

Home Decorating On a Budget

Decorate Like a Celebrity!

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Do's and Don'ts	5
Getting Ideas	10
Elements of Design	11
Organizing Your Ideas	13
Decorating on a Budget	18
Minimalist Style	27
Casual Style	30
Formal Style	32
Shabby Chic Style	36
Paris Apartment Style	39
French Country Style	41
Tuscan Style	44
Traditional Style	47
Tropical Chic Style	49
Lodge Style	51
Using What You've Got	53
Decorating in a Day	55
Choosing Art	58
Conclusion	62

INTRODUCTION

Courtney Cox loves to buy homes, refurbish and redecorate them and then re-sell. Countless other celebrities do the same thing. In fact, celebrities spend thousands of dollars just to have professional decorators come into their homes and re-decorate them.

Still other famous people choose to get dirty themselves so they can realize their dreams of a home that is decorated the way they envisioned it to be. In fact, the television show "Trading Spaces" has actually taken interior decorating to a whole other level.

People have visions of how they want their lives to be and how they want their living space to be. Celebrities and regular Joes alike possess these thoughts and dreams and want to see them come to reality.

What's the difference? Obviously, it's because most celebrities have an unlimited budget when it comes to their interior decorating views. We "regular people" generally don't have that same luxury.

If 'Trading Spaces' and segments about celebrity-inspired home decorating appeal to your creative senses, take a stand and create the home of your dreams! Interior decorating has taken new heights with the cost-effective styles and today's trends available at most local chains and department stores.

Luxury living is a combination of eclectic, traditional, and unique styles with a contemporary but inspirational look. Even antiques can be transformed into vital accessories for today's modern home, and add an air of distinction and originality to any corner.

Who needs a Hollywood designer when you can create great spaces on your own? Construct and build some versatile and chic domains on a variety of budgets and themes. Whether it's the bedroom, living room, or elegant dining area that needs some updating, think like a celebrity to create some dynamic and unique living spaces!

Now, I should take a moment to let you know that interior decorating is definitely a matter of personal preference and style. What appeals to one person may be disgusting to another. But there

are many, many decorating styles out there, and what we're going to do in this book is present a lot of those styles and ways to recreate them affordably.

Let's start with some basic premises about interior design and what it takes to make a great space.

DO'S AND DON'TS OF DECORATING

The rules of interior decorating can be as solid as a rock or as open to interpretation as the sky. But many experts agree that learning the rules can be the first step toward freely breaking those rules when necessary. Here are some of the decorating dos.

- **Do sketch your floor plan** and record the room dimensions, window sizes and placement, and the location of special features, electrical outlets, and so on.

Take your floor plan with you when you shop.

- **Do take the time to discover your personal style** by reading shelter magazines, attending show houses, and browsing online and in stores to learn what styles and colors really appeal to you.
- **Do identify the focal point of the room** (a fireplace, a view, a bed, an armoire).
- **Do define a room's style in writing**, being specific. (Not just "country French", but "French Country with a rooster motif, chicken wire cupboard fronts, and a color scheme that includes black and gold.")
- **Do pick a signature piece** to focus your decorating decisions. It could be a beautiful fabric, an area rug, a picture, a piece of pottery, dishes, or a postcard. The item should embody both the color scheme of the room as well as the style and mood you hope to create.

- **Do coordinate fabric and flooring choices** *before* making any major purchases, and before choosing exact paint colors.
- **Do purchase large elements first** (rugs, draperies, upholstered furniture) whenever possible, and use the exact colors and style of those major pieces to coordinate all other choices.
- **Do use a mix of patterns** -- large-scale, small-scale, checks, stripes, geometrics, plain -- when coordinating a room.
- **Do allow for natural pathways in a room** (such as from the door to the closet) and try to arrange furniture with those walkways in mind.
- **Do consider the uses and function of a room** before deciding on furnishings and arrangements. For example, if your dining room will also be your study, then you'll need room for a desk, books, lighting, and files as well as the dining room table and chairs.
- **Do consider using unifying elements** such as trim color, wood tone, flooring, motifs, fabrics, or materials.
- **Do use the principle of repetition** when planning shapes, colors, fabrics, and patterns. One red accent in a room may look like an afterthought whereas several red accents here and there will contribute to the color scheme.
- **Do plan ahead for appropriate task, general, and dramatic lighting** by using a mix of light fixtures on dimmers for maximum control.
- **Do purchase the best quality furniture you can afford.** Learn more about quality construction and materials that can prolong the life of furniture and make it a better buy in the long run.
- **Do use contrast to add interest** to a space. Placing furniture and accessories against a contrasting background will highlight each piece.

