

Accessorize your home without adding clutter

By **MARY VUONG** Houston Chronicle

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A home should be functional and inviting.

Yet people often display too many accessories, says Houston interior designer Audrey Drought-Mitchell, making the space look cluttered. Step back and consider the grand scheme of your room, she suggests. Does it feel heavy? It shouldn't.

Drought-Mitchell offers these tips on accessorizing:

Add warmth.

Color and wood are two easy ways. Use more than one accent color to give a room dimension. Incorporate touches of wood, even something as simple as a bowl. If you have a mostly neutral interior, a few dark accent pieces can offer balance. Drought-Mitchell avoids clear glass accessories, which can feel cold, and dust-collecting silk flower arrangements.

Create a series.

Cluster similar accessories such as oriental jars or candlesticks for dramatic effect. Groups of threes are ideal. "You don't want it to be overkill," she says.

Think texture.

Ceramics, woven items and painted canvases make a space interesting. So do coffee-table books, boxes and bowls.

Make it functional.

Decorative pieces can have purpose. A beautiful tray may hold remote controls and magazines. A gorgeous vase can be repurposed into a lamp.

Don't forget scale.

Whatever you incorporate should pull you into a room, Drought-Mitchell says. Also consider placement — is the item being hung in a room with high ceilings or placed on a small end table?

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