

# Simple Steps to Create a Sanctuary Space at Home



Michele Lerner, Associate Editor ⌚ 5 min read



## Your home is your refuge in a noisy world. Find out how to make it calmer.

If your home is a colorful, cluttered, lively place to be, you can still find ways to turn some or all of it into a spot where you can soothe your soul and calm your mind. Creating sanctuary spaces at home can be achieved with thoughtfulness and preparation, suggests Mary Gordon, vice president of [InSite Builders & Remodeling](#) in Bethesda, Md.

“Look at spaces from a different perspective and think outside the box,” Gordon says. “Unused corners of a room, spaces under the stairs, closets, attics, basements or small balconies can be transformed into sanctuary spaces with a little creativity and attention. Simplicity and a clutter-free environment are essential to creating a sanctuary space within a busy home.”

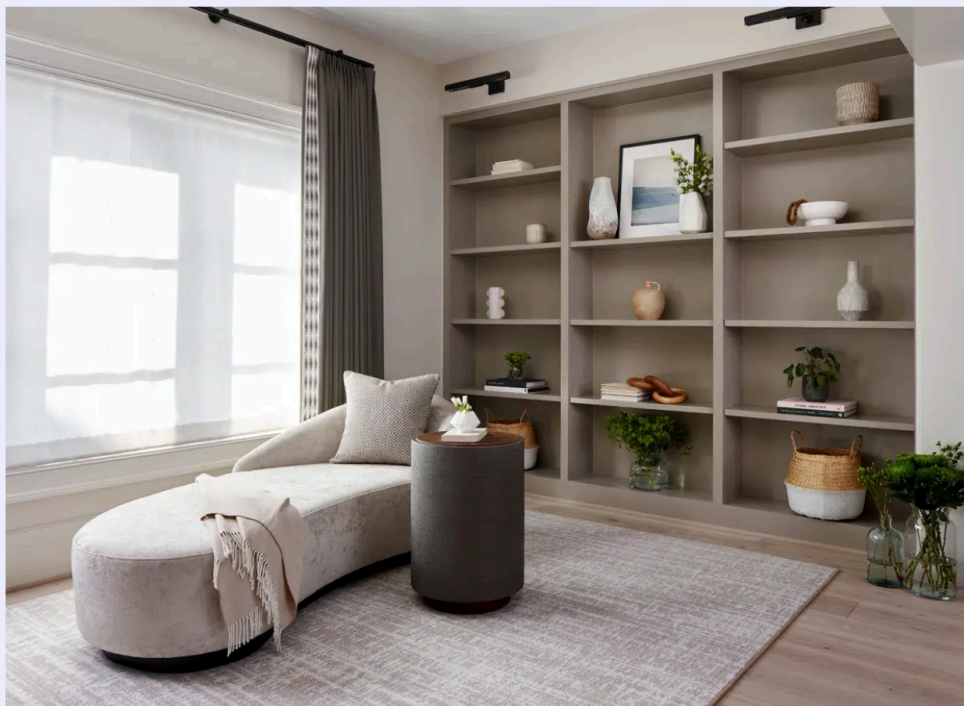


Image Credit: Tracy Morris Design, photo by Greg Powers

## **Color Schemes for Calm**

Choosing the right shade can have a huge impact on the overall mood of a room, says Sydney Levy, a designer with [Anthony Wilder Design/Build](#) in Cabin John, Md. She recommends a color palette of light shades of blue, green and off white for the ultimate calming space.

Other designers, like Summer Jensen, founder of [Hawk & Co.](#), an architecture and interior design firm in Laguna Beach, Calif., prefer warm-based colors for a sanctuary space.

"I look for colors that share the same base background hue and then I always add just a little gray to the tone to make the colors harmonious and easy on the eye," Jensen says. "I also don't like a lot of contrast in a calm space."

Depending on your preferences, Gordon suggests you try neutral tones such as cream, soft beige and taupe for a relaxing atmosphere.

"Alternatively, use cooler colors such as shades of blue and green that give a nod to nature, or earthy hues like sage green, browns and terracotta to provide a sense of grounding," Gordon says.

While there are many color schemes that can contribute to a calm atmosphere, Tracy Morris, owner of [Tracy Morris Design](#) in McLean, Va., recommends painting a space the same color, including the ceiling.