- **Do crosslink your rooms** by repeating colors, fabrics, and themes in varying combinations. |
- **Do balance a room's furnishings** by paying attention to scale and visual weight.

Balance a large stone fireplace with a large sofa or armoire placed opposite.

- **Do arrange conversational areas** to be within an 8 to 14 feet square area.
- **Do anchor spaces** in open floor plans with area rugs and furniture groupings to define each space.
- **Do pair seating in conversation areas with side tables** and lamps so that there is a place to set drinks, books, etc. as well as adequate light for reading.
- **Do choose accessories that reinforce** the color and style theme of a room.
- **Do use scale and pattern** to create interesting focal points.
- **Do use pairs of items** to underscore symmetry and balance.
- **Do use odd numbers of items (3, 5, 7)** when grouping accents for table-scapes. Do place items (high, medium, and low) within an imaginary triangle to add interest.
- **Do use symmetrical arrangements** in formal rooms. In more casual rooms go for **asymmetrical arrangements** of furniture and accessories.
- **Do emphasize the important elements of the room** and play down the unattractive or unimportant elements.
- **Do use a variety of textures** (smooth, rough, shiny, dull) when you want to add interest to a room.
- **Do use line** to underscore a room's style. Horizontal lines emphasize length and underscore a calm mood. Vertical lines will emphasize height, and diagonal lines emphasize space and

provide a dynamic and exciting feel.

- **Do reinforce the style** and theme of a room with appropriate details and accessories.
- **Do install more details** in a plain boxy room. Consider crown molding, wainscoting, and other applications to add interest and character.
- **Do consider the location of your home** and the architectural style when planning interiors.

Decorating "rules" are made to be broken. Not every project will lend itself to every so-called rule.

However, following the rules can help give your project a focus that a more haphazard approach may not. Here are some of the decorating "don'ts".

- **Don't paint your walls then go out looking for fabrics to match.**

Paint can be mixed in any of a thousand colors, so select the final shades after upholstery, carpeting, and curtain fabrics are chosen.

- **Don't paint a room without trying a sample of the color in the room.** Tiny paint chips can be deceiving as to tone and depth of color, so always paint a test board to confirm your choices.
- **Don't line up the furniture around the walls** except in the smallest of rooms. Pulling furniture into attractive groupings in the center of the room will add warmth and be inviting to guests as well.
- **Don't turn your back on the focal point of the room** by arranging furniture away from this important feature.
- **Don't place furniture where it will interfere with doorways,** cabinet doors, natural traffic patterns, or other everyday activities.

- **Don't clutter up a room with a million little collectibles** unless you're in love with that look. Most of us will feel it is too crowded.
- **Don't try to construct a color scheme from wildly disparate objects.** First find a print fabric or rug with all of the colors you want to use, then edit out, repaint, or recover items that don't fit with the plan.
- **Don't keep something you hate.** Do you have a hideous orange sofa from Aunt Zelda? Either slipcover it, recover, or remove it. You'll be happier.
- **Don't decorate around an item that just isn't "you".** If your new home came with gold shag carpeting when you love roses and lace, believe me, you'll never love that carpet. Get rid of it.
- **Don't forget the details.** If your theme is Mediterranean, look for iron lamp bases, weathered iron drawer pulls, and tile tables. If you love Cottage then use painted white accessories, floral accents, and lace.
- **Don't fall in love with cheap furniture** just because it has an appealing color or exciting fabric. Look for good lines, quality construction, and elegant details first. Then have those pieces covered in a fabric or finish that you love.
- **Don't choose colors standing in a store.**

Try to take samples (of paint, fabrics, and floor coverings) back to your home and look at them in daylight and at night.

