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*Styling  
to Stay*

Room by room tips to make  
your house a home

*Turn your  
House into  
a Home*

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# Welcome

Your home may be your sanctuary, your castle and often your largest investment but all too often its true beauty isn't fully realised. Whether you have clear vision of your dream home or need help to uncover it. This simple room by room styling guide will help you easily and economically rework your home to create spaces that are beautifully styled and suited to your needs and lifestyle.

Learn how you can easily:

- Transform the front of your home
- Give your entrance the WOW factor
- Create a welcoming and comfortable Kitchen
- Transform your living room into a haven
- Save space with functional storage solutions
- Add interest and elegance to your bathroom
- Sleep in style
- Transform your home with lighting &
- Spruce up your garden

**Are you ready....Let's get started!**



# Creating an entrance

The front of your home is very important - it makes the all-important first impression and welcomes you as you return from a long day of work. You want it to make you feel good as soon as you see it.

Your home's facade may be in need of a complete facelift – perhaps you need a new roof or the windows don't open or close, or perhaps it only needs a make-over with some fresh plants and paint.

Here are some ideas to lift the front of your home and make it a view you love pulling up to.

## Neat, clean and cared for.

The first thing to do is to make sure that everything looks clean and well cared for. Edge those flower beds, add some mulch, sweep the paths and clear away any cobwebs from letter box, lights and windows.

If you have a front gate it will be the first thing that people come into contact with so it needs to be clean, in good condition and quiet.

## Light me up

Ensure your bulbs are bright enough and working well. Make sure that the street or unit number is clearly visible and that the doorbell works.

## A Structured Garden

Evergreen shrubs will add appeal and structure all year round and you can easily add flowering plants through the seasons to add some colour, texture and height

## Pave the way

Your path should encourage people to continue to your front door. There are many options to consider depending on your taste and budget but I've found plain white pavers look terrific against a green lawn. If the steps to your front door look a little shabby a great trick is to tile the step treads, rather than ripping everything out and starting from scratch.



### Add a sculpture

Place a sculpture, a birdbath or an all-weather object you love in the front yard to make your front garden more interesting and to reflect your personality.

### Spruce up the front door.

A freshly painted front door and surrounding structure will help make your entrance look renewed and inviting. Door and window handles should be clean or even new. Also by placing plants symmetrical on either side of the front door it'll really help to make a welcoming impact. The trick here is to keep it simple and not clutter the space.

### Welcome Mat

Invest in a new door mat - This is a great for the rest of your home too, as people will wipe their feet before entering and will help keep your home clean. If you live in an area that gets mucky – add a boot scraper.

### The history of your home

If you live in an older home, why not contact your local council and apply for an official sign noting the year it was built and the name and perhaps a bit about the history. Display this near the front door – it will be an interesting point of conversation.

# Make an entrance.

The entrance is the gateway to the rest of your home and sets the tone for the full home experience. No matter how large or small, there are some easy styling tips to give your entrance that WOW factor.



### Refresh your door

Get a beautiful door - you'll be amazed at how an attractive door can change your entry way entirely – from both the inside and out.

### The Perfect Three

This works well every-time – a fabulous rug, a perfectly scaled side/hall table and great lighting. I suggest investing in the best rug you can as nothing warms up an entry like a rug. If you have a tight hall-way – perhaps add a wall mounted piece of furniture that can be used to display items and hold some lights.

### Centre Piece

If you are lucky enough to have a large entry foyer, a beautifully centred table with fresh flowers and an arrangement of ornaments will add elegance and grace to any entry.

### Give it some Personality

Make the entry way reflect you and your family - add some photos, a sculpture from your travels or something that speaks about the people who live there. Or add a fabulous patterned wall paper to transform your hall into the bold entry way you dream of – so easy and so beautiful.

### The Power of a Vignette

I love an informal vignette - or casual grouping of different ornaments, as it adds an interesting element to any room. Depending on space consider adding an old bench, a place to hang coats or bags, a chair or frames on the wall.

