that looks like it would be difficult to move gives a room a more formal look than a room with more portable furniture.


13.7 Tips for Arranging Furniture in Small Spaces


If you are living in a small space, there are some specific decorating tools that you can put to use to make the space feel bigger and make the living easier!


 Create plenty of “windows” - either making faux windows by hanging mirrors in panes (refer to our earlier [faux window](#) example) or by hanging huge photographs, paintings, and mirrors on their own. If the room has existing mirrors, heighten them with eye-catching window treatments (see our e-book, *Window Treatments Made Easy*, for lots of ideas!)

 Keep the room simple by allowing the eye to focus on a few key elements, rather than jump from one thing to another.

 Large furniture pieces - camelback sofas, oversized chairs, hefty wooden bookcases - can be too big for small spaces. It's best to work with small pieces that are more in scale with your space.


 Make an extra effort to minimize clutter, which tends to make a small space seem even smaller.


 Consider using a space divider in your room (see our previous examples for [decorated folding screens](#)) to increase the sense of space. Even more effective is to cover the divider with mirrors.

 Choose flexible furnishings, such as tables that turn into desks, or armoires that store home offices and can close when not in use.



A painting of a landscape with a wide frame acts as a faux window in a small space. (Sofa from [Ethan Allen](#).)


 Think vertical! Use tall furniture pieces (full-length cabinets, and shelving), select vertical pieces of artwork, and hang window treatments near the top of the wall to visually expand the vertical dimensions of the room.


 Showcase your favorite possessions and collections selectively and effectively. A few favorite things spread out, with plenty of blank space in between (right), creates more visual space than lots of items jammed together.

Try to resist the urge to display every trinket you own. Select the few that are the most inspiring and will make the greatest difference in your daily life.



A small handful of meaningful objects displayed on this antique secretary create an expansiveness and purity in design.

 Using light, cool colors on the walls - either with paint or wallcoverings - will expand a space.

 Hang artwork on the walls that shares a motif to create a spacious gallery-like look, as has been done in this tight hallway (right). If you imagine the same hallway decorated with a large variety of pictures and paintings that didn't match, it might look more crowded.



Like an art gallery, this hallway uses united artwork and plenty of "white space" to create an open feeling.

13.8 It's All About Energy: The Basics of Feng Shui

If you're so inclined, you may want to consider employing the concepts of **Feng Shui** as you arrange your furniture. There are many, many books on the subject that go into great detail about how to achieve Feng Shui...our favorites are:

[A Master Course in Feng Shui](#) by Eva Wong and
[Clear Your Clutter with Feng Shui](#) by Karen Kingston.

Feng Shui is a Chinese discipline that is based on the idea that our living space mirrors our lives. It seeks to create harmony in our lives through the conscious placement of elements in our living spaces.

Feng Shui uses a visual map called the *bagua* to analyze a living environment. The bagua looks like this:

Prosperity	Fame	Relationships
Family/Growth	Health	Creativity
Knowledge	Career	Helpful People/ Travel

The bagua represents the energetic fields defined in any space, when you are looking at a room (or at an entire house) from its doorway. Thus, the area right in front of the doorway - regardless of the placement of the doorway - corresponds to career. And the area placed in the farthest right corner, in relation to the doorway, corresponds to relationships.

Feng Shui teaches that by placing meaningful objects in these areas, and by using furniture to create a flow from one area to another, we can harness the energy found in each area.

AYID...Home is Where the Hutch Is!

What makes Feng Shui applications relevant for *everyone* is that they are very much in tune with generally-accepted design principles. Arranging furniture to be more open, less cluttered, and with clearer intention is a fulfilling practice to undertake, whether or not you are interested in Feng Shui, specifically.



And beyond that, Feng Shui promotes exactly what we have hoped to convey in this book!!



That is, that the act of consciously decorating your home is a spiritual act, one that can bring you much satisfaction and a new lease on life.

The room we want to encourage you to decorate is one in which a single element would detract from the room if it were taken away. For example, if you removed the blue vase from the second shelf of the bookshelf, something would be “missing” from the room. This kind of solid intention and conscious choice is exactly what Feng Shui encourages us to do. The changes we make in each area of a room affect not only our performance in that room, but in our entire lives.

Here are some of our favorite techniques associated with each of the areas:

1. In the Relationships area, place all decorative items in pairs of two.
2. In the Career area (which is where you first walk in the door), place scented items, such as candles, potpourri, or fresh flowers.
3. In the Prosperity area, place a mirror or any item conveying water (i.e., an indoor fountain, or a photograph of a lake) to encourage your contributions to be reflected back to you in a prosperous manner.
4. In the Fame area, make sure that everything you see is well-lit.
5. In the Creativity area, add a bit of warm color to activate creativity and imagination.
6. In the Helpful People/Travel area, clear large and immovable pieces of furniture to keep from over-stimulating the *yang* (male) energy.
7. In the Family/Growth area, place plants or trees (real or silk) in a triad (three of them together) to stimulate new growth and potential.
8. In the Knowledge area, store at least three books and integrate the color blue.



Coffee Break

Now that we've covered style, color, walls, floors, ceilings, pattern, texture, and furniture, it's time to get serious to finalize your choices. Use the furniture pieces on your floor plan to help you make your final choices for your room. Flip back through the notes you've taken on this journey to remind yourself of concepts that interested you.

It's a good idea to create a list of what you have and what you need to get, and continue to fill it in as you continue to finalize your choices. This list will be your "action plan" and you can print out this worksheet and take it with you as you shop to jog your memory and/or take additional notes.

Decorating Action Plan!

	HAVE?	NEED!
Paint Color 1 : _____	_____	_____
Applied to what area: _____		
Manufacturer/name: _____		
Paint Color 2: _____	_____	_____
Applied to what area: _____		
Manufacturer/name: _____		
Paint Color 3: _____	_____	_____
Applied to what area: _____		
Manufacturer/name: _____		
Wallpaper/border 1: _____	_____	_____
Applied to what area: _____		
Manufacturer/name: _____		
Alternative wall treatment: _____	_____	_____
Applied to what area: _____		
Other materials needed: _____	_____	_____

AYID...Home is Where the Hutch Is!

