

Your home is where you spend the majority of your free time. It's where you eat, sleep, relax, and entertain your friends and family, so it's only natural that you want to create a cozy space that you can enjoy and a place you will look forward to returning after a long day. One factor that plays a key role in whether or not you feel at home is how you feel about your environment. Small rooms and cluttered surroundings can make you feel stressed out and tense. While you cannot change the dimensions of your walls, you can make some simple alterations to make the most of your space, or lack of. Whether you have outgrown your living quarters or simply want to turn a cluttered, cramped room into a streamlined, sophisticated habitat, follow these simple tips to transform your home into a place you will love to be.

1. Keep Clutter to a Minimum

One of the easiest ways to make a small room look bigger is to keep clutter to a minimum. A small room can become cluttered very quickly, even with just a few things out of place because there is less space for everything. A pair of shoes by the door, junk mail on the coffee table, and keys tossed haphazardly on top of the entertainment center can quickly make a room look messy. Taking a few minutes to put your shoes in the closet, open your mail, and hang your keys on a hook will make a world of difference in making your room look tidy. Not only does eliminating clutter make any room look bigger, but keeping your living quarters tidy is an easy way to create a relaxed feeling for you and your family after a long day. Look for closet organization pieces so you have a place to put shoes, purses, and backpacks immediately upon your arrival home.

2. Choose Light Paint Colors

Choosing light paint colors is another effective way to make a small room look bigger. Darker colors can create shadows and make a room feel more closed-in. On the contrary, light colors automatically reflect light, which makes the room appear larger. Luckily, neutral colors such as gray, tan, and taupe are trending now, and repainting a room is a relatively inexpensive way to give your home a complete facelift. If you are feeling really ambitious, you can also paint the floorboards and trim a lighter color than the walls, which will add dimension to the walls and trick your brain into thinking there is more space. Your eyes will notice the contrast in colors and your brain will subconsciously add dimension, thus creating the illusion of a larger room. Popular paint color schemes right now are white trim and floorboards paired with gray, tan, or taupe walls. Combine your freshly-painted walls with the right kind of lighting, and your room will instantly look more sizable.

3. Choose Furniture That Fits the Space

Choosing furniture that fits properly in the room can be a great way to make a small room look bigger. While larger furniture such as sectionals and overstuffed chairs are trendy now, your room will look stuffy and outdated if your furniture is merely placed in the room haphazardly. Positioning a large sofa or sectional in one corner will open up the room, while still allowing plenty of comfy seating for you and your guests. Align the sofa or sectional flush against the wall, and add a floor rug and tables to create a cozy corner. Many pieces of furniture can also be found with built-in storage. You might want to look for a sectional sofa with storage under the chaise, a coffee table with baskets and a shelf underneath, or a large ottoman with storage. By giving yourself extra storage space, you are giving yourself more room to organize, which will help keep clutter to a minimum as well.

4. Use Lamps Instead of Bright Overhead Lighting

Using lamps instead of overhead lighting is a simple optical illusion that can help make any small room look bigger. One overhead light will most likely cast the brightest lighting in the center of the room, making the corners look dark and shadowy. Placing lamps in several locations around the room allows you to evenly distribute the light and eliminate dark corners that can make you and your family feel cramped. By adjusting the height and placement of the lamps, you can focus the light on various areas of the room. Try placing a reading lamp behind or near your sofa along with a lamp in the opposite corner of the room. Choose soft lighting to cast a relaxing glow around your room, as opposed to bright lights that can create dark contrasts. For a fun effect, you can choose an [accent lamp](#) that will not only provide lighting, but serve as a decorative piece as well.

5. Use Rugs to Create Separate Spaces

A fun way to make a small room look bigger is by using a rug to accent your space. Choose a rug that is slightly smaller than the dimensions of your room, and center the rug accordingly. When your rug is centered in the room, there should be several inches of floor exposed on all sides. Choose a light or neutral color to reflect the light in the same way that you chose the neutral paint colors, as the idea is to use light colors to reflect the light and trick your brain into seeing more space. Try to stick to solid colors or a design that does not have small, intricate details. A rug that is too “busy” will draw your attention towards it and will also give the appearance of clutter. Likewise, choose a finish that is simple; a thick rug or shag texture will add thickness and make your room feel more closed in.