### Step inside and see the light.

If your hallway feels dark, try painting the walls white to lighten things up, or add a sky light. A broad runner will make a hallway seem wider.

Add a living flower arrangement. – Flowers or longer lasting potted plants like orchids help create a welcoming statement and add colour, life and scale.

### Separate the space

If your entry opens into a large room, create a screen with a bookcase or cabinet and add accessories and family photos to help





# The Heart of the Home

Kitchens have become the heart of the home. We expect them to be welcoming, comfortable and look fantastic, forgetting they are the hardest working room in the home.



Don't panic - remodeling your kitchen is not an all or nothing proposition – there are many things you can do to spruce up the kitchen or give it a bit more love without having to do a full blown remodel.

## Clear the clutter

Do an inventory of your existing possessions. Do they all fit neatly? Can some items be kept elsewhere such as the laundry?

It is important that worktops are freed up and can be used to keep practical accessories on hand – like large platters of fruit, a marble pestle and mortar and stainless steel appliances.

One easy way to clear the clutter is to add a wall rail organization system where you can hang pots, utensils, paper towels, dish drying racks, a clock or what-ever you choose.

## Wall worries.

A fresh coat of paint can work wonders in a drab kitchen, especially if cooking splatters have become a feature! Don't forget your worn tiles, a little primer and paint can make a huge difference.

## Buy a new soap dispenser

Believe it or not, little touches like a nice soap dispenser are noticed in a kitchen, it's an item everyone uses so it should be one that you love.

### Change your Cabinet Hardware

Swapping cabinet doors can give your kitchen a whole new look. If entirely new doors are outside your budget you can make a huge difference by simply replacing the handles of your cupboards and drawers.

### Make a small kitchen seem big

Replace solid cabinet doors with glass one. This will lighten the look of cabinetry and allow the eye to travel through to the back which will make the kitchen seem bigger – just make sure the cupboards are clutter free.

### Storage Solutions

You can never have enough storage in a kitchen – it's important for organization and control. Consider adding additional storage or a cabinet you can put plates in if space in the kitchen is tight.

### Lift the lighting.

Add a pendant light on an extra-long cord, to make an elegant alternative to spot task lighting – a single light fixture can transform a room.

### Benchtops.

Many people think that replacing a scratched and stained benchtop is just too costly, but not all benchtop materials are that expensive. I suggest laminate or even the slightly more expensive option of corian or composite materials. This small investment will transform a kitchen.

### Fix the floor

If your kitchen floor is a little worse for

wear, lift the lino and if you have them, polish the floorboards underneath - if they are in good enough condition - otherwise lay vinyl flooring, which is easy to clean. Alternatively you may like to use tiles for a contemporary cool feeling.

### Tile your backsplash

This is a cost effective way to add some personality and colour to a kitchen – and it's functional too.

### Finishing Touches

- A window sill or the top of a kitchen cupboard all possess display potential, combined with practical appeal. Consider adding a jar with some flowers or an arrangement of pots or vases for some added interest.
- Don't forget the basic items like plates and cookbooks can be used decoratively. Displaying these items on a shelf instead of tucking them away in a cupboard will add colour and personality to your kitchen.
- Add fresh flowers – you'll be surprised how happy they'll make you
- If you have open shelves – pick the prettiest tableware and display it.
- Buy some matching jars and transfer your beans, rice, pasta, nuts etc then display them on open shelves or behind glass doors. If you don't have glass cupboard don't worry - put them in your cupboard as organisation looks good and give a sense of calm.

# Living in Style

We may entertain, relax with the family and watch television in this room, but in reality our family / living rooms need to feel like a retreat, somewhere you feel safe and relaxed.



The design principle I use when styling this space is “Every good interior has a compliment and a contrast”. It’s what gives a space excitement and personality. Using contrasting elements like black and white for example works well, but it can be achieved equally as well with opposing fabric patterns, textures or different size ornaments.

## Where to start?

Make a detailed checklist of the activities that will take place in this room. Start by considering how you use the living room – do you like a quiet space to read and relax? Is entertaining important to you? Does your family congregate there in the evening or do you have little children who need to come first at the moment. By prioritizing the way you use the room will help determine the room lay out.

