

10 Tricks to Make Your Home Look Bigger

Create the illusion of more space with these decorator secrets

By [Kimberly Fusaro](#) Posted May 06, 2010 from [WomansDay.com](#)

[Comment with Facebook Connect](#)

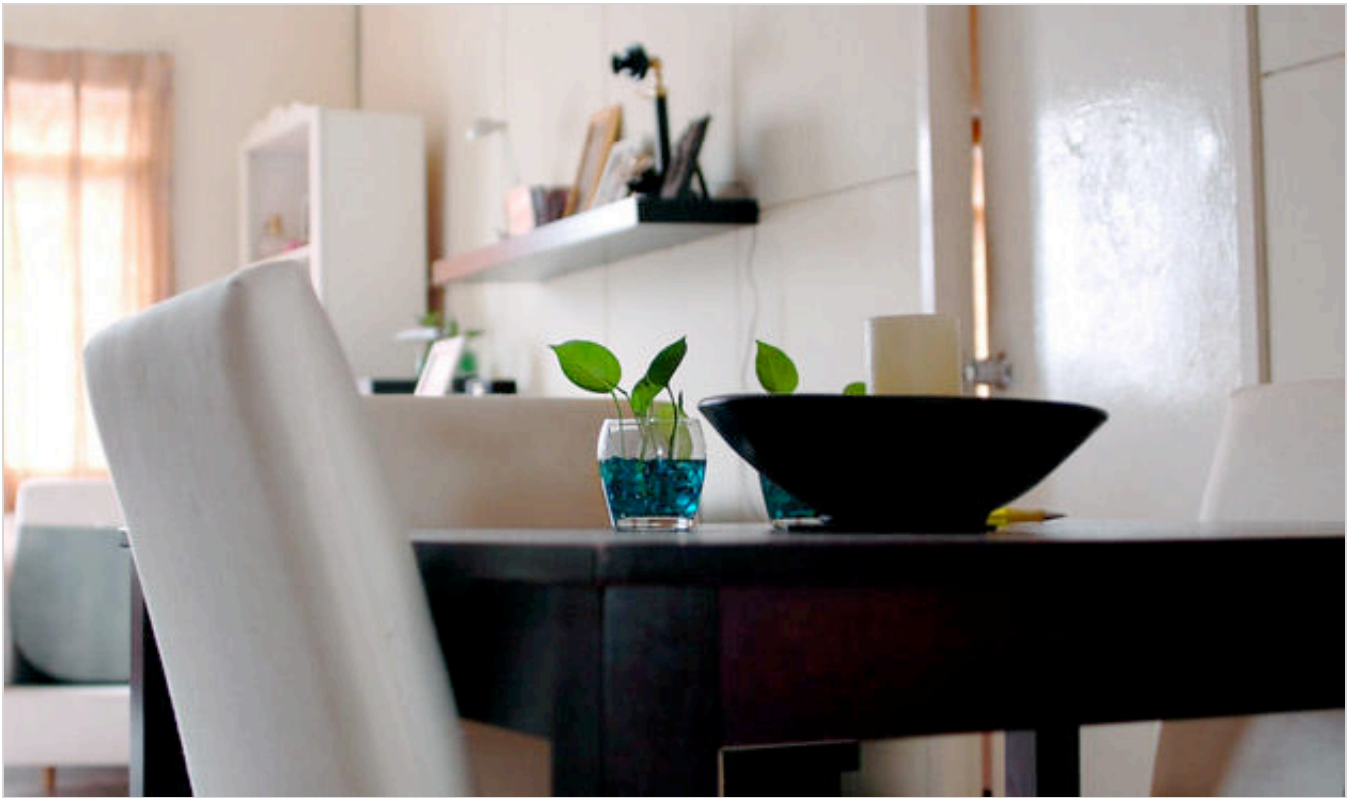


Photo: © Shutterstock

No matter how generous your home's square footage, chances are, at some point it will seem like the walls are closing in on you. Perhaps you favor bulky bedroom furniture or painted your dining room walls dark maroon on a whim. Or maybe your knickknack collection mysteriously multiplied and has taken over your living room—seemingly overnight. Whatever the reason, your rooms appear smaller than they actually are. The good news: You don't have to take this downsized version of your life lying down. Whether you're ready to do a little remodeling or just want a \$20 something-or-other to help visually clear out a room, our decorating experts have 10 easy tips to help you reclaim your living space.

1. Trick the Senses

Just like pinstripe pants make your legs seem longer, a striped floor will make a room appear to go on for miles, says designer Kelly Edwards from Style Network's *Tacky House* and HGTV's *Design on a Dime*. Use an oversize mirror to enhance the effect. "Go big or don't bother!" says Christine Brun, interior designer and author of [*Small Space Living*](#). See-through furniture—either glass-topped tables or pieces molded from Lucite or acrylic—will also fool the eyes. A trio of acrylic nesting tables (\$95; [InteriorExpressOutlet.com](#)) provides endless surface space without cluttering a room visually. Prefer more substantial furniture? Pieces that match your wall color within a shade or two take up less visual space, says Sabrina Soto, one of Target's Home Style Experts. *Photo courtesy of InteriorExpressOutlet.com.*