"This creates an enveloping feeling, creating calm," Morris says. "When utilizing this look, the colors can vary. I like to use creams, whites, blues or soft greens."

## **Sustainable Materials that Comfort**

While your mind may instantly link soft blankets and velvety cushions with comfort, a variety of materials in your home can contribute to a sense of coziness that can calm your mind and body – even tile.

"LIVDEN tiles are made from recycled materials, using processes that have minimal environmental impact, so you can ease your mind knowing you are using an eco-friendly product," says Georgie Smith, co-founder of California-based sustainable tile brand [LIVDEN](#). "Our terrazzo tile's chips of translucent glass can create soft, dreamy light while bringing an element of texture to a space. Soft, warm colors are, by nature, calming."

The recycled terrazzo tiles hold warmth well, which can also add to a comfortable feeling, she says.

Natural fibers such as cotton, linen and bamboo are sustainable and comfortable choices for bedding, curtains and upholstery, Gordon says. "Furniture made from reclaimed wood or recycled metal reduces environmental impact and offers a variety of charming, pre-loved options," she says. "Wool or jute rugs that are biodegradable are excellent for adding warmth and coziness to a space."

## Lighting Tips for Sanctuary Spaces

Whether you're lighting a yoga or meditation room, there's a strong chance that room may function sometimes as a homework space or guest bedroom, too, so you'll need lighting for multiple functions.

"I like to have multiple types of lighting to create a calming mood, such as recessed, sconces, chandeliers and lamps," Levy says. "That way you can choose what type of light you would like to radiate at a given time."

Besides natural light from windows with sheer curtains for privacy, Gordon recommends overhead lighting with dimmers to adjust the light intensity.

"Choose LED bulbs with a 'Dim to Warm' feature to achieve softness similar to incandescent light while saving energy," Gordon says. "Candlelight and string or fairy lights also add a gentle glow, perfect for creating a peaceful environment."

Jensen, on the other hand, says overhead lights should never be used in a sanctuary space.

"In general, I've really been shying away from the spray of downlights in a home," Jensen says. "Indirect cove lighting or a wall washer to highlight a pretty wallpaper is better when you want to relax your eyes."

## Natural Calm

Bringing natural elements and nature into our everyday lives can improve both mental and physical wellbeing, says Hilary Gibbs, co-founder of LIVDEN.

"Incorporate natural materials like wood, stone and clay in your interior design," she says. "Let more natural light into your home with large windows, reflective surfaces and sheer curtains. Candles can bring an element of warmth and aromatherapy. Potted plants can add greenery and improve air quality indoors. There is a reason neutral tones, blues and greens are the most calming colors – they connect us to the earth; blue skies, green grass, soft sand."

Indoor plants bring a source of life to spaces, Morris says, and can provide both calm and texture. She recommends adding a fig tree to the corner of a living room, a succulent to a table or a small plant on a desk.

"Indoor plants like succulents, peace lilies, and snake plants are thought to remove airborne toxins, promoting a meditative environment and healthier indoor air quality," Gordon says.

Jensen likes to add atriiums and planter beds into homes when possible to add greenery.

"Even a simple walkway lined in river rocks echoes the organic forms found along the beach's edge," Jensen says. "There are also some new light fixtures hitting the market with integrated pots for plants."

## **Softer Sounds for a Quieter Mind**

If you simply want to block out the sounds of chatter or a television in another room, or if your home is on a noisy street with traffic, fabrics such as thick curtains and rugs can absorb sound and reduce noise, Gordon says.

“White noise from fans, noise machines or a small indoor fountain can provide soothing background sounds,” Gordon says. “Door sweeps can also help minimize sound coming through gaps in doorways.”

Depending on the level of noise, you may want to tackle the issue with a bigger home improvement project. For example, if you’re hearing someone walking on the floor above or your neighbors talking, there are several potential solutions, Jensen says.

“For most noisy conditions, my acoustic engineer would say to build a room within a room,” Jensen says. “This will allow an air gap that buffers sound and transference around the entire room. If the room is an echo chamber, try to add soft goods like carpet, drapery and upholstered furniture. Upholstered panels also provide acoustic properties. Another option is an acoustic drywall like Quietrock that you can apply over plywood for a quieter space.”

Thoughtful choices can help you achieve a calmer home.