

FURNITURE

FIX Here's why the where is just as important as the what

BY RED BARRINUEVO



As the saying goes, it's not just the tools in your toolbox that get the job done, it's how you use them. Think of your furnishings as tools that, when used correctly, serve a functional, spatial and aesthetic purpose.

As a stylist and "redesigner," I often find that the furnishings themselves aren't the problem. Rather, it's their arrangement that can make a home feel cramped, inefficient or just plain awkward. So, what's the trick to proper furniture placement in your space?

Step one is to **measure, then measure again**. The size of your space will define the type of furnishings you'll incorporate and how many pieces you'll need. Time to hit the showroom? Not so fast. More measuring is essential. Furniture tends to look smaller in the store because it's in a wide open space with a high ceiling. When you bring that L-shaped sofa home, it may take up your whole living area. Measuring before buying will help you avoid any unpleasant surprises and the hassle of returns.

Once you have an idea of size, think about **function**. In today's modern, open-concept homes, a single space will need to serve many purposes. An open-concept main floor might be used as a foyer, dining area, living area, family room and work space. With a solid

plan and the right furniture selections, this is all possible in a single space.

This is where **zoning** comes into play. Think about creating several intimate conversation areas, achieved through colour and some strategic elements. One or two chairs, a side table, a great lamp and a midsize rug underfoot are all you need. As you plan the zones in your space, think about your traffic patterns. How do you walk through the room to get to an adjoining space or another zone within the room?

TIP: In a dining area, you'll need at least three feet of space between your wall and the dining chair to allow room to pull the chair out without bumping into the wall. That said, intimacy is, of course, key to a good conversation zone. Don't be afraid to place a couple of chairs close together and tell someone your story.

Finally, look up. Having a high ceiling makes a big difference in the overall feel of the room. If your living room is blessed with high ceilings, take full advantage of that extra space. It doesn't give you extra seating, but it does draw the eye upward, making the room seem bigger and grander. Fill in vertical space with gallery photos or a beautiful gallery wall.

Beautiful furniture that's improperly placed will fall flat. Redesigning a room to get that wow factor often involves a few new furniture finds coupled with your existing pieces, and a well-planned perspective on how to place them.

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