

Live Large in a Small Space: Your Apartment Interior Design Guide



By: Mark Adam

Abstract

Living large in a small space is all about maximizing functionality and style in your apartment. Start by embracing a minimalist approach, selecting multi-purpose furniture like a sofa bed or a coffee table with storage. Opt for light colors and mirrors to create the illusion of more space, and utilize vertical storage solutions to keep your floors clutter-free. Don't shy away from bold accents and personal touches that reflect your personality; even in a small area, thoughtful design choices can make a big impact, turning your compact apartment into a cozy, chic haven.



1. Introduction

To further enhance your small apartment, focus on creating distinct zones within the open space. Use area rugs, lighting, and furniture arrangement to define different areas for living, dining, and working. Invest in modular furniture that can be easily rearranged to suit various needs and occasions. Consider incorporating fold-out desks, wall-mounted shelves, and under-bed storage to optimize every inch of your apartment. Plants can bring life and a sense of tranquility to your space without taking up much room. By blending practicality with creativity, you can achieve a harmonious and spacious environment that feels both expansive and intimate.

2. Small Living Room Layouts That Maximize Space



Deciding on a small living room layout can be a tricky puzzle. The tight dimensions limit your options, but the right furniture arrangement can create a functional space that seems larger than it is. Try these tricks that make the most of your room. We have ideas for arranging furniture around a sofa, small living room layouts for open floor plans, and more.

Focal Point Layout

Plan a small living room layout around a designated focal point. A TV, fireplace, window, or wall decor can all serve as the room's center of attention. Position furnishings around or directly facing the focal point to maintain a clear view.

Small Living Room Layout Mistakes

Maintaining an open space in the middle might seem like a small living room layout that will make your space appear larger, but the opposite is true. Avoid this common furniture arranging mistake by pulling sofas and chairs away from the outer walls. Gather furniture in the center of the room to create a cozy conversation area.

Light Visual Weight Furnishings

Pay attention to the visual weight of furniture, not just its actual size. Light-color furniture or pieces with legs appear lighter than dark or boxy upholstered pieces. In this small living area, the leggy, armless chair doesn't obstruct views of the floor or fireplace, making the space more open. The small marble-topped coffee table also consumes very little visual space.

Small Living Room Layout Tricks

This small living room layout employs several design tricks for an open, orderly look. Helping the space appear larger, an acrylic coffee table offers practical storage while taking up virtually no visual space. Matching armchairs, poufs, and table lamps are mirrored on either side of the room, creating a streamlined and aesthetically pleasing effect.

Small Living Room Neutrals

Using a neutral palette throughout a small living room is one of the best ways to create the illusion of more space. The eye can roam freely through a neutral color scheme, making the area feel more expansive. Choose white, cream, tan, or gray variations for walls and large pieces of furniture, and bring in small touches of color or pattern with accents.

Space-Defining Layout



A small living room can feel even smaller when it shares space with a home's kitchen or dining area. To help distinguish the two spaces, position the sofa with its back facing out of

the living room. Arrange accent furniture next to or across from the sofa, maintaining a clear pathway into the room.

Vertical Space in Small Living Rooms

A room includes more than just its horizontal dimensions. Invite the eye to move above and below eye level to make a small living room furniture arrangement look more substantial. In this living room, emphasis on the vertical comes from floor-to-ceiling draperies that hang just below the ceiling.

Small-Scale Furniture

Choose furniture with a scale appropriate for the room and the people who use it. In a small living room layout, pairs of armchairs can make better use of the space than a large sofa or sectional. These chairs' sleek design and smooth lines ensure the small room doesn't feel crowded.

3. Make a small living room look bigger



When you live in a small house or apartment, fitting in everything you need is difficult. Trying to fit everything and make it look good is an even bigger challenge, but that's what makes small space design so fun: Coming up with clever solutions to those obstacles makes

it all the more rewarding in the end. Luckily for you, we've got quite a few small space tricks up our sleeves, with hacks ranging from hanging beds to hidden storage, tricks of the eye, and more. Whether you live in a studio apartment or want to get more out of a tiny room in a small house in Brisbane, these small space design ideas will make it feel so much larger while maintaining style.