	HAVE?	NEED!
Furniture 1 : _____	_____	_____
Placed where: _____		
Store/brand: _____		
Upholstery: _____	_____	_____
Refinish to do: _____		
Furniture 2 : _____	_____	_____
Placed where: _____		
Store/brand: _____		
Upholstery: _____	_____	_____
Refinish to do: _____		
Furniture 3 : _____	_____	_____
Placed where: _____		
Store/brand: _____		
Upholstery: _____	_____	_____
Refinish to do: _____		
Furniture 4 : _____	_____	_____
Placed where: _____		
Store/brand: _____		
Upholstery: _____	_____	_____
Refinish to do: _____		
Furniture 5 : _____	_____	_____
Placed where: _____		
Store/brand: _____		
Upholstery: _____	_____	_____
Refinish to do: _____		
Furniture 6 : _____	_____	_____
Placed where: _____		
Store/brand: _____		
Upholstery: _____	_____	_____
Refinish to do: _____		

AYID...Home is Where the Hutch Is!

	HAVE?	NEED!
Furniture 7 : _____	_____	_____
Placed where: _____		
Store/brand: _____		
Upholstery: _____	_____	_____
Refinish to do: _____		
Furniture 8 : _____	_____	_____
Placed where: _____		
Store/brand: _____		
Upholstery: _____	_____	_____
Refinish to do: _____		
Furniture 9 : _____	_____	_____
Placed where: _____		
Store/brand: _____		
Upholstery: _____	_____	_____
Refinish to do: _____		
Furniture 10 : _____	_____	_____
Placed where: _____		
Store/brand: _____		
Upholstery: _____	_____	_____
Refinish to do: _____		
Accent Fabric 1: _____	_____	_____
Used where: _____		
Store/brand: _____		
Other items needed for project: _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Accent Fabric 1: _____	_____	_____
Used where: _____		
Store/brand: _____		
Other items needed for project: _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

14.0 ACCENTuate the Positive!

14.1 Accents are the Icing on the Cake!

Accent pieces are the last layer to add to the fabulous room you have manifested into being. They are usually the smallest items in a room, in terms of size, but they are the items that pulse with the personality of your room.

You can select your accent pieces while you are still in the planning stages of your room -- that is, think about where your accents will go as you are figuring out color scheme, or planning your furniture arrangements.

Another approach is to be spontaneous and wait until everything is in place, and then add your accents with spirited thought.

An accent is generally anything decorative that isn't floor covering, wall covering, or utilized furniture. Accents include such things as artwork, photographs, knick-knacks, collectibles, lamps and light fixtures, and objects from nature.

In addition to being attractive and communicating personal meaning, accents can serve practical purposes. For example, accents can be functional - like decorative coasters or an artistic coat rack.

Accents can tie the colors of a room together to promote unity of design.

Accents can help create balance in a room when placed symmetrically, as shown in this photograph (right).

This is a den with a lot of visual activity, with an abundance of books, plants and decorative items. The symmetrical placement of items on the mantel and bookshelves ties the room together in a harmonious way. In spite of the room being very full, it does not feel cramped or cluttered.



Symmetrical, horizontal placement of accents brings peace and order to a room!

AYID...ACCENTuate the Positive!

We strongly believe that the best accents are the ones with great personal meaning to you...the ones that whisper stories into your ear when you look at them...the ones that inspire you to embrace the wonder of life...the ones that are associated with your most delightful memories.

There are lots of decorating “rules” about placement of art and accents: symmetrical vs. asymmetrical, eye level vs. above eye level, difference between arrangements of items in formal rooms vs. informal rooms.

We believe that your heart is smarter than these rules! By now, you’ve grasped many design concepts related to color, style, arrangements, and so on. If you take your time when selecting objects that punctuate your room, you will be able to listen to the inner voice - your “interior designer” - and trust it.

By now, that inner voice knows more than books of decorating how-to’s.

That being said, there is one driving concept that may help you make your decisions in placing accents. We’ve already spoken about the “less is more” concept, and how it helps make a small space feel more expansive.

This is definitely something to keep in mind as you select accents, especially if you want to create a spacious, airy, peaceful atmosphere. In this photograph (right), a basket of dried flowers is accompanied by three small, carefully-chosen pots to sit on the counter of a guest bathroom.



A bounty of beauty is created with this simple arrangement.

It’s a simple arrangement, but an effective one. You can imagine how this space would look very different if twelve pots were scattered around the bottom of the flower basket.

But....”different” definitely doesn’t mean that it would be less attractive! We are all individuals and we all have different inspirations.

AYID...ACCENTuate the Positive!

In this photo of yet another counter in a guest bathroom (right), we see a very different style at work. The counter boasts a collection of wonderful glass baubles and creatures of the sea.



This counter is also inspiring, with its fun and lighthearted approach. You can understand how guests using this bathroom would become rather entranced with all the little goodies, and filled with curiosity about their origin and fascinating design.

The homeowner's words to describe this assemblage of glass objects: "It's stuff to gaze at. I just love clear, translucent, and colorful."

It's helpful to determine, from the get-go, if you are a **"less is more"** person or a **"more is more"** person. Again, one is not a better design mantra than the other.

The key to a successful "less is more" approach is to select a few objects to use as accents and to place them in a pleasing arrangement so that they receive appropriate visual impact. In the living room shown here (right), selective items are displayed on a bookcase while artwork is used sparingly to add dimension to a corner.



When entering this room, you don't feel overwhelmed. Instead, there is a calming sensation in the simplistic, tasteful use of accents.

The "less is more" approach to using accents brings a calm sense of order and harmony to this living room corner.

AYID...ACCENTuate the Positive!

While we certainly encourage freedom in selecting your accents, we do have two “rules of thumb” for you to keep in mind as you decide which approach to take.

First, the “less is more” approach usually is the best approach if you have several large accent pieces you want to use in a room, such as shown in the dining room corner shown here (right).



Large accent pieces are placed in small groupings on opposite sides of the room so they don't compete with one another.

In this room, two elaborate candleabras are placed alone on a console, while the reflection in the mirror reveals three pieces of artwork hung symmetrically on the wall. Note that there is plenty of space between in the room between the candleabras and the artwork. You can imagine the objects would compete with one another if the candleabras were placed directly in front of the artwork.

Our other recommendation is to go for the “less is more” approach in small spaces. As we said previously, this approach is more likely to aid against a feeling of confining clutter.