2. Clear Out Clutter

"This is the simplest, cheapest thing you can do," says Brun. "Purge, streamline and reduce clutter." It will be much easier to keep a room tidy—and clutter-free—if there's a place for everything, as the adage goes. Outfit every closet with a hanging shoe organizer [Amazon.com](#) (\$19.99;), which can hold not just pumps, but magazines, stuffed animals and beauty supplies, as well. An inconspicuous shelving unit (\$72.50; [IKEA.com](#)) that fits behind a bedroom door is ideal for stowing anything that usually winds up on the floor, including board games and books. *Photo courtesy of IKEA.com.*



3. Make a Statement with Paint

"The lighter your walls, the better," says Soto. While darker paint colors *do* make a room seem cozy, they often give the illusion of less space. The reason: Light colors reflect and multiply light, while dark colors absorb it. To make a room feel airy, Soto sticks with cream, beige, light grayish-blue and lavender. *Photo by Shutterstock.*



4. Edit Your Collections

Less really is more. "You simply cannot display *everything* you own and love," warns Brun. Instead of showcasing all of your ceramic vases, for example, divide the collection into four groups and rotate in a new set every season. The individual pieces will appear more dramatic if they're



not lost among the masses. Soto follows what she calls the cantaloupe rule: “Decorative accents that are smaller than a cantaloupe cramp a room.” Opt for a single, statement-making piece instead. *Photo by iStockphoto.*



5. Opt for Storage Furniture

“Dual-use furniture creates more room by increasing the function of each space,” says Brun. An entryway bench with storage space [Busy-Kids.com](#) (\$97.97;) is the perfect perch for putting on shoes as well as a convenient spot to stow the things you usually forget on your way out the door, like reusable grocery bags, and seasonal accessories, such as umbrellas. A flip-top ottoman [Target.com](#) (\$79.99;) holds the bedding for a foldaway couch or out-of-season throws until you need them.



6. Create Unexpected Furniture Arrangements

Don't be afraid to break the rules: Create a furniture arrangement that's “different.” For example, you don't *have* to have a sofa and love seat in your living room just because everyone else does. Instead, try four comfortable armchairs. In the bedroom, if your bed works best when it's covering part of a window, so be it. “There are no design police waiting to issue you a ticket,” promises Brun. An unexpected setup might make your space more useful—perhaps giving you room for a dresser or desk that wouldn't fit in a traditional arrangement. *Photo by iStockphoto.*



7. Lighten Up

Light-colored countertops in kitchens and bathrooms make surfaces seem more spacious, says Edwards. Even if you're not ready to revamp a whole room, you can redo your countertops over a weekend. "The darker the tile, the more cramped the surface will look," warns Edwards. On a smaller scale, look for light-colored storage pieces that blend in with your existing wall color. A white storage bin ContainerStore.com (\$11.99;), tucked in a corner, unobtrusively holds clutter. *Photo courtesy of ContainerStore.com.*



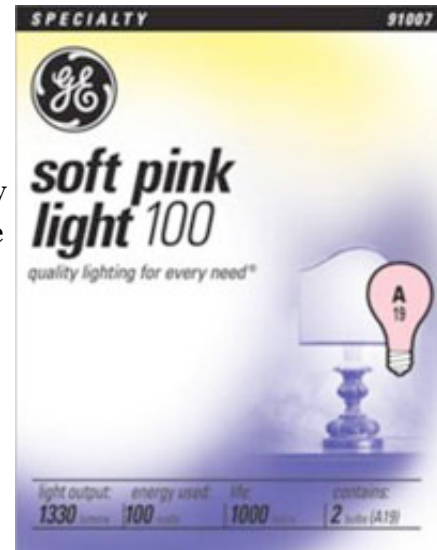
8. Stow Accent Pieces Until You Have Guests

Of course you'll need more surfaces when you're hosting a get-together—but you needn't clutter your everyday space with unneeded tables. "Use small, foldaway pieces to convert a room for a party," suggests Christopher Grubb, an interior designer and the founder of [Arch Interiors](http://ArchInteriors.com). Folding side tables Target.com (\$41.30;) are great for holding hors d'oeuvres trays. If you're hosting a dinner party, set up a bar or buffet on a foldaway banquet table. *Photo courtesy of Target.com.*



9. Upgrade Your Lighting

Don't rely on overhead fixtures, which pool light in one spot. Try to have several lighting elements in every room. "They draw the eye around, giving the illusion of more space," says Edwards. Soto puts soft pink bulbs (\$4.99 for 2; LampsPlus.com) in every fixture. "I love the way they warm up a room," she says. To take advantage of natural light during the daytime, do away with heavy drapes. *Photo courtesy of LampsPlus.com.*



10. Take Advantage of Vertical Space

If you're going to splurge, custom built-ins are the way to go, says Brun. Lofty rooms reach their full potential with one-of-a-kind shelving units that reach from floor to ceiling. Custom storage also helps you maximize out-of-the-way nooks, like the area under a flight of stairs. Not ready to commit to a contractor just yet? Easy-to-install floating shelves (\$29.99;



ContainerStore.com) hung above bathroom and bedroom doors are great for bulky items, like spare towels and winter sweaters. *Photo courtesy of ContainerStore.com.*



subscribe to
woman's day magazine

Discover innovative homemaking tips and articles on nutrition, health, fitness, beauty and fashion, food, family and more.



**CLICK HERE
TO GET
15 ISSUES
FOR \$10!**