



10 Common mistakes in interior design

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It happens to everyone— you are shopping and see the perfect home decor accessory.

Immediately you think, *Oh! this will look perfect in my TV room!*

Of course, you give in to the impulse buy and excitedly bring home your new-found treasure— only to discover that what looked liked the ideal accessory looks hideous when put in place, and you are left saying, *What was I thinking? Where did I go wrong?*

What most of us don't understand is that interior design takes a very keen and knowledgeable eye. We may be out shopping and see something we love, but that doesn't necessarily mean that it will look perfect in our home. Interior designers understand how color, lighting, room size, scale, and placement all affect how items look in a room and dictates whether they will make or break a room design.

There are a lot of common mistakes that almost everyone makes when designing their interiors. Here we look at the 10 most common mistakes and how to avoid making them:



1) Scale in Interior Design

We love how Linda Floyd explains scale and proportion in design, she says, “When you enter into a room, it should be like a city scape...a combination of different heights. You never want everything in a room to be at the same level or the same size. Accomplish this with different heights/sizes in your furnishings, art placement and window treatments.”

Scale is the number one mistake that almost everyone makes when it comes to interior design. This is probably the case because it takes a talented eye to decorate a room with impeccable scale. Some people put too many small things in a room, thereby cluttering the room and not giving the eye a place to land.

While others put too many large, bulky items in one room, making it look stuffed and small. The secret to proper scale is a mixture of different shapes, heights and sizes. If there is only one thing that you hire an interior designer for, it is help with proportion and scale. With the right scale your room is well on its way towards a successful design.



2) Shop Around and Budget Before Buying

We are all prone to impulse buys. It's not to say that you shouldn't buy something that you fall immediately in love with, but maybe just keep the receipt in case it doesn't work the way you had originally thought.

Before heading to the furniture showroom, it's best to have a plan and a budget well-established. First, your rooms need to be measured. The furniture placement and size need to be planned properly. Luckily, there are a lot of online room arrangement tools that are free and easy to use.

Go into a showroom with a plan in place, helping you know what you want and making sure you stick within your budget. Buyers remorse is an awful feeling, so plan first and shop later.



3) Ask for Help and Interior Design Advice

Even the most skilled designers make mistakes. It can be difficult to spot our mistakes when we have been muddling over the same room design for months—sometimes a room needs a fresh set of eyes to spot the problems.

Ask a friend for an honest opinion on color choice, fabrics, or room arrangement. If it is feasible, hire an interior designer for guidance—you don't have to hire one for an entire design project, as there are plenty of designers who charge by the hour. Interior designers are full of clever design tips and tricks that can transform your home.

If you disagree with the second opinion, then get a third. Listening to advice, doesn't mean we have to take it—your home design is uniquely yours and if you love it, then that's all that really matters, right?



4) Arrangement of Accessories and Collections

We all have them—collections. Somehow it started with one little ceramic bird and now you have a collection of birds in various shapes sizes and colors that you have amassed over the years. What is the proper way to display a collection such as this?

Well, let's start with the improper way, and the mistake that most of us make— scattering pieces of the collection throughout your home. One little bird may tweet from a fireplace mantle, while another little bird somehow flew all the way over to perch on the coffee table.

No matter what the accessory is, it is best to display them in arrangements and groupings. There are some steadfast rules to arranging items into groups—called the rule of three. So, gather what you love into groupings and display them proudly and properly.



5) Hanging Art

You can literally turn any wall of your home into your own personal art gallery. Everyone should display some form of art in their home—whether it is a rare oil painting or a cherished drawing from your child’s pre-school days. The road block that most encounter is how to properly hang art.

The best way to ensure there are no mistakes, and nasty nail holes to fill, is to trace and cut-out the frames outline on paper. Simply tape the paper cut-outs onto your wall, trying numerous placement options until you have the desired outcome.

Have fun with your arrangements, playing with size, color, and texture, remembering to avoid the number one mistake that most people make—scale (see number 1 above).



6) Buy Fabrics and Textiles First

A common mistake that most of us are guilty of—painting first. Put that paint brush down! First, you need to pick out the rooms fabrics and main textiles, such as rugs and curtains.

Why is this? Because it is simply much easier to find fabrics that we love and then pick out paint to match. While it is much harder to find a fabric that we love, that also just so happens to match the paint we have already put on our walls.

So, with budget and room size in mind, go for a shopping excursion. Look through samples of fabrics, rugs, pillows etc... Find what you love and then once you are happy with your design choices, pick out a paint shade or shades from the chosen textiles. Now you can pick up the paint brush.



7) Add Character

While it is really fun to look through showrooms that are full of brand-new modern furnishings, don't get carried away and buy everything at one time and one place.

Doing this results in a common interior design mistake—buying everything matchy-matchy, resulting in a home that lacks character. How do we add character? Slowly, over time. It can take years to have your home fully complete and fully designed.

Character is built within your interior design by adding that odd chair you found at the flea market or the amazing painting that a street vendor was selling. Try a small shopping excursion on the weekend, slowly over time you will find things you love and build your homes character.