If you do go for the “more is more” approach, think in terms of creating order amongst your treasures. Here are some ideas on creating “order out of chaos”:

- ☑ Arrange objects symmetrically or in a recognizable shape or pattern.
- ☑ Organize them on a gridded shelf so that the groupings are cohesive. We like the Elfa shelves from [The Container Store](#).
- ☑ Place a repeating element amongst an arrangement to tie accents together (right).



Several doilies are used in this arrangement to visually unify a menagerie of antique fascinations!

- ☑ Use the seasons to help you be selective about what you choose to display. Change your displays of collections with passing seasons... or create a display of nature-related items that can be organized according to seasons.
- ☑ Use small stacking tables in corners to split up your accent items so that they aren't all taking up the same surface. This is a great trick to use in small spaces...you get three times the display space, but with no more surface area!
- ☑ If you are hanging a lot of items on the wall, start with the three largest objects. Then, you can fill in the space between them with smaller items. This will help you keep the three large items as focal points on the wall.
- ☑ If the items you want to hang up are of varying of varying sizes, place the large ones over the sofa. Large pieces can be viewed from a distance. Place smaller items where they can be seen up close - without having to kneel on a piece of furniture.
- ☑ To create more areas in which you can display objects, install shelving near your ceiling to act as a plate rail. Decorating with the "more is more" mantra is more effective if your shelves are not cluttered.
- ☑ Create a handmade work of art to tie in several colors that appear to be used randomly in a display of many objects. For example, if you are displaying knickknacks in one place, pick three or four colors that seem dominant in the items and then paint or collage those colors on a piece of posterboard. Frame your artwork and hang it above the collection.



Handmade quilted banners celebrate the seasons in a dining room alcove.

AYID...ACCENTuate the Positive!

- ✓ When you're arranging lots of objects together, pretend you are a window display designer for a department store. Make some of the items take center stage, and others act as background enhancement. Think about variety in levels and contrast. Step back often to see the arrangement from "the bigger picture."



Think like a window display or museum exhibit designer when arranging your collections and favorite accents!

As an illustration, examine the photograph here (left). A large doll collection is displayed in built-in cabinets. Each cabinet is divided vertically and horizontally in a cross shape, and this organizes the collection. Antique sewing items are arranged carefully in an attractive display, with selected items taking focus, and others serving as a visual accompaniment.

This sitting room (right) is another example how many accents can be organized in small "display areas". Throughout the room, items have been grouped together in small, cohesive sections that are pleasing to the eye.

To sum it all up, it *absolutely* is possible to create streamlined displays if your heart follows the "more is more" approach.



Small groupings of objects make the "more is more" approach succeed.

Just focus on organization, meaning, and unification in your decorative areas and you'll be fine!

AYID...ACCENTuate the Positive!

14.2 The “Art is Anything” Theory

“What is art?” Well, that’s just the best guarantee for opening a can of opinionated worms than any other statement! But we have a very simple answer.

Art can be anything!!!

Not everyone will agree with this, which is fine. But we’re here to tell you that art does not have to be expensive or hooty-tooty. It can be whatever you want it to be. Here are a few ideas to get you rolling...



Hang fancy placemats or small rugs on your wall as artwork (right).



Show off antique or costume jewelry in an aged frame.



Hang framed items in unexpected places - on a wall in a closet, on the back of a chair, under the bathroom sink!



The top and bottom wall hangings are placemats, bought for \$3.99 each! Sandwiched between them is a southwestern floor rug and a hand-stenciled design. (Placemats are from [Wal-Mart](#); rug was purchased on [Ebay](#).)



Dress old busts or mannequins from a flea market with scarves...or paint directly on the bodice!



The artwork pictured on the right was created by a professional artist. But you can create the look -- just glue torn up construction paper or pieces of felt to a piece of posterboard, and then frame. You’ve got art!



Easy-to-replicate paper art!

AYID...ACCENTuate the Positive!

14.3 Luminescence Made Easy!

Lighting is one of the most important factors for creating the desired effect in a room.

Lighting can be used to create mood, make tasks comfortable and convenient, showcase art and other focal points, and enhance the colors, patterns, and textures in your room.

We've assembled a comprehensive list of effective ways to use home lighting at Home-Decorating-Made-Easy.com. This Web page defines the different types of lighting, and when and where each is the most appropriate. We also offer room-by-room tips for using lighting to your best advantage.



Beyond it's illuminating purpose, lamps and lighting fixtures can serve as very exciting decorative accents...they can be wonderful artistic elements, that just happen to also bring essential light into the room. Now, isn't that convenient?



The funky floor lamp pictured here (right) could easily be mistaken for sculpture, especially when paired with abstract artwork.

Yet, it also provides effective mood lighting. (See our earlier photo of a [different view](#) of this corner.)



A floorlamp designed by Albuquerque artist Robert Gaston shimmers between crushed velvet draperies and an original William Burroughs painting. (For unique abstract light fixtures, we recommend [Chia'sso](#).)

AYID...ACCENTuate the Positive!

Here's another example of "light as art". The Tiffany chandelier in this kitchen (right) makes a real statement -- after all, how often do you see a chandelier in a kitchen?



Focusing light on artwork and accents ensures that they are seen and appreciated!



A fruit motif on the stained glass Tiffany chandelier offers a subtle but witty tie-in to the function of the room!

The other reason we have grouped lighting with our discussion on accents is that if you are showcasing one or more accents, they must be properly lit or else they will blend into the background of the room.

In the photograph directly above, a tubular light fixture is hung above the artwork to highlight its place in a hallway.

In another hallway (far right), a serene mood is created with the help of a small Italian light fixture (right inset) that submits a very focused white light.



A single recessed light fixture by [Reggiani](#) acts as the spotlight...



...for this stunning photographic portrait by Tom Baril. Partnered candles enhance the radiant ambiance.

14.4 Tying Your Room Together with Heartstrings!

The possibilities for artful accents are vast and extraordinary! Give yourself permission to let loose and see everything around you with new eyes.

Go shopping somewhere where the prices are delightfully tempting, like a flea market or garage sale. If something catches your eye, trust that! Think of ways that you could use this item in your home to enhance your vision of your living space and infuse it with your own personal radiance and style.

Enjoy the process....
color outside the lines...
tie your room together with heartstrings...
find out what your wings are truly made of!!!