- **Don't spend a lot of money on expensive items that are "trendy".** Try out trends that truly appeal to you by experimenting first with inexpensive accessories.
- **Don't live with a lot of mismatched furniture orphans.** Unite pieces with color -- either by painting everything one color (white, pale gold, or black for example) or by recovering everything using identical or a mix of coordinating fabrics.
- **Don't always choose backgrounds in your favorite color.** Sometimes providing a softer background will make your favorite

color stand out as the brightest accent color in the room.

- **Don't choose everything beige if you really love color.** Remember, color doesn't cost more than white. Wouldn't a pretty mango, soft coral, or lovely green wall make a terrific backdrop for your white sofa?
- **Don't ignore the mood effects of color** -- red is exciting, pale blue soothing, green calming, and yellow is happy -- so choose color schemes that underscore the feeling you want to create in your home.
- **Don't disregard the undertones of a color.** Every color can be either light or dark, cool or warm, clear or muddy. Look for these color cues when choosing color.
- **Don't blow your entire budget on something that isn't functional, classic, or long-lasting,** unless you're completely smitten and can't live without it. In general it's best to start with the basics and build from there.

Some people feel clueless when they begin a decorating project. They know they want to re-design a room, but they have no clue where to start.

GETTING IDEAS

The easiest way to find your style is to start collecting ideas. Flip through decorating magazines or home improvement websites and collect pictures of things that catch your eye like a particular sofa style, a really cool lamp, a wall color, window treatments, a fabric, or maybe just the feeling that the whole room gives you. Make notes right on the pages so you remember why you saved it.

Also, start collecting samples of existing fabrics or colors that are going to stay in the room. For instance, say you're not changing the carpeting and you want to keep your grandmother's side chair. See if you can clip a little bit of extra fabric off the chair where you won't see it. Clip a small square of the carpeting out of a closet. If it's a painted piece, you can use paint chips from your local paint store to match it as closely as possible and have those with you.

You will also want to take measurements of the room and any furniture that is staying. If you can, make a simple floor plan to scale for reference. And finally, take photos of the room and any of the pieces you will be keeping.

Now as you collect all these samples and notes you will need to organize them in a way that makes sense for you; either by room, or by idea such as furniture ideas, lighting, colors, fabrics, or window treatments. Then keep them in your car so when you are out shopping you won't have to make another trip back home to see if it's the right color, size, or if it will "go". Decorators always have samples with them when they shop.

As you start to collect a fair amount of items you will start to see a pattern or similarity in what you like. And a style, that you didn't think you had, will soon emerge.

Maybe you want to look through a magazine and find a style that appeals to you. That's fine if you want to copy that style, just be sure that it will work in your house.

There are some elements of design that should be taken into consideration.

ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

There are 6 basic elements used in all aspects of interior design and decorating. If you correctly incorporate all or most of these elements you will have created a beautiful and functional room.

Balance

There are two types of balance – symmetrical and asymmetrical. Perfect symmetry is like the human body – two eyes, two arms etc. Symmetrical balance is typically very formal. Asymmetry, on the other hand, refers to an imbalance, perhaps two candlesticks of slightly different sizes placed next to each other. Asymmetry is used to add visual motion and excitement to a space, and therefore it is considered a more informal way of decorating.

Balance also refers to the weight of different objects in a room. This can be the actual weight and size of furniture – such as a large entertainment centre; or it can be visual weight – a patterned or very bold color upholstered piece appears to take up more space than a solid or neutral colored one. If there is too much weight on one side of a room, the arrangement will feel awkward and uninviting.

Color

The human eye can see more than 16 million colors. To simplify your paint choices look at your favorite piece of art, a rug or the upholstery fabric. Choose your colors based on that item using the “60-30-10 rule”.

For example – your favorite painting contains blue, yellow and cream. You might then choose yellow walls (60%), a blue sofa (30%) and a cream accent cushion (10%).

Focal Point

A focal point is the centre of interest – usually the part of the room that our eye is naturally drawn to when we first enter. If you don't have an existing architectural detail – such as a fireplace or large bay window – you can create a focal point by strategically hanging your art or by creatively displaying some accessories on a bookshelf. Once you have determined or created a focal point in your room, simply arrange your conversation area around it.

Harmony

This does NOT mean that everything should match. It simply means that the furniture, art and accessories compliment each other in some way.

