

A Guide to Arranging Your Home Décor Accessories

Photos by Amanda Sneddon Photography



One of the biggest home decorating dilemmas is how to arrange your accessories, whether it be a bookcase, shelf, or tabletop. Here is a three step system that will transform your boring or cluttered spaces into charming vignettes

Harmony and Contrast

When arranging a space with accessories, one has to keep in mind that the most important thing to avoid here is boredom! This has a lot less to do with the objects you choose than how you choose to display them. To keep an arrangement from putting the neighbours down for their afternoon nap, remember to keep a balance of harmony



(things that feel like they go together, like similar colours or styles) and contrast (things that spice things up by being different...smooth against texture, round against straight line) You want a bit of both in your arrangement. Perhaps you could create harmony by repeating a square shape or the colour purple, and then add contrast by sitting a smooth candlestick next to a rough basket.

Scale and Shape

Make sure that the items you are using fit into their new homes scale...you don't want one tiny paperweight on a large kitchen table, and you want to steer clear of using a huge ceiling high arrangement of flowers on a tiny end table. Most people tend to use things that are too small for their



surroundings however. If you have small accessories you would like to display, but need to give them more oomph in the arrangement, try grouping them on a plate or a fabric covered box. You can also give them height by perching them atop stacked books or baskets.

Layer and Soften

Once you've chosen your objects for the space following the design principles above, now it's time to layer and soften. Start with a larger, taller piece slightly off center... this will be the defining piece in your arrangement. Now work to the outer edges in



layers...Add a taller background layer, a middle sized medium height layer, and your tiniest objects in the front. Keep the eye moving up and down as it purveys the arrangement from left to right for interest. Add some fabric or twisted ribbon to soften the edges of the shelf or table, to bring in color, and to highlight certain objects.

Above all, keep trying new combinations of items until you find an arrangement that works for you. Use things in unusual ways. Tuck flowers or a live plant into an arrangement that seems too static. Even professional designers will occasionally be surprised by trying things in a new way! And remember, if your arrangement still looks cluttered and lost, chances are you are trying to display too much. Develop a prop box or closet where you can keep some of your treasures, and switch them out a couple of times a year for a fresh new look without spending a dime! DYH



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