Some of our favorite “heartstrings” include:

- ✦ Flowers and photographs placed together can be quite sentimental and also visually stunning. Place tiny bud vases next to favorite photographs and fill each vase with a fresh flower.
- ✦ Decorate a wreath with mementos contributed by each member of your family...add ribbon and dried flowers and you have a work of art with special meaning that you will treasure forever!
- ✦ Create a narrative tablescape (that is, a “landscape” of objects designed on your tabletop) by selecting items that have a story attached to them - perhaps items picked up on a trip or that symbolize the courtship between you and your partner. Arrange the tablescape in “chronological” order or in another order that makes sense.
- ✦ Place tall taper candles in chunky vases or glasses (right) and display as a twosome on a coffee table or end table. Invite a bit of ritual into your life by lighting them daily while taking a moment of quiet reflection.



Take time every day to grace your home with candlelight!

- ✿ Take a walk outdoors while thinking of the new room you have brought into your home. Keep an eye out for natural objects (leaves, pinecones, grass, twigs) that remind you of your vision of your home.

Then, create a mobile by wrapping some wire around the items and hanging them from a branch so they are balanced (right). Hang the mobile somewhere special, a place that will always remind you of the warmth and vibrancy of your home.



A mobile of carefully-chosen natural objects acts as a "moving meditation".

- ✿ Display items that you have specifically chosen to be representative of your home. For example, select a "house gem" and wrap a string of the faux version around a lamp or on top of an armoire. You can buy gem-like beads at any craft store and string them on a thin ribbon. Select a "house scent" and buy candles, room sprays, and aromatherapy oils in that scent (for information about aromatherapy, we recommend [Aromatherapy 101](#) by Karen Downes.)

- ✿ Select a private space that no one need see but you. It could be a small shelf above your work desk, the top of a dresser (right) or even inside a drawer of your bedside table. In this area, place items that inspire you, and change them often.



When adorned with meaningful objects, the top of a dresser becomes a landscape of inner design and beauty.

Consider this area as your altar; your own personal act of "interior decorating"!

15.0 The Emergence of Home: Infusing Spirit into Style

There is no greater moment than the one that holds the beginning, the tender genesis, of change. In those moments, absolutely anything is possible. In those moments, your dream home is right there in front of you.

When we started this journey together, we hoped to instill that hope - that tangibility of the possible - in you. We aimed to fill you with an abundance of information while letting that hope continue to stir in you and push you to create that dream, to make it real, and make it YOURS.

We hope that at the end of this journey, you have embraced the fact that the perfect home has very little to do with the sizes of your space or budget. The perfect home is the one that is designed with the totality of your heart, and the fullness of your dreams.

We hope this is what you have taken from this journey! We hope you'll return to this resource, time and time again, and continue to hear us shouting, "You can DO this!!!"

Thanks for taking us along as you venture toward your new life in your new living space. We wish you a lifetime of

"just right" colors...
"oooo-ahhh" fabrics....
and the home of your heart,
right in front of your eyes!



A colorful mural sums it all up!

From your very biggest fans,

Marney and Michael

Appendix A:

Contact Information for Sources Without Web Sites

Brooks Weir Furniture Outlet
4515 Mcewen Rd
Dallas, TX 75244
972-503-3503

Weir's Furniture Village
3219 Knox St # A
Dallas, TX 75205
214-528-0321

Chess Pacific Corp
2W Canterbury lane
Phoenix, AZ 85023
602-336-4615

Clements Antiques of Texas
207 E. U.S. Highway 80
Forney, TX 75126
972-564-1520

Geneva Home Works
33W622 Roosevelt Rd.
West Chicago, IL 60185
630-208-0040

Jot'em Down Store
613 E Highway 80
Mesquite, TX 75150
972-226-0974

Stool & Dinette Factory
1325 W Elliot Rd
Tempe, AZ 85284
480-961-9755

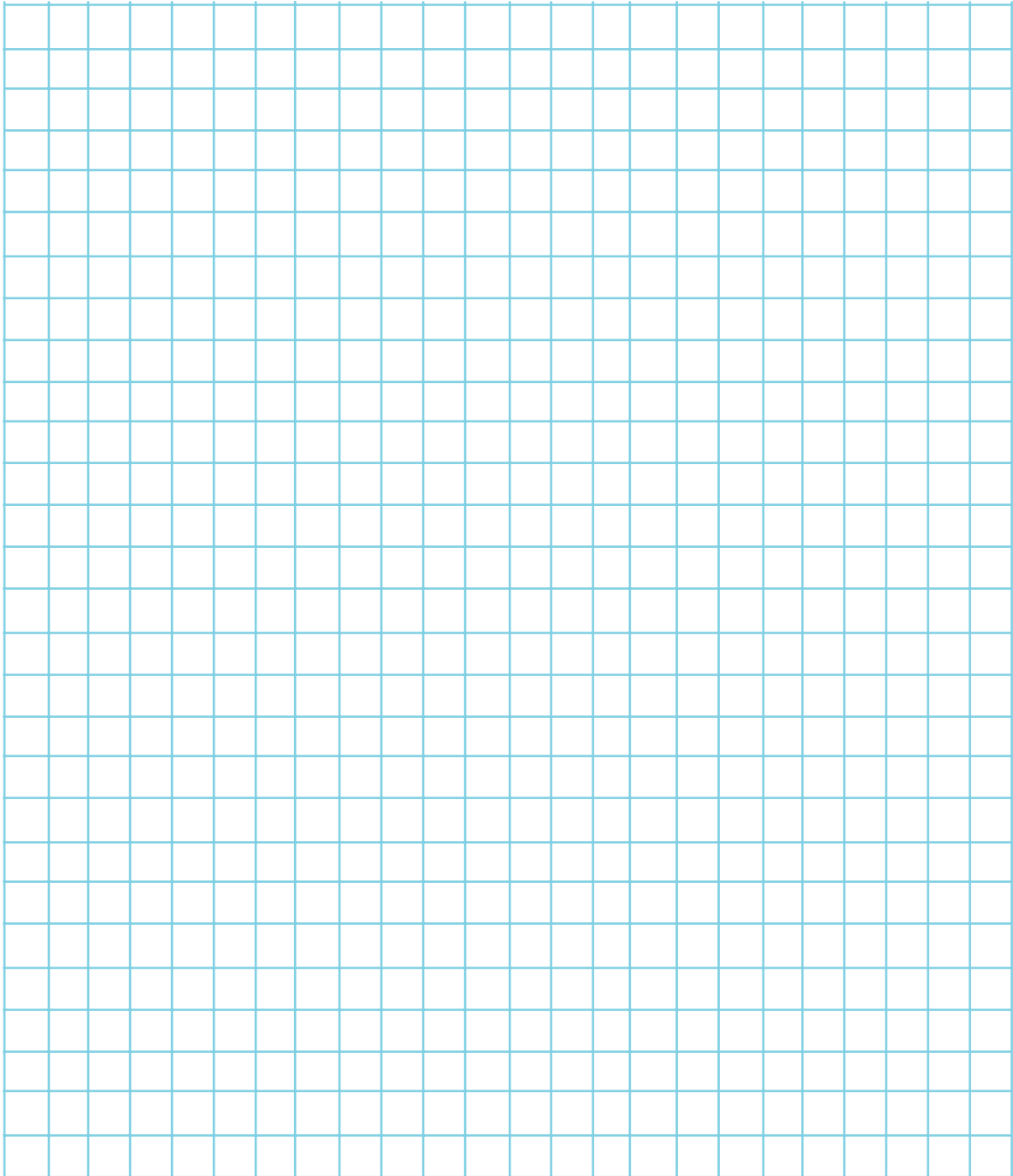
Walter E. Smithe Furniture
1725 S Randall Road
Geneva, IL 60134
630-208-1998