Scale and Proportion

The size of pieces relative to one another and the size of the space is their SCALE. Large, ornate pieces will not look right in a very small room, just as small contemporary pieces will be lost in an oversized space with vaulted ceilings. And more importantly, the size

variance of different pieces within a room should be somewhat related.

Texture

Texture is the one element that can instantly add interest to a monochromatic color scheme. Should you choose to decorate an entire room in one color – mocha perhaps – it will be easy to add some visually interesting texture. Linen window shades and leather pillows can be found in the same color range but each has a very different look and feel.

You may have never put a lot of thought into these elements, but when they are put together in a room, they will enhance the room and make it beautiful!

Taking on an interior design project can be a huge undertaking. Don't let your vision become compromised. Start by getting organized.

ORGANIZE YOUR IDEAS

When you're getting ready to begin a decorating or remodeling project it's a great idea to get everything together. And keep it together! Any building, remodeling, or decorating project will be easier if you get organized before you start with a decorating file.

Your decorating file will hold everything you'll need to coordinate the project. Include carpet samples, fabric cuttings, paint samples, floor plans, wallpaper cuttings, photos, and pictures of inspiration rooms. Having everything in one place will help the job go more smoothly from conception to completion.

You can choose any style of file you want. The choice is yours. A small canvas tote bag, briefcase, notebook with file pockets, expanding envelope, or file box works well. Be sure you select a container that will be easy to carry from store to home and large enough for all your items.

Probably the most convenient way to keep everything together, and your hands free, is in a tote bag with shoulder handles. Interior pockets are helpful, too. Be sure to have a container for pens, your cell phone, tape measure, scissors, and tape.

Place an expanding folder with pockets and divider tabs into the tote. These pockets will keep projects and items separated and organized. You can keep several projects separate by labeling the folders for each.

You'll save time by having everything together wherever you go. Instead of wondering whether a paint chip coordinates with a fabric swatch, you'll know right away. If you're shopping for a lamp, you'll know if the lamp shade is the right color. If you happen on a wonderful flea market, you won't have to pass up a great bargain on an antique bureau because you don't know if it will fit in your space. With everything together: colors, fabrics, measurements, and ideas,-- you'll always be ready!

As you work on a project, you'll think of things that would be helpful to have in your own decorating file. The things on the following list are just a start. The most important thing to remember about a decorating file is that you should have it with you at all times.

- **Pens and Paper**

There's nothing more frustrating than finding a perfect paint or carpet and not being able to write down the particulars for ordering them. Have several pens and pencils tucked in your file and a pad of paper or spiral notebook for taking notes. You may want to make notes of a furniture arrangement, trim detail, or window treatment that you see.

- **Tape Measure**

Try to find a lightweight measuring tape if you can, as a builder's tape measure can get heavy if you're carrying it around all day. A 10-foot tape is usually fine for shopping trips, but you'll want a 25-foot measuring tape to measure rooms, windows, and ceiling heights.

- **Floor Plan**

If you're doing a room decorating project or a whole-house

remodel, you'll need a drawing of the rooms with measurements. A scaled drawing on graph paper is most useful, but you can have a simple sketch for a smaller project.

Be sure that you take accurate measurements of walls, window dimensions, and distances between doors and windows. You'll find that the more information you put down on this floor plan, the more helpful it will be as you're working.

A drawing of each wall will come in handy as you select fabrics for windows and wallpaper. This sketch should show the placement of windows, doors, and architectural details with accurate measurements. To get the proper drawing, look at the wall from across the room and draw in the details.

If you're not up to drawing your floor plan by hand, you might want to check out some online help from Smart Draw or Arrange-A-Room from Better Homes and Gardens.

Once you get a decorating file organized, you'll wonder how you ever got along without it. This file will hold all the information you collect to get a decorating project put together.

- **Photos of Your Room**

Even if you can't stand how your room looks now, take some "before" pictures. Get all the angles and details. These will be helpful when you're working on your plan or when you need to talk to a salesperson about your project. They'll help remind you of details as you're working.

- **Calendar**

As you proceed with your project, you'll undoubtedly have schedules to keep. Note when the floors will be measured for carpet, when the plumber is coming, or when you have a date with the painter. You can use your personal daily planner if you have one or keep one separate just for your decorating projects.

Just be sure to have it with you!

