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Display your collection of items for great-looking arrangements.

### Accessorize Your Home

Whether you're 25 or 65, you've acquired a collection of items that are appealing to you. Sometimes figuring out just how to group those pieces together and display them in your home can be a challenge. So how do you create great-looking arrangements? Here are a few tips and tricks designers use that can help you display any type of accessories – whether they're flea-market finds, family heirlooms, or pricey collectibles.

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#### Making It Personal

Accessories, more than anything else, add personality to a home. Your accessories tell a story about you to guests. Plus, they make your home more inviting and comfortable for you and your family – everyone likes being surrounded by things they love. While there are a few basic principles for arranging accessories, you don't need a degree in interior design to get great-looking results. Experiment, and don't be afraid to try something different. After all, rules are made to be broken, and what's most important is that the arrangements satisfy you.

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#### Getting Started

Sort through your hand-me-downs, heirlooms, collectibles or other unrelated pieces to determine what you want to use. Old pictures, keepsakes tucked away in storage, and anything that is important to you adds personality to your home's décor. If you plan to add large pieces of art to your room, plan for this early in your design scheme. Large pieces of

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art and collections can have major impact on a room's décor.

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## Achieving Balance

Balance keeps arrangements from looking lopsided. Balanced arrangements can be either symmetrical or asymmetrical. **Symmetrical** arrangements are perfectly equal on both sides of a central line, are the easiest to arrange and create a more formal atmosphere. If you have a variety of pieces in different sizes, shapes and colors, try an **asymmetrical** arrangement. Asymmetrical arrangements create an informal look by balancing the visual weight of the objects.



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## Determining Placement

Keep the following in mind when displaying your accessories:

- **Create groupings.** Display objects together in odd numbers. Combinations of three and five work well.
- **Place similar objects together.** Group according to color, shape, or design. A collection, such as antique vases, has more impact when grouped together than when scattered throughout the house.
- **Alternate height of pieces.** Objects of varying height in a grouping add visual interest. Elevate small prints and decorative plates with small pedestals or stands to highlight their presence in a grouping.
- **Create depth.** Zigzag or alternate the pieces from back to front instead of placing them in a straight line. Place three objects in a triangle, with the tallest pieces in the back. Try using overlapping triangles when working with more than three objects, again placing larger pieces in the back.
- **Alternate texture.** Bring together items of different textures for a unique look. Alternate shiny finishes with flat ones or hard objects with softer ones. For example, if you have a grouping of brass candlesticks and a ceramic vase, try using a plant, floral arrangement or woven basket for a softer texture.
- **Find the focal point.** Arrange everything around one major object to center the grouping.



Combine objects with varying heights for visual interest.

- **Avoid clutter.** Know when to say when. Too many items can look messy and detract from your décor. If you have more accessories than you need, simply store them for a while and then switch them out for a fresh look.

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### Using Mirrors as Accessories

Mirrors create the illusion of space. You'll want to make sure the view from the mirror is attractive before you hang it, so position it to reflect something interesting in the room. For example, a mirror opposite an attractive fireplace and mantel is a nice touch.

If your mirror looks lost on a wall, try one of the following:

- Place a floral swag or a floral runner over it.
- Hang small paintings, decorative sconces and wall lamps on either side.
- Group several mirrors of assorted sizes and shapes together.



Mirrors create the illusion of space.

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### Lighting It Up

Use [lighting](#) as an accessory to accent fireplaces, artwork, plants, and other ornamental objects. Lighting should be warm, cozy, and inviting. Place a cluster of candles on a table or a piano to accent with soft light.

Focus an uplight behind a folding screen to add a glowing accent. Uplighting plants adds dimension and shadow to a room. Crosslight sculpture and other three-dimensional objects for dramatic impact.

Use recessed lighting or chandeliers with downlights to accent the centerpiece on a table. Picture lights create a gallery effect and also help to define the outer dimensions of a room.

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### Accessorizing with Flowers

Silk or fresh flowers brighten the atmosphere in your home. Experiment with the following:

- Use old urns, water pitchers, and teapots as vases. Collectibles make great containers for flower arrangements.
- Take your favorite vase or bowl to a florist for a custom-designed arrangement.
- Float two or three blooms, such as gerber daisies or rose petals, in a favorite crystal bowl. Add floating candles for evenings.
- Fill a clear glass vase with a bouquet of loose flowers. Anchor with colored marbles for a casual look.
- Arrange several small vases to create a centerpiece. Fill each with the same type of flower or a mixture of different stems.



Whether they are fresh or silk, flowers brighten the atmosphere of any room.

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## Decorating with Art



Small art pieces grouped together have a larger impact.

Whatever your artwork includes – valuable prints, family photographs, or originals from your kids – you want it to capture people's attention. Large paintings are more effective when displayed alone on walls. However, small pieces have more impact when grouped together.

When choosing frames for your artwork, make sure the frame is large enough to hold a mat. The frame should be at least one to three inches larger in dimension than the picture. Coordinate frames with other existing frames and the overall look of the room. Buy quality frames. Make sure there aren't any gaps at the corners and check the finish for flaking or discoloration.