Appendix B:

(for use with [Interior Interview](#) questions)

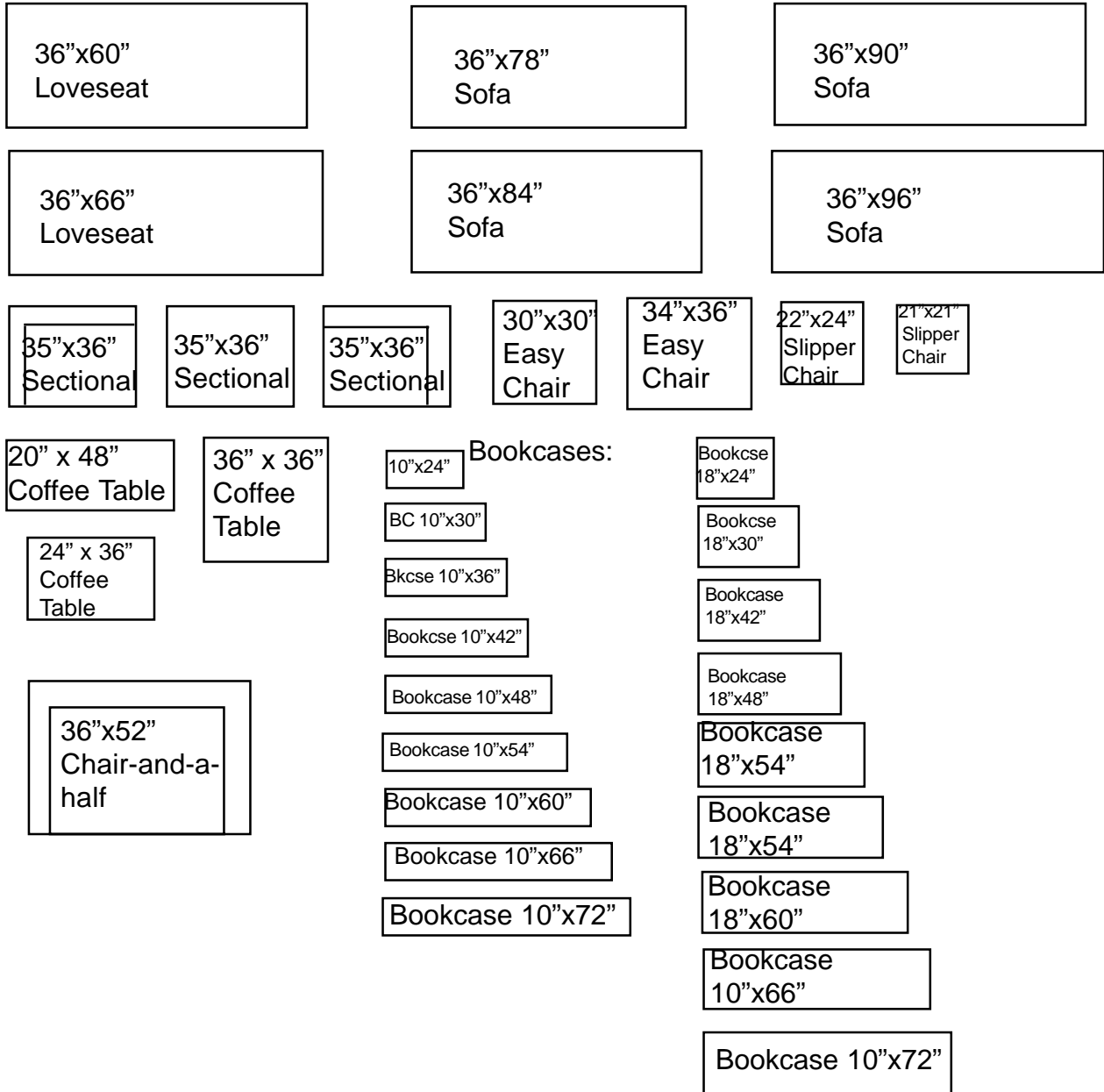
Appendix C:

(for use with your floor plan...1 square = 1 square foot)

