

# Creating the Perfect Space:

Tricks of the Trade to Maximize Room Function

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Do you find yourself squinting to see the television or yelling across the room to have a conversation? Is your back to your beautiful lake view while watching television or enjoying your fireplace? Does your room feel like something is missing or off, but you are not sure what it is?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, it is likely that your furniture placement needs work. You may have the right amount of furniture, but just need to arrange it differently. Most living rooms have two to three focal points in them, commonly a fireplace, television and view. And, they generally have multiple functions going on in them. So, how on earth does one arrange furniture considering all of this?

The first thing you need to do is ask yourself some questions:

- How many people do I need to seat in the space?
- How do I want the space to function?
- What is most important—television viewing, entertaining, conversation or reading?
- What are the main focal points?
- What are the traffic patterns in and out of the space?
- How does the space look when it is viewed from adjacent areas?

Try floating your furniture in the room around your focal point(s) versus lining your walls with it. This will create your traffic patterns behind your pieces, instead of in front of them. It will get your furniture closer together to create a more intimate seating arrangement and put the visual weight of the room in the center,

thereby balancing the space. Such an arrangement could open up a corner to tuck a comfortable chair and ottoman in for reading or enjoying your view.

If your focal points are split up from one another, consider using swivel chairs. These can be a very functional way to take advantage of all of the focal points in a room. If your view is through low windows, consider doing lower backed furniture so it does not obscure your view as much as the higher backed varieties. If you like to put your feet up, consider a large ottoman instead of a coffee table. You can always put a tray on it for entertaining purposes, or use it as an extra seat or two. If you entertain often and need to gain seating during these occasions, try tucking a pair of small ottomans under a console table, or coffee table that can be pulled out when needed for an extra seat. If your furniture is focused around the fireplace and you have a nice large hearth, have some custom cushions made to enhance your room and add seating.

Once your furniture is placed, don't forget about lighting the area with portable lamps. For floating furniture arrangements, floor outlets are a must. This eliminates the hazard of having cords strung across the floor or hidden under a rug. If you have a basement or crawl space, these can be added to accommodate a floating floor plan. Try to balance the light in the space. Locate a lamp at either end of a sofa, or behind it on a console table, and one between two chairs opposing it. Keep in mind that floor lamps can be very functional too, as many of them are adjustable in height and angle and can easily tuck under the edge of a piece of furniture.

As a final touch, the furniture arrangement can be beautifully anchored with an area rug. If your furniture is solid in color, consider a colorful patterned rug to enhance or complement your throw pillows and accessories. If your furniture has patterned fabric, consider a more muted solid rug. This is also something that can be changed seasonally to create a new look and feel to the space.

Remember not to fill your space with too much furniture or stuff. A room can get over done quickly and impede the room's function. You can fill those corners and nooks with live plants, accessories or even an extra dining chair to add texture and color. Just remember to measure your space and your furniture before buying, or hire an interior designer to do some space planning for you to maximize your room and your budget. With careful space planning, you can create a room that is both lovely to behold and a joy to live in. □

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