When matting a picture, choose a mat shade and texture based on colors that stand out in the picture. Mat with a color that highlights the artwork best. To draw attention to a small piece of art, make the mat at least six inches larger.

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## Creating Wall Arrangements

Interesting wall arrangements can become a dynamic focal point of the room. Remember:

- **Experiment:** Before you start hammering nails in the wall, arrange the pieces on the floor and try different combinations. To get a better idea of spacing on the wall, trace and cut out the shapes of the objects on brown paper bags. Using bits of painter's tape, rearrange the paper pieces on the wall until you find the arrangement you like best. Painter's tape will not pull the paint from walls like masking tape can.
- **Avoid placing everything in a row:** Let the shape of your walls influence the arrangement. Combine pictures and objects in assorted sizes. Balance the visual weight of the arrangement and keep in mind:



Hang items in assorted sizes and balance the visual weight of the arrangement.

- A vertical arrangement adds height to a room.
  - A horizontal arrangement widens a room.
  - A rectangular or an oval arrangement works in an area above a mantel or sofa.
  - A circular arrangement adds interest to prints hung in an entryway.
- **Plan the placement:** Place art six to nine inches above a sofa or at eye level. Artwork placed too high on a wall appears to be floating. If artwork is placed too low over a sofa or chair, it interferes with headroom. When hanging multiple pictures, start by measuring and marking the spot for the center print. Hang the center print. Continue hanging the middle row of prints, working from top to bottom. Finish by hanging the remaining pieces, again working from top to bottom, until the grouping is complete.
  - **Keep it in proportion:** Avoid placing a small, framed piece over a large piece of furniture. For example, if you're hanging a picture over a couch, make sure the

frame is at least two-thirds the size of the couch. If you decide to use small pieces, hang them together to keep things in proportion.

- **Maintain balance:** If you're working with a group of frames in a variety of sizes, keep the larger pieces on the bottom. Large pieces anchor groups and keep arrangements from appearing top heavy.
- **Unite artwork:** Use matching frames or mats to unite a group of art that doesn't have a common theme or color.

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## Working with Textiles

The varied colors and textures of fabrics and [rugs](#) liven up any room. Add comfort and softness with the following:

- Use pillows and throws throughout the room. Draw different groupings together with a common accent color.
- Coordinate rugs, towels, napkins, place mats, and tablecloths in the kitchen and dining room.
- Brighten up your floors with non-skid area or accent rugs.

Quilts, tapestries, and printed cloths have great display potential. Use these pieces alone on a wall as a focal point or feature. Mount textiles on a wall in a number of ways:

- Frame smaller cloths and place them under glass. Fabric can be difficult to keep straight and balanced within a frame. Think about having the piece professionally framed.
- Attach larger cloths or rugs to a wooden or metal dowel. To attach the fabric to the dowel, loop the top piece over the dowel and stitch it together. Curtain ring clips also work well. Finish with decorative finials to add interest.
- If your wall hanging is too large for dowels, screw or nail a 1"x3" board or other furring strip to the wall. Secure the wall hanging directly to the furring strip with clips, heavy-duty staples, screws, or nails.

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## Enhancing Your Bathroom

Bathrooms often look cold and uninviting because there is not much space to display decorative items. Yet these rooms often cry out for interesting decorative details. Here are some suggestions to solve this problem:

- Add glass shelving across the windows. These shelves are a great place for bright-colored glass items or other interesting collections. Glass shelves filled with decorative items can even replace window treatments since these items limit the view from outside.
- Place a houseplant and folded or rolled stacks of towels by the tub to break up the lines of the bath.
- Use artwork to enhance your bathroom. When choosing art for a bath, consider the medium first. Options include paintings, sculpture, ceramics, glass, and prints.

Humidity damages artwork, but many experts feel that a piece is safe in the bathroom if it is properly framed and hung in a well-ventilated area. Before hanging any artwork in your bathroom, determine the quality of the ventilation. Don't hang signed lithographs, originals or anything irreplaceable if moisture collects on the walls after you shower or bathe. Paintings on canvas perform the best in bathrooms. Canvas may sag when exposed to moisture, but will tighten as it dries. For extra ventilation, place bumpers on the backs of all frames.

- Add a variety of houseplants to your bathroom. Select plants that grow well in humid environments and the lighting available in your bathroom.

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### Additional Tips

- Don't be afraid to use one large item by itself. Large accessories can create drama and interest.
- Don't forget about your foyer and leave it bare and empty. Remember – the foyer is the first impression of your home for visitors, so make it interesting. Add plants or pictures to the room. Showcase a favorite accessory or personal collection. Small furniture like a sofa table, bench, etagere or chair adds a lived-in appeal.
- Books are great decorating items and make a statement about you. Use books to elevate small items in arrangements. Place them in any area of your home.
- Use all possible decorative space. Place plants, tins, and books on top of cabinets and armoires.
- Place a big basket with a lid within tossing distance of your bed to store magazines, linens, or clothing.
- Use decorative screens in corners.
- Candles in all types and sizes are great in any room.
- Use baskets of greenery and other plants throughout your home. They add texture and soften the room. Make sure the container suits the room's style whether formal or informal.
- Display art on easels. Large easels create interest in corners while small easels work well in bookcases or on table tops.

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