- **Magazine Photos**

Magazines are a great source of decorating inspiration. If you

see a color you like, a fabric print that is just what you love, or an arrangement of accessories that would work in your space, tear the page out and keep it in your decorating file.

Find pictures with ideas you can incorporate into your own decorating project. You can also get great ideas from decorating books, but don't tear the pages out!

- **Samples of Fabrics, Colors, and Flooring**

As you shop; you'll want to collect samples of carpet, tiles, flooring, fabrics, and paint chips. The more you have in your Decorating File, the easier it will be to put your project together when you get home. Add more samples with every shopping trip.

You may not be replacing everything in the room you're decorating. Be sure to take a sample of anything that is staying in your room, including carpeting, upholstery fabric, paint samples, tile, or wood.

For an upholstered piece, it's ideal if you have a piece of the fabric. If not, take an arm cover or cover of a pillow. If you just don't have a suitable piece of fabric to include in your Decorating File, try to get a good color picture of the pieces you'll be saving.

An 8" square of carpet will fit in your tote. If there's just no extra carpet, trim off some tufts of carpet fiber from an inconspicuous place and tape it to a piece of cardboard for your decorating file.

As you decide on your decorating scheme, you'll put together all the elements, first in your mind, then in your Decorating File. Coordinate fabrics with paint and paint with flooring by testing combinations of samples you've collected. Or use the resources of professionals who have put together collections of fabrics, colors, and wall coverings for companies such as Waverly.

Whether your "decorating file" is a notebook, a canvas tote, briefcase, or large purse, be sure it is comfortable enough to carry with you. Here are several additional items that are useful to include in your decorating file.

Add these final items to your decorating file and you'll be ready to go at a moment's notice.

- **Phone List**

Have a handy list of phone numbers for your carpet man, plumber, painter, upholsterer, or contractor. Keep the list in your Decorating File for easy reference.

- **Scissors and Tape**

When you find the perfect paint chips, you might want to tape them together with fabrics you've chosen. Also put together fabric samples and carpet tufts.

- **Envelopes or Zip-Lock Bags**

You never know when you might find some small piece of information, color, or pattern that could get lost if put in the bottom of a tote.

Have a few plain #10 envelopes or zip-lock plastic bags in your Decorating File.

- **Post-It Notes**

Simple post-it notes are great for marking pages that you don't want to lose in a book or magazine. Or use them to mark possible choices in a wallpaper book. If you're looking at paint chips, block off shades that you don't want, using a post-it note.

- **Color Board**

Once you've made all your choices, put together a color board. Use a piece of mat board, foam core, or cardboard, cut to fit into your decorating file. Paint the board in the color of your chosen wall paint or just leave it white.

Attach all fabrics, trims, inspiration photos, and drawings to the board. You can have the mat board cut to fit into a standard or legal size file folder. When you've completed your project, put the color board away in a filing cabinet for reference.

You'll find that it's fun to put together a Decorating File for your decorating projects. It's a useful tool to keep you organized.

Now that you at least have some idea of where you want to be with your new decorating project, you may be worried about how you will afford what you need. Don't worry! You can still have a celebrity room with an everyday budget.

DECORATING ON A BUDGET

Just because you don't have a celebrity checkbook doesn't mean that you can't have celebrity style! Anyone can re-decorate their home or apartment – even with limited funds! Consider the following:

1. Decide ahead of time on a budget or payment plan, pace your decorating. Include money for accessories.
2. Decide on one room at a time and designate a priority within your room. That's where you should begin.
3. Have a plan, color scheme, style, & atmosphere. Have a target date for completion.
4. Your confidence level in tackling your decorating project makes a big difference. If you are the least bit unsure, contact a professional designer. He or she will save you time, energy, money, and frustration. Select a designer that you are comfortable with and trust. He/she should know your likes and dislikes. Whatever is done needs to suit you and your family.
5. Measure your room to scale. Show windows and doors. Decide on a focal point. Measure furniture, rugs, etc. before purchase. Draw your furniture to scale and cut out the drawings. Place these on your floor plan, moving them around until you get an arrangement that you like. This is very easy on your back. This procedure will also help you decide if the items are proportionately correct for your room. Think too about ceiling height and traffic flow.
6. Repeat each color in your scheme at eye level, mid level, and floor level to achieve good visual balance. Repeat any pattern and/or textures at least twice in the room.

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