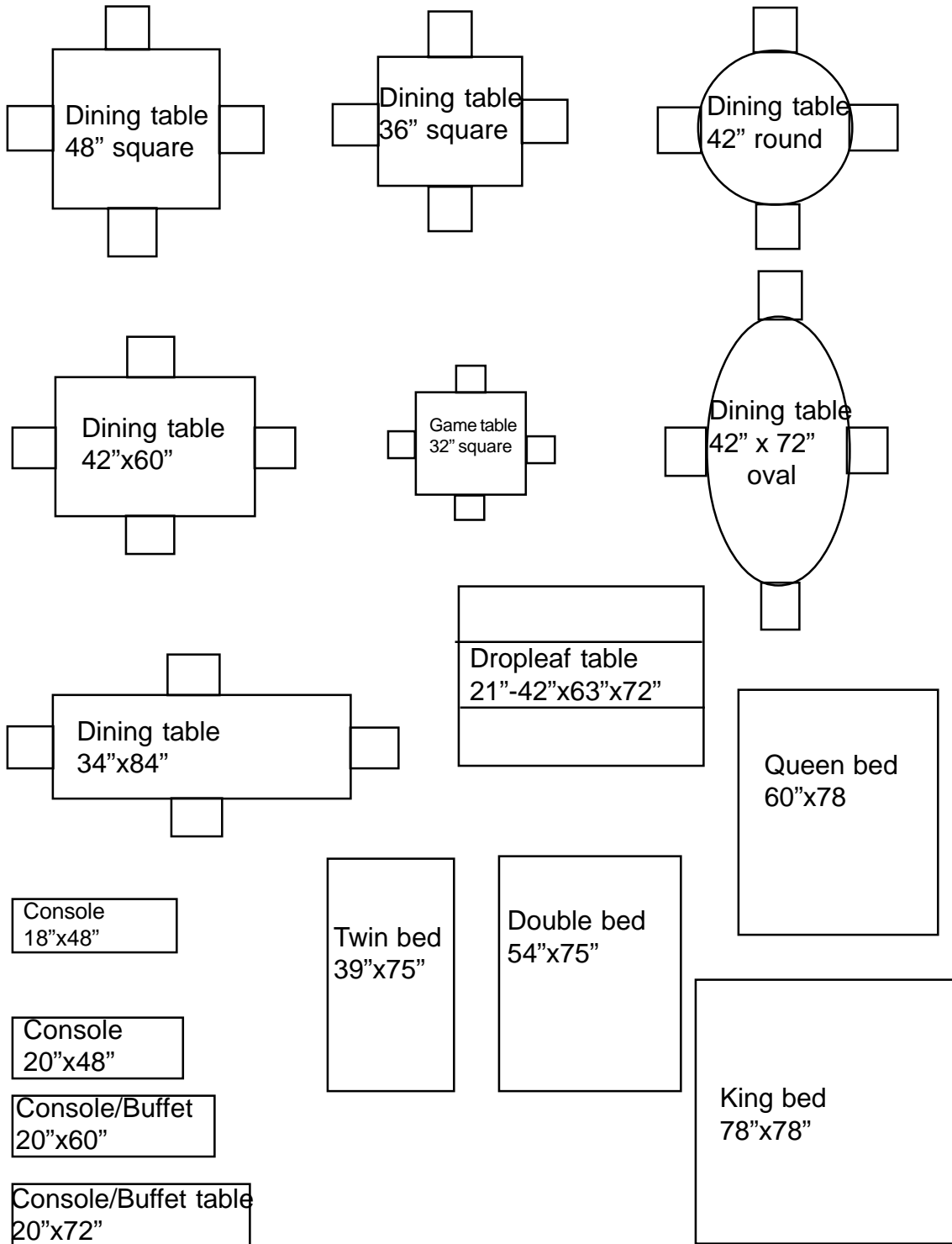


Appendix D:

(Furniture pieces for use with your [floor plan](#))



AYID...Appendix D



Index

A

- A Master Course in Feng Shui (book) 300
- A.C. Moore (source) 46, 47, 107, 220, 223, 224, 284
- accent pieces 305
 - tips for "more is more" approach 308
 - tying rooms together with 314
- American Country style 46
 - ABCs of 47
 - Contemporary Country style 47
 - painting techniques for 179
 - use of color in 144
 - use of fabric in 239
 - with European Country style 44
 - with Traditional Romantic style 48
 - with Traditional style 60
- American Marazzi Tile (source) 43
- antiques
 - use in American Country style 46
 - use in European Country Style 42
 - use in Traditional Style 58
- Armour Etch (source) 286
- Armstrong, Diane (designer) 106
- Aromatherapy 101 (book) 315
- Arts and Crafts Movement 58
- artwork 49. *See also* accent pieces
 - displaying 307
 - unique options for 311
 - use in Formal Contemporary style 53
 - use in small spaces 299
 - use in Traditional style 59

B

- B-I-N (shellac) 193
- bagua. *See* Feng Shui
- beadboard. *See* Wainscotting
- Bed, Bath, and Beyond (source) 45, 57, 86, 112, 141, 229
- bedrooms
 - use blue in 84
 - use of violet in 86
 - use of yellow in 89
- Behr (paint manufacturer) 87, 104, 109, 112, 174
- BEHR 1-Coat (paint) 206
- Benjamin Moore (paint manufacturer) 87

books

- decorating with 222
- Brooks Weir Warehouse (source) 84
- built-ins 104
 - decorating with paint/wallpaper 221
- Bulls Eye 1-2-3 (primer) 194

C

- Calico Corners (source) 87, 252
- Carl's Furniture (source) 222
- carpet 226. *See also* rugs
 - pile 227
 - shopping for 228
- Carpet and Rug Institute (source) 228
- Casual Contemporary style 49
 - ABCs of 51
 - painting techniques for 179
 - use of color in 144
 - with Rustic Style 57
 - with Traditional Romantic style 51
 - use of fabric in 239
- Casual Romantic style 61
 - ABCs of 62
 - painting techniques for 179
 - use of color in 145
 - with Spiritual Style 63
 - use of fabric in 239
- ceiling
 - use of color on 120, 165
- chair rail 158
 - creating faux 218
 - using ribbon as 218
- chaise 52
- chaise longue. *See* chaise
- Chia'sso (source) 312
- chintz 43
- Clear Your Clutter with Feng Shui (book) 300
- Clements Antiques (source) 174
- collections. *See also* accent pieces
 - displaying in small spaces 299
 - use as wall treatments 217
 - use in American Country Style 46
 - use in Casual Contemporary Style 50
 - use in Rustic Style 56
- color
 - base 81
 - black 149
 - blue 43, 84
 - brown 148
 - cool 81