Incorporate Reflective Materials

Opt for white lacquered walls and glossy tiles, as designer Brian Patrick Flynn did here. The high-shine materials are reflective and will generate the same maximizing effect that a mirror will, bouncing light and making for a generally airier space.

Opt for Pocket Doors

Pocket doors with glass windows allow for shared light to flow throughout the space while also creating separation. And even better, they slide right into the wall when not being used, taking up much less space than swinging doors.

Add a Gallery Wall

Though it may sound counterintuitive, covering a wall floor-to-ceiling can make a small space feel larger. In Rudy Saunders's apartment, an assortment of framed works (plus an overscaled watch clock!) draw the eye up, making the 375-square-foot studio feel more expansive.

Be Resourceful

When space is limited and you don't want to shop for new, bulky furniture, use a chair as a side table and install wall sconces to save surface space. A cheerful color, like this pale turquoise hue, is also a good idea to set a happy mood in a tiny room.

Think Vertically

By hanging subway tile vertically—rather than the more common horizontal hang—designer Eneia White makes this modestly sized bathroom feel both taller and more streamlined. A tight palette of black, white, and blush prevent it from feeling cluttered.

Hide the Utilities

For the restaurant at The Cornell Inn, Toledo Geller used drapery to cleverly conceal pipes and HVAC, creating an elegant canopy while avoiding visual chaos.

Hang a Swing!

Since it doesn't take up any literal floor space, a swinging seat gives the appearance of a much more open room. For proof, look at the daybed Tiffany Brooks hung in this room at the Kips Bay Palm Beach showhouse.

Shrink Your Dining Table



Small round tables aren't just for breakfast nooks. Ditch the giant dining table and give yourself some extra space by opting for a small, round dining table instead, like Emily Henderson did here.

Use a Day Bed

Add a day bed and watch your bedroom double in size. If you don't have a designated guest room, this could also come in handy in your living room.

Maximize Shelving

In this Manhattan apartment, Cece Barfield Thompson corralled the owner's books and accessories into one room, where built-in shelves—complete with gallery lights—make the items look deliberate. The best part? This library doubles as a dining room in the small apartment.

Express Yourself Everywhere

Yes, even on the fridge—no, especially—your fridge and other bulky appliances. Since there's limited space for extras and less room to pile in all your favorite items, you'll need to beautify everything. Here, Anthony Dunning turned a regular old refrigerator into a design opportunity by dressing it up in removable wallpaper.

Mount Your TV

A media console is the biggest space waster in a small living room. Mount your TV on the wall or above a fireplace and you'll regain necessary floor space.

Hide Your TV

Or, even better, hide it! Whether inside of a credenza or disguised as artwork, this design trick is perfect for anyone whose living room is always their family room, dining room, and/or more.

Do Double Duty

Pieces that can serve multiple purposes are key: Find a table that can function as a desk and dining table, get a deep sofa that can double as a guest bed, or buy cubes that serve as a coffee table and bonus seats when guests are over.

Take Advantage of Architectural Quirks

Every single inch counts in a small house in Brisbane, so be sure to take full advantage of architectural quirks—this way, they'll actually become your favorite thing about the space. That radiator by your window? Invest in a pretty radiator cover and customize a cushion so you can use it as a window nook to read and relax in. (And you'll be able to forgo the bulky couch that'll take up half the studio!) Pile on the pillows and add a pendant light for tasks, as Jae Joo did here.

4. How to Decorate a Small Space



Does your small living room need to look bigger? Is space tight or is a lack of light make it feel compact? We've come up with sure fire ways to make a living room look bigger, lighter and brighter – and we don't mean by going minimalist and painting everything white – though that will work.