## Plan the Room

With a clear view of how the room is to be used, determine the main focal point – this is one of the golden rules of interior design – every room needs a focus.

To work this out consider what are you going to look at and enjoy - is it a fireplace, the television, a painting, feature wall or something else?

Then think about the traffic and conversation flow, how do you enter the room, get around sofas etc.

To work out the best way to arrange your furniture – either:

- Plan out every detail and use scaled furniture cutouts and position them around the plan OR
- Get a friend or partner and start moving things around. If you can empty everything out of the room that's the best then start to bring items back in.

Layout Tip:

- Try to keep 50-60cm between upholstery and the coffee table
- Try arranging your furniture symmetrically first as it works well in living rooms
- Make sure you have 1m – 1.2m of walking space in a main pathway

### Watch out below.

Floors can be the most expensive part of your room to replace; It may not be economical to replace worn or inappropriate flooring, so make the most of what you have.

Have your carpets professionally cleaned or re-sand and polish your marked or damaged timber floors.

### Finishing Touches

The core ingredients for getting your room to feel and look fantastic, is how you combine colour, pattern and texture.

### Colour

Have fun with colour – don't worry about what's in fashion now – choose one that reflects your personality and makes you feel happy. If you're nervous about introducing too much colour – try adding in some coloured cushions or a feature wall. Both are easy to change if you really hate the look.

### Texture

When thinking about texture – think about what it's like to touch different surfaces. Some are smooth or rough, others are soft and fluffy while others are shiny or matt. By mixing the different textures up in a room, it will add interest and an extra dimension. Easy ways to introduce texture is via a coffee table, upholstery, floor rug, lamps and plants and paintings.

### Pattern

This is the 3rd key dimension that will help revitalize a room. Consider adding in a mix of tonally matched patterns in your cushion covers, on the floor, in a throw rug or in a well placed painting.

### TIP: Seasonal change

A cheap way to change the whole look of your family room is to have different cushion covers for the seasons – you'll be amazed the difference they can make

# Creating functional storage solutions

No matter where you look if you train your eye you can find hard to reach or seemingly unusable areas that you can transform into usable and functional storage solutions. You need only use your imagination and get familiar with some of the awesome storage hardware solutions out in the market place



### Stair Storage

This image credited to both zsarchitects.com.au and hendarise.com.au has a very neat approach to shoe storage, making an opportunity out of the lost space between stairs. Ingenious!

### Keeping Things At Arm's Reach

If you have high ceilings you have the opportunity to tuck things away using clever systems that lets you hang items up high but simply pull on a handle and they come down like magic.

### Some Amazing Engineering

Another one of my favourite storage solutions is this amazing bit of engineering by Hafele called the LeMans corner pullout. It makes the most of those awkward corners in cupboards so that you can actually get to the things you put in there, not just the stuff at the front.

### Utilising the Void Behind a Splash Back

I've always had a really strong focus on storage, my first ever project featured an interesting use of a void in a kitchen behind a splash back. I was able to figure a way to lift the mirror to reveal a bar behind.

### The Value of Window Seats

Good storage isn't only about gadgets and novelties though. It's more about looking for the spaces in your home that might otherwise be wasted and finding a way to use it.

There are opportunities for better storage in every room in your home. A window seat could have a flip top or drawers in front to store shoes like this one by [www.annacarindesign.com.au](http://www.annacarindesign.com.au)

### Under Bed Storage

Bed bases can flip up or have drawers for utility storage like the DROR or LIFFT bed bases from Domayne.

### Adding an Appliances Cupboard

Kitchens can use the storage solutions most of all, often with things as simple as an appliances cupboard that hides your benchtop necessities

### Dual Purpose Furniture

More common dual purpose furniture like Murphy beds have even made their way onto the Block with Steve and Chantelle using something much like this to get both a bed and storage into the same small space.