AYID...Index

color

- emotional impact of 90
- experimenting with 147
- "first aid" with 119
- focal 140, 152
- gray 148
- green 85
 - sample schemes 126
- healing with 83
- intermediate. *See* color: tertiary
- monochromatic 151
- neutral 117, 148
- orange 88
 - sample schemes 132
- primary 113
- quiz 73
- red 87
 - sample schemes 130
- schemes
 - analogous 114
 - black and white 53, 149
 - building from artwork 111
 - complementary 114
 - monochromatic 140
 - neutral 117
 - selecting 108, 109, 150
- secondary 113
- split complementary 115
- temperatures 81
- tertiary 113
- theory 113
- tint. *See* tint
- trends 90
- use in relating rooms 151
- use with decorating styles 143
- value 81
- violet 86, 128
- warm 81
- wheel 113
- white 145
 - use with neutrals 145, 146
- yellow 89
 - sample schemes 134

colors

- schemes
 - examples, by style & color 123
- Cottage style. *See* Casual Romantic style
- Cover Stain (primer) 195
- Crate and Barrel (source) 251
- Creative Stamping for Walls & Furniture (e-book) 25, 45, 85, 104, 217

curtains. *See also* window treatments

- beaded 221

Cutting Corners (source) 265

D

dado 158

DecorateToday.com (source) 43

decorating

- achieving balance in 249
- Action Plan for finalizing choices 302
- affirmation/mission statement 31, 72, 91
- planning ahead 96

styles

- American Country. *See* American Country Style
- Casual Contemporary. *See* Casual Contemporary Style
- Casual Romantic. *See* Casual Romantic Style
- Eclectic. *See* Eclectic Style
- European Country. *See* European Country Style
- Formal Contemporary. *See* Formal Contemporary Style
- quiz to determine 32
- Spiritual. *See* Spiritual Style
- summaries of 40
- Traditional. *See* Traditional Style
- Traditional Romantic. *See* Traditional Romantic Style
- use of color with 143

decoupage 224. *See also* walls: decoupageing.
See also fabric: decoupageing

decoupageing

- floors 235
- furniture 284

detailing

- evaluating in existing home 105
- molding. *See* molding

DidYouSay.com (source) 221

dining rooms

- in European Country Style 44
- shown in various styles 37

doors

- evaluating in existing room 103

Drexel Heritage (source) 85, 266

drywall 188

DTM Bonding Primer 195

Dutch Boy Twist & Pour paint (paint) 203

E

Ebay (source) 46, 48, 56, 104, 222, 266, 311

Eclectic style 70

Eco by Design (source) 234

Eisenhart Wallcoverings (source) 155

English Country style. *See* European Country style

AYID...Index

Ethan Allen (source) 15, 26, 60, 105, 117, 146, 250, 256, 264, 270, 276, 277, 278, 298

European Country style 42

ABCs of 44

painting techniques for 179

use of color in 144

use of fabric in 239

with American Country style 44

with Spiritual style 70

Expo Design Center (source) 222, 287

F

fabric. *See also* fabric

decoupage 247

repeating single patterns 256

selecting 237, 253

quiz for 237

shopping for 245

types of 238

use in decorating styles 239

use in unifying a room 246

use of pattern in 236

use of scale in 252

uses for 236, 246

Fabricut, Inc. (source) 256

faux finish. *See* painting technique: faux finish

Feng Shui 68, 219, 300

fireplace

building a faux 106

evaluating in existing home 106

mosaic 106

floor plan 97

instructions for drawing 97

flooring. *See* floors

floors

decoupage 235

painting 235

painting floorcloths for 235

parquet 234

creating faux 234

tile/ceramic 232

types of 232

unique alternatives for 235

use of carpet on. *See* carpet

wood 233

focal point 104, 248, 296

Formal Contemporary style 53

ABCs of 54

painting techniques for 179

use of color in 144

Formal Contemporary style

use of fabric in 239

with Rustic style 55

Frank's Nursery and Crafts (source) 282

Frazee (source) 85

Freeds Furniture (source) 52, 117, 226, 271

Freed's Furniture (source) 151

French Country style. *See* European Country Style furniture

antiquing/distressing 288

arranging. *See* furniture: placement

index of 270

inexpensive alternatives for 279

placement 291, 297. *See also* Feng Shui

focal point in 296

in small spaces 298

recommended dimensions related to 294

reviving and altering 283

shopping for secondhand 289

taking inventory of 267

Furniture Repair and Refinishing (book) 289

FurnitureFind.com (source) 53

G

Gabberts Furniture (source) 52, 85, 151, 234, 274, 275, 295

Gaston, Robert (designer) 312

Geneva Home (source) 104, 265

Georgia Pacific (source) 160

Glidden (paint manufacturer) 88, 109, 112, 281

Goof Off (paint cleaner) 208

Gothic Cabinet Craft (source) 172, 280

Grand Finishes for Carpentry (book) 164

Gustafson, Sandra (designer) 25, 71, 84, 156, 161, 176, 180

H

Hancock & Moore (source) 142, 292

Hitchcock Chair Company (source) 26, 60, 105

Home Decorators catalog (source) 48, 292

Home Depot (source) 22, 106, 109, 116, 164, 171, 172, 189

Home Goods (source) 57, 71, 251, 270

home office

use of orange in 88

Home-decorating-made-easy.com (source) 68, 96, 312

Horchow (source) 70, 87

houseclearing 92

AYID...Index

I

IKEA (source) 54, 63
Interior Interviews 21

J

JC Penney Home Store (source) 20
Jetta (source) 148
Joann Fabrics (source) 57, 141, 142, 251,
256, 266, 272
Jot 'Em Down (source) 286
Just Rugs (source) 256

K

kitchens
 using blue in 84
Kmart (source) 141, 263
Kraft Maid/Arbor Cliff (source) 148

L

Lafayette Mill Antiques (source) 48
lambrequin 67
lamps. *See also* accent pieces; lighting
 covering shades 247
Levitz Furniture (source) 50, 274
lighting 312. *See also* lamps. *See also* lamps
 evaluating in existing home 105
 fixtures
 mixing styles of 51
Lights Fantastic (source) 51
Lime Dragonfly Art (source) 107
Linens 'n' Lace (source) 266
Linens 'n Things (source) 45, 119
Lowe's (source) 143, 164, 189, 281

M

MacAfee Designs (source) 22
Mattress Giant (source) 142, 251, 272
Mecklenburg Furniture Co. (source) 292
Michaels 107
Michaels (source) 47, 221, 224
Minwax Polyshades (stain) 207
mirrors 219
Mod-Podge (product) 224
molding 105, 158
 baseboard 158
 bullnose 160
 cornice 159
 cove 160

molding

 covering with fabric 219
 creating faux 161
 crown 159
 edge 159
 half-round 160
 highlighting 162, 164
 quarter-round 160
 selecting paint color for 163
 selecting paint finish for 198
 trim 158

murals 71, 180, 181
 use of scale in 182

N

National Association of Professional Organizers 96

O

Office Depot (source) 142
Olympic (paint manufacturer) 105
Organizing from the Inside Out (book) 96

