How to Make a Small Room Appear Bigger

Small rooms are the bane of the home decorator. How do you achieve a pleasing look that doesn't feel cramped and claustrophobic? Short of building an addition or knocking down walls, you are limited to a few, but effective, decorating tricks that create the illusion of space.

The strategic use of colour and light is the best way to achieve this. Choose light shades of paint or wallpaper for the walls. Lighter colours reflect light making for a brighter room. Use an even lighter shade of the same colour or white for ceilings and floors. A darker colour on the ceiling will make the ceiling look lower and tends to make the walls look as though they are closing in.

Avoid harshly contrasting colours. In fact, a monochromatic colour scheme that carries throughout the room into fabrics and accessories is very effective. Steer away from too many patterned items. The goal here is to blur perspective.

Anything you can do to bring light into the room will also give the effect of increased space. A corner wall sconce that casts light up onto the wall works well. Try to vary lighting effects for interest. A skylight is a great way to add light to a room, but isn't always practical or affordable. Mirrors are a great solution for small rooms. Place mirrors directly across from another for maximum impact. A mirror placed across from a window is also effective. Place a lamp in front of a mirror to add more light to your room.

If you have wood or patterned flooring, have it installed so that the lines run diagonally across the room. This makes for longer lines, which give the appearance of a larger space. When furnishing the room, pick objects that are proportioned to the size of the room. For example, opt for a loveseat over a full-sized sofa. Lastly, keep the clutter to a minimum. Avoid using a lot of knick-knacks and keep the room tidy and well organized.

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