

A DESIGNER'S GUIDE TO BETTER LAYOUTS

The Room Planning Guide

How to measure, plan, and furnish rooms that feel comfortable, balanced, and beautifully put together.

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A well-planned room is not just about fitting furniture. It is about creating the right scale, flow, function, and feeling before you make major purchases.



Start With the Room - Not the Furniture

Define how the room needs to work

Before choosing a sofa, dining table, bed, or accent chair, decide what the room needs to do for you. A successful layout begins with real life: how you move through the space, who uses it, and what activities need to happen there.

ASK YOURSELF

- What is the main purpose of this room?
- How many people need comfortable seating?
- Do I entertain, watch TV, read, work, or gather here?
- Which architectural features should the layout highlight?



Measure before you shop

Measure the room itself, but also record windows, door swings, fireplaces, built-ins, floor vents, outlets, and pathways into adjoining rooms. Then measure delivery access - doorways, hallways, stairs, elevators, and tight turns.

DESIGNER TIP

Do not rely on a furniture piece “looking about right.” Even a few inches can change circulation, balance, and how comfortable a room feels.

Quick measurement checklist

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Room length + width | ☐ Ceiling height |
| ☐ Windows + doors | ☐ Architectural features |
| ☐ Traffic paths | ☐ Delivery clearances |

Create Good Flow and Comfortable Spacing



A room should be easy to move through

Traffic flow is one of the fastest ways to tell whether a room has been planned well. Furniture should create natural conversation areas without blocking the paths people use every day.

CREATE A CLEAR PATH

Keep major walkways open so people do not have to weave around furniture.

BUILD CONVERSATION ZONES

Place seating close enough for conversation instead of pushing every piece against the walls.

RESPECT NEGATIVE SPACE

A room needs breathing room. Empty space is part of the design, not wasted space.

Useful spacing guidelines

- Living room: leave about 14-18 inches between a sofa and coffee table.
- Conversation seating: aim for roughly 6-10 feet between people, depending on the arrangement.
- Dining: allow about 36 inches behind dining chairs when possible; more is better in a main traffic path.
- Beds: allow comfortable walking space on accessible sides and room for nightstands that fit the bed scale.

Choose Furniture to Fit the Room

Scale is what makes a room feel “right”

Furniture should relate to the size of the room, the ceiling height, and the other pieces around it. A large room can handle more visual weight; a smaller room usually benefits from slimmer profiles, fewer pieces, or furniture with visible legs.



LIVING ROOM

- Start with the sofa or sectional.
- Check depth as carefully as width.
- Choose tables that relate to seat height and scale.



DINING ROOM

- Plan chair clearance before table size.
- Consider extension leaves before ordering.
- Choose a rug large enough for chairs to remain on it.



BEDROOM

- Center the bed on the best wall when possible.
- Scale nightstands to the bed and wall.
- Leave enough clearance for doors and drawers.

BEFORE YOU ORDER

Tape out the footprint of larger pieces on the floor with painter's tape. This simple step makes scale and circulation much easier to understand before you commit.

Layer the Room After the Layout Works

The layout is the foundation

Once the major furniture is placed correctly, add the elements that make the room feel finished. Rugs, lighting, fabrics, color, art, and accessories should support the layout rather than compete with it.

LAYER IN THIS ORDER

- Area rug
- Lighting
- Window treatments
- Pillows + throws
- Art + mirrors
- Accessories + greenery



Keep the entire home in mind

Even when you are planning one room at a time, think about how it connects to nearby spaces. Repeating a few colors, finishes, wood tones, or materials creates a home that feels cohesive without making every room look the same.



Navy



Soft green



Warm neutral



Wood



Stone

REMEMBER

A room can be beautiful and still feel wrong if the scale or layout is off. Plan the room first. Decorate it second.

Plan Your Room Before You Buy

Use this page as your room-planning checklist

Print this page or use it as a prompt when you begin planning your next room.

ROOM

PRIMARY PURPOSE

ROOM SIZE

CEILING HEIGHT

MUST-KEEP ITEMS

MAIN FURNITURE NEEDED

COLORS / MOOD

CHECK BEFORE PURCHASING

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Furniture fits the room | ☐ Clear traffic paths |
| ☐ Delivery access confirmed | ☐ Rug size planned |
| ☐ Lighting locations considered | ☐ Finish + color story coordinated |

Need help planning your room?

I can help you create a layout, select furnishings, and make confident decisions before you buy. Whether you are furnishing one room or an entire home, I would be happy to hear about your project.

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