



10 Ways to Avoid Decorating Disasters

How many times have you decided to update a room by painting, buying new furniture, swapping out window treatments or adding new accessories, only to be disappointed with the results? Listed below are some decorating mistakes we've all made at one time or another, and suggestions for avoiding them:

1. "The paint color didn't turn out how I expected."

Lighting is usually the culprit. The lighting in paint and home improvement stores is usually pretty bad, and the light in your home changes throughout the day. Instead of relying on paper swatches, get sample pots of paint, apply a few strokes on the wall, let it dry completely, then take a look to see if you really like it in different lighting conditions.

2. "I loved all the detail on the sofa/curtains/chairs when I picked them, but now I can't stand them."

Heavily decorated or boldly colored textiles may look fab as a swatch in the store, but often lose their appeal—especially on large pieces—because they command your attention each time you walk into the room. If you like intense colors, prints, trim, or other embellishments, limit them to smaller pieces like pillows, ottomans, or accessories, so you can easily swap them out when their 15 minutes are up.

3. "This piece shows every mark, speck of dust or dirt, and smudge."

Consider the durability of materials and finishes on items that will be handled or used often. Soft woods and metals scratch, and dent easily, while super hard or brittle materials tend to crack or chip. Textured surfaces are much more forgiving than high-gloss reflective ones. Choose easy-care durable materials for pieces that will take a beating, and save the more finicky pieces for display only.

4. "I think I went overboard with my theme."

Just because you want to turn your bedroom into "an evening in Paris" doesn't mean Eiffel Towers should cover every surface. Instead of rigidly adhering to a theme, think "inspired by" instead. Choose a few statement pieces that reflect your source of inspiration, and use neutral, adaptable fabrics and accessories to complete the look.



Photo from HookedonHouses.com

5. "The furniture is too big."

You can't accurately gauge the scale of furnishings in a store, so measure the room, windows, and doorways, and allow for other furnishings in the room. Be sure to allow walk-around space for each item that takes up floor space, or that has to be opened or moved when used.

While you shop, measure anything you're seriously considering.

6. "The room is too dark."

Let there be light. Choose window treatments that filter, rather than block, light. Add more sources of light, like table or floor lamps, uplights or picture lights. Flameless candles or tealights can add a warm glow whenever you need it.

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Photo from UglyHouses.com

7. ***“Everything is too matchy-matchy.”***

All of the items in a room don't have to match exactly to look coordinated. In fact, they shouldn't—it makes for a very predictable, and somewhat dull, décor. Thoughtful mixing of textures, patterns, colors, and styles adds visual tension to the room, keeping things interesting.

8. ***“The room doesn't look pulled together.”***

In a well-appointed room, every piece somehow relates to or balances the other things in the room either by color, style, shape, or size. Check the furniture arrangement; let your major pieces mix and mingle within the room instead of hugging the walls. Create groupings of accessories—the impact is much stronger than scattering them throughout the room. Mix sizes, shapes, and densities so the décor is balanced, and not dominant in one area and lacking in another.

9. ***“I love it but my family hates it.”***

Failing to take into consideration the tastes and needs of others who share your home when you start redecorating almost guarantees they'll have a problem with the changes you've made. When planning your room makeover, create areas that your family can enjoy too. It doesn't mean putting an NFL logo chair in your new beach-inspired living room, but maybe adding a few touches with the hubs and kids in mind can prevent an unnecessary mutiny.

10. ***“With this furniture layout we can't sit on the sofa and watch TV/look out the window/enjoy the fireplace/get to the patio doors.”***

When re-arranging furniture, be sure to account for the natural focal points and traffic patterns in the room, and plan accordingly. While placing all the seating so it faces each other may result in the perfect conversation area, it will become a problem if you end up turning around half the chairs every time you want to watch TV. Consider all the ways you use a room so that you don't create more problems than you solve with the new floorplan.

If the thought of doing it all yourself seems a bit overwhelming, then call Happily Better After for some expert advice.



Whether you need assistance selecting a paint color or re-working the furniture layout, an objective opinion about your accessory choices, or help with the entire process, we'll make sure you are happy with your makeover project. Call us today to get started!


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