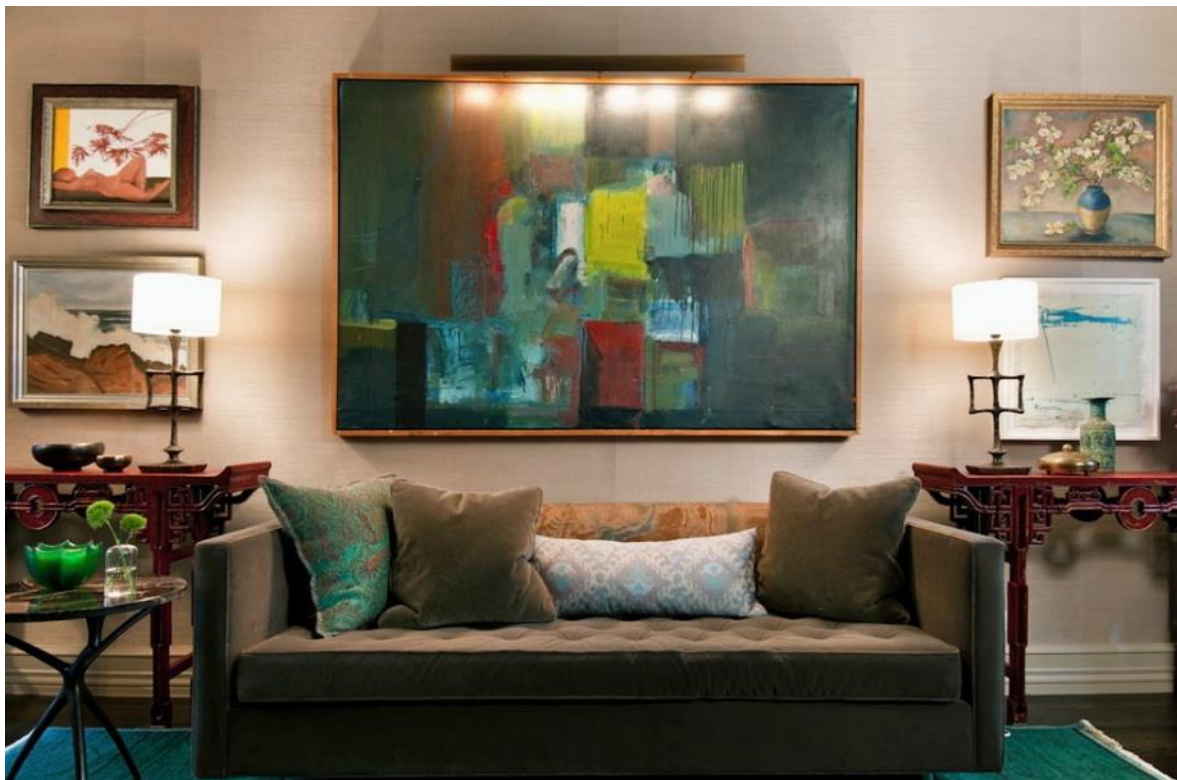


8) Add a Focal Point

Every room needs a focal point—it offers a place for the eye to rest and assigns a room with a function (Note: Larger rooms can have more than one focal point). This is a very common mistake—forgetting to give each room a purpose or point to focus on.

Some rooms are simple—in a TV room the focal point usually ends up being the TV and the unit it is placed on, while all the other main objects in the room (i.e. couches/chairs) are focused and pointing towards the TV.

Other rooms are a bit more difficult, such as sitting rooms or dens. Don't just scatter furnishings about the room— first, find a focus or purpose for the room, and then place the furnishings around that focal point. For example a fireplace, a gaming table, a large painting, or even a coffee table that encourages guests to sit and converse.



9) Don't Keep Grandma's Antique if you Dislike it

We all have hand-me-down furniture. Some are prized possessions, while others are weighing us down with distaste and guilt.

Do you have one of those “guilty” objects in your home? You know, that piece that was handed down to you—you hate it, you want to hide it in the basement, but you can't because it was a gift from Grandma? Why make this decorating mistake? Why have something in your home that doesn't bring you joy and happiness?

We suggest you find a new purpose for all those hand-me-downs that you hate. Whether you paint it, hand it off to another relative or give yourself permission to sell it and buy something you love in its place. Set yourself free and make your home full of things that make you happy.



10) Show Your Personality

Your home should speak to who you are; it should be like a personal memoir of your trips, your loves, your life. There is nothing worse than walking into someones home to be greeted by beige walls, brown furniture and one mass-produced print on the wall, pretending to be art.

The above-mentioned room just screams BORING! and we know our readers are far from boring. So, don't be shy when it comes to your home decor.

Bring in all the things you love, making your home a unique oasis that welcomes you at the end of a hard day, and also tells an intriguing story to your visitors.



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As you have read, there are a lot of common mistakes that can be easily made when it comes to interior design. Luckily, there are also plenty of easy solutions to fix these mistakes—sometimes it's as easy as getting rid of a hand-me-down that you hate but felt obligated to keep, while other times you may need to enlist the help and keen eye of a friend.

If all else fails and you are too frustrated with all the decorating decisions and obstacles that you face, then hire a professional interior designer—they are knowledgeable and can help you achieve your dream home—without all the mistakes.