# Soak up Some Luxury

A bathroom must combine functionality with good looks. It is often planned in isolation which means it misses out on decorative themes. So here are some simple ideas to add some interest and elegance to your bathroom.



## Clutter free

Always style with restraint – try to maintain a clutter free space with carefully chosen accessories such as glass jars, plants and perfume bottles to keep the space streamlined.

## Fix the fittings.

Cracked basin, toilets or tubs give the impression the room is unhygienic, so consider replacing these. It's not that expensive provided you don't change the plumbing

## Clean, clean, clean.

Clean your tiles and grouting, make

sure your windows, mirrors and shower screens are spotless and free of streaks. Hairs in the drains are yuk so check this regularly. Replace your soap bars with liquid soap, there will be less mess to take care of.

## That smell won't sell.

It is a fact of life that bad smells can creep into your bathrooms. Make sure you air your bathrooms well, open the windows, use the extractor fan and add some potpourri or air freshener if needed...but don't go over the top as it feel as though you are hiding something.

### Add a bit of luxury.

Today luxury bathrooms are very popular, but we don't all have this look. You can however add a little luxury to any bathroom.

Fresh plump towels, some handmade soaps, plant or fresh flowers and some boutique bath products set out in your bathroom will give that feeling of luxury.

### Space savers.

If you have a small bathroom don't clutter the limited wall space with towel rails, put them on the back of the door. If you are renovating a small bathroom, consider wall mounted sinks and toilets. Use big mirrors to make the room appear twice the size - not only will they enhance the feeling of spaciousness, they are also very practical.

The bathroom will also seem less cluttered if you keep the colour scheme simple and light as well as ensuring you have good storage to hide all those bits and pieces.



### A new coat.

Stained or chipped bathtubs and basins can be easily fixed by enamelling companies that can give your fitting a whole new look. They can even enamel old tiles, so if your bathroom's colour scheme is straight out of the 1970's this simple inexpensive process could save your thousands. Add to this a fresh coat of paint on the walls and you have a whole new bathroom.

### Natural light

Bring natural light into the shower if you can – perhaps use glazed windows with frosted glass

### If you don't have much wall space

Consider alternative storage to the bathroom cabinet. Is it possible to build in a cabinet below a vanity worktop? Can towels be stacked on low level shelves? Woven baskets, ceramic containers or pretty glass jars can hold bathroom essentials and they look great too.

### For the family

Make sure you use good anti-slip flooring and choose a simple shower mixer that everyone can operate. I suggest you fit an energy efficient showerhead to reduce water flow – this is a great idea if you have kids.



# Sleeping in Style

The living room is the most public room and the kitchen is the heart of the home, but the bedroom is a place for you to escape – it's your sanctuary. Here are some tips to help you rest easier.



## Less is more.

However large your bedrooms are, they will look small if they are cluttered with too many knick-knacks. Remove as much as possible then start bringing those items you love back in.

The point is to keep your bedroom clear, clean and as simple as possible.

Here is a list of the bedroom necessities:

- Unobtrusive bedside tables
- Beautiful sheets
- Task lighting
- Ambient lighting
- Black out curtains
- Small water jug next to the bed
- Scented candle
- Something good to read

### A Colour Change

If it's been a while since you changed the colour scheme – try making a fresh start. Picture your ideal bedroom. Now note down a colour you love that makes you feel calm and relaxed. Fresh blues and greens are generally calming and clean white with citrus yellow can make the room feel fresh. This is one room you don't have to worry about colour trends.

### Visual Inspiration

Every wall in your home is worthy of great artwork - not just the living room. Group a collection of your favourite framed prints or photographs on the wall – it will be a great visual inspiration when you wake up. Add a mirror to bring in more natural light and add a plant to your bedside table – living things add a sense of life to any room.

### Add a Bed Head

You won't believe the difference it makes to your bed. Not only is it comfy to rest back on if you're reading in bed but you can cover it with fabulous material and easily introduce colour to the room.

### Change your Bed Linens and Add Texture

If you want to change your look without spending a lot, consider new sheets, doona cover and pillows. For extras, think quality not quantity. A cashmere, alpaca or merino wool blanket may be more expensive, but they are cosy, durable and beautiful.

