

# How to Decorate a Living Room in 7 Steps

By [SARAH LYON](#) | Updated on 10/19/21



 [Chris Bradley](#) for [M. Lavender Interiors](#)

While the process of [decorating](#) a space as large as your [living room](#) may feel daunting, designing a space that will appeal to you and your family both in terms of form and function is easier than you may think. We spoke with experts who outlined the seven steps one must keep in mind when planning out a living room concept. Read on for their pro tips.

## MEET THE EXPERT

- **Rozit Arditi** is a designer and the founder of [Arditi Design](#).
- **Mia Jung** is the director of interiors at [Ike Kligerman Barkley](#).
- **Mark Lavender** is the principal designer at [M. Lavender Interiors](#).
- **Kate Lester** is a designer and the founder of [Kate Lester Interiors](#).
- **Tracy Morris** is a designer and the founder of [Tracy Morris Design](#).

## 01 Measure Your Space

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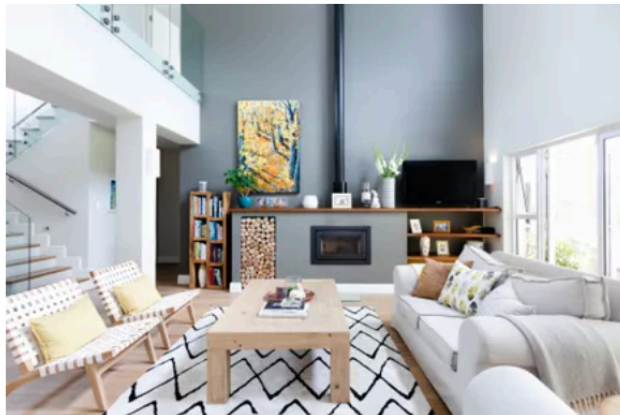
 The Spruce / Michelle Becker

Before you can make any drastic decisions about decorating your living space, you'll want to have an accurate sense of its square footage. After all, designer Kate Lester notes, "[Proper measurements](#) will ensure you select the correct size rug, furnishings, and window treatments." And keep in mind that doing

your due diligence ahead of time will save you both time *and* money—ordering and returning furniture and accessories because they don't fit into a space as you had hoped can be a hassle!

## 02 Establish Your Intentions

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 The Spruce / Michelle Becker

Determining the way in which you wish to, well, *live* in your living room will significantly shape the decorating process. "It is critical to fully understand how you want to use your space before you begin the design process," designer Mark Lavender states.

However, there is no one-size-fits-all use for a living

area. "Personally, I knew our living room was meant for conversation and reading," designer Tracy Morris says of her own space. "So, I placed the furniture in a grouping that allowed maximum conversation and allowed me to read by the window." In other spaces, existing fixtures such as a fireplace or built-in shelving may affect the [furniture arrangement](#) from the get-go and ease the decision-making process.

It's critical to be realistic about your intentions for the space, too, and not just base your design off of what you see in high-end design publications. "Make sure the room reflects you and your lifestyle—whatever your needs are at the time, make sure the room serves for that," designer Rozit Ardit states. "If you have kids, you do not need a glass coffee table or too many floor lamps that could be tripping hazards. Opt for a wood table and wall sconces instead."

## 03 Focus In On Your Aesthetic

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[The Spruce](#) / Leticia Almeida

Asks Lester, "Are you feeling modern farmhouse vibes, or more romantic and feminine?" Of course, it may be challenging to determine the direction that you wish to take with your living room design if you find yourself swooning over many types of decor styles. There's no need to commit solely to one

particular look, but establishing a general scheme is important. "The space doesn't have to be a total theme party, but determining and overall design direction will help when narrowing down selections for the space," Lester says. Upon making this decision comes the fun part—turning to favorite resources for inspiration. Lester enjoys looking through design books, magazines, or Pinterest. "I like to have at least 10 images that help inspire a room design," she offers.

## 04 Make a "Room Board"

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[Chris Bradley](#) for [M. Lavender Interiors](#)

Before grabbing your wallet, you'll want to consider how your [ideal furniture pieces](#) will function in a space. "Gather images of the pieces you intend to use and make a small 'room board,'" Lester suggests. "See how all of the pieces interact with each other and play off of one another before you get them home." You may find

yourself catching key mistakes—far before they're too late to fix, fortunately. "Oftentimes, this is when we see that we have pulled too many items with the same leg style or that a rug pattern may be competing with a drapery fabric," Lester explains. "It's a great way to make simple changes and swaps and fine-tune the look before you place the final order!"

## 05 Get Shopping

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Greg Powers for Tracy Morris

Given that [furniture](#) can be quite pricey, you may wish to spread out your purchases over time. If you're not sure what to buy first, think big—literally. "Start with the larger pieces to ground the room, like the sofa or the area rug, and build from there," Arditì says.

Arditi offers another key piece of advice, for [buying sofas](#): "Always invest in the best sofa you can afford at the time," she comments. "We spend so much time in our living rooms and most of that time is spent on the sofa—make sure it is the most comfortable and the best one you can get. You won't regret it."

## 06 Address Your Walls

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Michael Hunter for Kim Armstrong Design

By no means should the walls be left blank, either. [Wall decor](#) is essential. "Walls are always a great opportunity to add more character to the room," Arditì comments. Adds Lavender, "Artwork, pillows, and decorative items always act as the jewelry for the room. These pieces really add that next layer of

panache to the space."

Not sure what to hang? "Either a large piece of art—or a gallery wall, depending on your style—or a mirror to reflect the sunlight through the room are always great ways to decorate," Arditì adds. You can always go the secondhand route, too, to source an artifact that will make your living room truly shine, notes Mia Jung, director of interiors at Ike Kligerman Barkley. "Having a special vintage or an antique piece and art will set it apart from the family room," she states.

## 07 Don't Forget About Greenery

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 [Kate Lester Interiors](#)

According to Ardit, [plants](#) make for the perfect finishing touch in any living room. "If you are tight on budget or live in a rental where you [cannot invest much in your decoration](#), make sure to get some plants," she encourages. "The greenery adds life and freshness to any room without breaking the bank."