P

paint

 alkyd 197
 applying over wallpaper 186
 applying primer before. *See* primer
 applying topcoat/varnish over 207
 brushes and rollers 201
 used in special projects 202
 clean up after 208
 determining if existing is oil- or water-based 197
 determining if oil- or water-based 194
 finishes 198
 glazes 200
 hiring professionals 209
 how to 183
 how to apply 205
 latex 197
 miscellaneous supplies 203, 204
 oil-based. *See* paint: alkyd
 preparing to 184
 purchasing 200
 safety precautions for 190
 types of decorative 199
 use on furniture 283.
 See also furniture: antiquing/distressing
vs. wallpaper 155
water-based. *See* paint: latex

AYID...Index

painting technique
 bagging 176
 colorwashing 170
 dragging 173
 dry brushing 175
 faux finish 104
 used to soften bold wall colors 169
 frottage 176
 sponging 171
 stippling 174
 strie. *See* painting technique: dragging
 use of stripes 157
painting techniques
 index of 177
 use with decorating styles 179
pattern 248. *See also* fabric
 accent 254
 focal 254
 in European Country Style 42, 43
 in fabric 236
 selecting 253, 260
patterns
 combining 259
photographs
 use as decor 222, 287
Pier 1 Imports (source) 22, 112, 229, 256
plants 68, 142
plasterboard. *See* drywall
Plow & Hearth Country Home (source) 263
Plow and Hearth (source) 265
Pottery Barn (source) 280
primer 192, 195
 for drywall/concrete 193
 for laminate 195
 for metal 195
 for new wood or plaster 193
 for non-porous surfaces 195
 for raw wood 193
 for surfaces with existing paint 194
 for surfaces with repairs 194
 for surfaces with stains 195
 for wallpaper-stripped surfaces 194
 selecting type 196
 tinting 195

Q

Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts (e-book) 45,
 49, 57, 104, 105, 106, 116, 142,
 147, 217, 224, 234, 235, 245, 247, 262,
 283, 290

quilt 45, 63, 218
Quoteland.com (source) 222

R

Rag Shop (source) 107, 222, 284
Ralph Lauren (source) 119, 256, 273
Reggiani (source) 313
Restoration Hardware (source) 42, 295
rooms
 arranging furniture in small 298
 evaluating structure of 103
 methods of dividing 292
 "public" vs. "private" 154
 relating adjacent 153. *See also* color: using to relate rooms
rugs 229, 247
 placement of 230
 sizes for 230
 types of 231
Rust-Oleum (paint manufacturer) 143
Rustic style 55
 ABCs of 57
 painting techniques for 179
 use of color in 144
 use of fabric in 239
 with Casual Contemporary style 57
 with Formal Contemporary style 55

S

Sauder.com (source) 119
Seaman's Furniture (source) 57, 89, 172, 270, 273, 286
Shabby Chic style. *See* Casual Romantic Style
Sherwin-Williams (paint manufacturer) 50, 85, 141, 159, 163, 198
slipcovers 62, 245
Southwest style. *See* Rustic Style
Southwestern-Rustic-Furniture.com (source) 56
Spiritual style 67
 ABCs of 69
 painting techniques for 179
 use of color in 145
 use of fabric in 239
 with Casual Romantic style 63
 with European Country style 70
stairwells
 treated as rooms 32
Surefit Slipcovers (source) 62
Sweeping Changes (book) 94

T

Texana Quilt Company (source) 46

AYID...Index

The Container Store (source) 308
The Great Indoors (source) 42
The Oriental Rug Warehouse (source) 59
throw pillows 262
tint 81
toile 43, 45
Toile de Jouy. *See* toile
Traditional Romantic style 64
 ABCs of 65
 painting techniques for 179
 use of color in 145
 use of fabric in 239
 with American Country style 48
 with Casual Contemporary style 51, 66
 with Traditional style 66
Traditional style 58
 ABCs of 59
 painting techniques for 179
 use of color in 144
 use of fabric in 239
 with American Country style 60
 with Traditional Romantic style 66
trim. *See* molding: trim
trompe l'oeil 180. *See also* murals

U

Uncommon Goods (source) 85

V

varnish. *See* paint: applying topcoat/varnish over
Victorian Drapes and Interiors (source) 66
Victorian Showcase (source) 66
Victorian style. *See* Traditional Romantic Style
VictorianStation.com (source) 64, 143, 271, 295
Vinyl Etch Primer 195

W

wainscotting 160
 creating faux 161
wallaper
 collaging with 223
Wallies Designs (source) 284
wallpaper
 applying around outlets/switches 215
 applying caulk finish to 216
 how to 213
 painting over 186
 removing 187
 selecting 211

wallpaper
 testing samples 213
 vs. paint 155
walls
 cleaning 185
 covering with natural elements 223
 decoupageing 223
 evaluating before painting 184
 hanging collections on 217
 hanging fabric on 217
 painting quotes on 221
 stamping on 220
 unorthodox treatments used on 217
 use of mirrors on 219
 using photographs on 222
WalMart (source) 45, 311
Walter E. Smithe (source) 104, 159, 265
Waverly (source) 45, 149, 255
Weir's Furniture (source) 263, 292
WickerFurniture.com (source) 69
Wicke's Furniture (source) 52
window treatments. *See also* curtains
 purposes for 263
 use in Traditional Romantic style 66
Window Treatments Made Simple (e-book) 263,
264, 266, 298
windows
 creating artificial 218
 evaluating in existing room 103
Wine Enthusiast (source) 157
wood
 flooring. *See* floors: wood
 used in European Country style 42
woodwork. *See* molding

AYID...Now, It's Your Turn

Now, It's Your Turn...😊

Hi -

Michael here.

I sincerely hope that *Awaken Your Interior Designer* has met your needs...

I've dedicated my company, ImagineQuest Information Products Inc., to creating high-quality e-products that will make it **easier than ever** for you to put lifestyle enhancing ideas into action.

But we're always looking to improve. We want the next edition of *Awaken Your Interior Designer* to be even better! That's why I'd love to hear from you.

Were there any **areas** of this book that you feel exceeded your expectations? Were there any that fell short? Go ahead, we really do love hearing the good, the bad, and the ugly. So...

Just click on this link to share your thoughts mjh@home-decorating-made-easy.com....

You'll be doing us and future readers a great service!

Thanks 😊