### Pillow Power

To make your bed look its best you need an assortment of different sized pillows. For a double bed or larger, you can use up to 9-10 Pillows – 2 European cushions, 2 to sleep on on each side, 2 decorative pillows and one- two smaller pillows in the front. I can hear some men groan – but believe me beds look great like this.

### A Place to Curl Up

If you have the space, consider adding an armchair, small sofa or a low cushioned bench for quiet moments.

### Storage Style

You can never have enough storage in a bedroom! To reduce the demands on limited space in small bedrooms, consider having built-in robes installed.

If you're using a dresser for your TV, swap it for a beautiful armoire where you can hide the television and store lots of other items

### TIPS: When it comes to bedrooms, size matters!

There are a number of tricks you can use to make your bedrooms seem large. Reduce the amount of furniture and be clever with the space you have. If you have a small bedroom use a double bed instead of a queen, or bunks in a children's room.

# Lighting fundamentals

The key to great lighting is creating drama through contrast.

Whether you're renovating for profit, planning a new or existing space in your house or wanting to add glamour when marketing a property, good lighting is one of the most fundamental aspects of successful interior design.

Lighting for me is all about telling a story, creating drama and adding an element of visual interest that furniture and decoration alone simply won't achieve.



## Use Natural Light to your Advantage

Try to capture as much natural light as possible.

If a room is completely sun-drenched, try using filtering window coverings to soften its intensity. If there is limited natural light available, consider the use of mirrors and reflective finishes. Used cleverly, these will allow you to bounce natural light deeper into dark spaces.

## Don't Be Afraid of the Dark

Darkness brings out the different moods and personalities of a room and adds an air of uncertainty and romance that can be exciting and even sublime. As light creates shadow, this can be used to distort the boundaries and dimensions of a room which actually enhances its sense of space.

Highlighting a painting, artwork or sculpture on a dark wall gives the illusion of objects being suspended in space.

### Shine the Spotlight on your Features

Light also gives you the opportunity to direct people's gaze to the focal points of your room or home like tables, statues, artworks or even statement furniture pieces. Lights can also serve as sculptural objects themselves or to light up cabinets

### Understand Space and Create Light Zones

Angled down lights and wall sconces can be used to expand a room's size or break up open spaces and walls into discrete areas. Up lights can be used to make a room feel taller or can be used to highlight certain architectural features.

In rooms with vast ceilings, table lamps, floor lamps or feature candles can bring the focus below eye level to make a room feel more inviting and intimate.

### Take Task Lighting to Task

Another fundamental rule is that light should always suit what you're doing in a room at a particular time. Dimmers are a great way to adapt the lighting levels in the room to suit your activity or mood at the time.



# Step outside



Us Aussies love to be outside. Whether it's entertaining friends for family, creating a space for the kids or a special area for you to relax with a book – it's important to consider this space and to get it right.

## Neat and trim

Weed your garden and keep the lawn trimmed when opening your home for inspection. Consider your plants – remove and replace any dead ones, but make sure they suit the conditions in your garden:

## Colourful creations

The garden is one place you can have fun with colour but rather than introduce lots of different colours into a small garden bed, try sticking to one shade, perhaps using varying tones. You can add instant colour with pots of whatever is in flower from the nursery.

## Styling your garden

You can give your garden a simple makeover by adding defining borders to your flower beds and adding a focal point. Timber borders are popular, or you can outline your beds with small shrubs or

grasses.

Add a few larger plants as focal points but keep them in proportion to the size of your garden.

## Creating a courtyard

Many houses today, particularly in the inner city, don't have large gardens. Often there is only a small courtyard so it is important to maximise this space. The first step may be to create a focal point like a water feature, statue or urn.

This should be placed at the furthest point from the entrance so your vision is drawn to a distance, giving a sense of space. You can also give an illusion of space by paving the entire area with large pavers to make the ground look wider and less busy.

Don't use any dark colours in your courtyard structures as these reduce the perception of space.

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