

furnishing



PHOTO BY GRIDLEY+GRAVES

Floating a sofa (or two) in the center of a room achieves an airier look than jamming it against a wall. Apartment-sized sofas, here placed back-to-back, create double the conversation areas.

Optimize every inch of living space with these clever furniture arranging and selection tips.

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success

To reduce the perception of clutter in a room, opt for two or three featured accent pieces instead of a multitude of knickknacks



PHOTO BY LUX DESIGN INC., LISA PETROLE PHOTOGRAPHY

If properly sized, a sectional sofa can work in a small room. This soft-hued piece is offset by a leggy round coffee table and thin, stacking accent tables.



Workhorse Furniture for Small Spaces

1 IN THE FOLD With its removable tray and durable metal construction, this Tray Table will work as hard as you do. Best of all, though, it collapses for easy, sleek storage.

2 BETTER TOGETHER Four shelves tall, the Tower Bookcase looks great on its own—but, try grouping a few together for a wall of storage that's high on style.

3 MULTI-USE It's a storage unit! it's a room divider! This Wall Shelf works wonders, so be creative. Reversible backs display either a Pale Oak or Moccasin finish.

4 MOVE ALONG Don't let the Multi-Cart's fun Yellow Saffron finish fool you: It's strong enough to support a 37-inch TV. Casters allow for easy mobility.

5 HOLDING PATTERN Part of the Harbor View collection, this dresser is a works-anywhere option, complete with four drawers, plus more space behind two louver-detailed doors.

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A parson's-style dining table, opposite, takes up minimal space in this small loft.

An armless chair, left, is more sleek than a rolled armchair and complements most decorating styles.

Open space on shelves increases sight lines, below. Lining up matching items lends a sense of visual order.

PHOTO BY FLÜFF DESIGNS & DECOR

Think it Through

Evaluate your existing furniture. Light-color furnishings with legs and open space below lengthen sight lines and appear to take up less room than dark pieces of the same size that extend all the way to the floor. Similarly, glass-topped and small metal accent tables take up very little visual space. Reduce the visual weight of existing furniture by adding slightly taller legs to the sofa and chairs, or by using slipcovers in a lighter shade. Spread a light-color throw over a sofa cushion and toss several light-color pillows on the opposite end. Paint or stain a bulky wooden coffee table a lighter shade, and replace large end tables with discount store or flea market occasional tables or even tall, leggy plant stands.

Check it Out

What is the best feature of your living space? Does it have a fireplace or a window with a nice view? Accentuate a natural focal point by arranging the seating area around it. If there isn't anything special about the room, create a focal point by adding floating shelving (floating shelves take up very little visual space), framed art, mirrors or a combination of these elements. If the television will be the focal point, enhance its appearance by choosing an attractive TV stand and arranging art and shelving around it.

Stand Tall

Think vertical. There is more to a room than its horizontal dimensions. Invite the eye to notice the vertical space by installing floor-to-ceiling draperies, crown molding, high shelving or framed art arrangements that extend from seated eye level to within a foot or two of the ceiling line.



PHOTO BY FLÜFF DESIGNS & DECOR

STRATEGY SESSION

Encourage Conversation

In an open floor plan, stake out a conversation area with a loveseat and two chairs, four armless chairs or a pair of loveseats. Add a glass coffee table or a pair of small ottomans that can double as a coffee table. Instead of arranging all the furniture square with the walls, consider placing one piece at a 45-degree angle. A triangular arrangement may allow for better traffic flow or visually soften the hard lines of the back of a sofa or chair.

Clear a Pathway

Before you start moving furniture, sketch a floor plan—be sure to include the entrances and exits. Anticipate the way traffic will flow, and allow a generous pathway (28 inches or more) through the space. If possible, arrange the room so that people coming from outside or other rooms can walk *around* conversation areas rather than through them. If this isn't possible, create clear walkways to prevent guests from bumping into the corners of tables or other low obstacles.

Eat Up

A tall, narrow dining table not only takes up less space, it also keeps sight lines open. When entertaining, you can add chairs (culled from other places in the home, if necessary) to the short ends of the table or pull the table away from the wall to dine.

Maximize Light

Dark, shadowy spaces look smaller than they are. To keep your rooms looking light and airy, choose sheer panels or translucent shades instead of heavy draperies. Hang mirrors opposite windows to reflect additional light. Instead of adding several table lamps, consider floor lamps. They typically have a thinner profile.



DESIGN BY HÉLÈNE DABROWSKI



PHOTO BY SEAN LITCHFIELD; DESIGN BY MEGHAN SHADRICK INTERIORS

Floating shelves and a clean-lined storage console, *above*, take up minimal space in this narrow living room. A round rug breaks up the long lines.

A slim floor lamp easily tucks behind a sofa, *left*. Sheer shades let in light without sacrificing privacy.



PHOTO COURTESY LAURA MARTIN BOVARD INTERIORS



PHOTO BY FLÜFF DESIGNS & DECOR

A large vintage mirror hanging behind the sofa makes this gathering space, *above*, appear larger than it is. An open metal-armed leather chair takes up less space than a fully upholstered one.

This triangular-shape coffee table, *left*, takes up little visual space and is easy to maneuver around.