From options that include white ceilings, light wood flooring and not having fussy window treatments to clever ways with mirrors, these expert tips will be useful if you are looking for small living room ideas that are purely space-enhancing.

How To Make A Small Living Room Look Bigger

Whether you're looking for small living room ideas for apartments or want to make a small living room look bigger in a vacation home or cottage, our curated advice from industry experts will help.

Choose A Simple Color Scheme



The primary thing to remember when designing a small room is to ensure all tones stick to the same color palette – thus creating flow throughout the room. Bobby Berk regularly emphasizes the importance of creating a cohesive space on his blog. Despite his adoration for color, Bobby's living room paint ideas tend to be based around monochromatic and tonal hues that will accentuate the scheme further.

When choosing our palette, Bobby reminds us to think of the space as 'one cohesive space' instead of using different colors and patterns that will divide the room and make it feel smaller.

'With studios especially, the instinct is often to cut the main room into separate sections to create the illusion of a larger room – but what you're actually doing is cluttering up the space and making it appear much smaller,' he warns.

'That doesn't mean that it can't be colorful, but that does mean sticking to a tonal palette, whether that be cool tones like blues and greens or warmer tones like terracotta, beige, and rusts,' Bobby explains.

'By keeping things within the same palette, the space will feel larger and more cohesive, which will allow it to feel less disjointed. In a smaller space, we usually like to use a matte finish to help hide imperfections in the wall, which will make the dark color feel more expansive visually,' he adds.

2. Use Color, But Wisely

Creating a bigger and brighter living room doesn't mean you can't have color. A dark shade on your walls will create the opposite feel, but if you choose a light warming shade like coral for example it will lift the space.

Use white on your woodwork and skirtings and if you have shutters all the better – if not, and you can cope without drapes, then let the light pour in. Instead of investing in dark wood furniture, opt for painted pieces instead and rustic wood suits this look really well.

3. Opt For Beautiful Textures

To make a small living room look bigger, you will want to pare back clutter – but you don't want to create a sterile scheme with minimalism and all-pale shades – which, we know, create space-enhancing light spaces. Instead, keep it cozy with sumptuous textures that don't take up space visually.

Sheepskin rugs, beautiful grained wood pieces, limed floorboards, velvet cushions and oh-so-soft tan leather armchairs will all warm up a scheme instantly, particularly when used in otherwise minimalist apartment living room ideas.

4. Embrace Magic Of Mirrors

We 100% believe in the power of decorating with mirrors because they can make a small living room look bigger – if you get their placement right.

VSP Interiors show you how fabulous they can look in this living room. This pair of mirrored alcoves immediately bounces the light from the windows and reflects everything back. It's

the sure fire way to add light and brightness, but go large with your mirrors – there’s no room for small and dainty here.

5. Layer Lighting To Make A Small Living Room Look Bigger

Small living room lighting ideas can make your space feel bigger at night, even if the room has oodles of natural light in the day time. Layering the heights of your lighting is key – so ensure you have a pendant light overhead with a dimmable control, lots of lamp light and wall lights. Choose shades that can both direct light for tasks like reading, and create pools of light for atmosphere. Having wall lights that direct soft shafts of light up and down will also make the space look taller.

6. Keep Your Furniture Refined



To make a small living room look bigger, you need to remove visually heavy furniture which will drain the light from your living room, and chunky pieces that are simply too big. Think ‘light’ with tapered legs and thin frames sections, glass is also worth considering. The sofa is key: knowing how to buy the right couch for a small living room will ensure your space feels as big as possible.

‘To achieve a light and spacious feel within a living room it is best to incorporate refined furniture pieces in lighter toned natural finishes such as soft timber veneers, artisan silver leaf or polished marble,’ explains Louise Bradley, Founder of Louise Bradley Design Studio.

‘When selecting a piece, be mindful to consider the scale and avoid oversized options which can sometimes make a room feel darker.’

Plus, choosing furniture with show legs (the legs on furniture that you can see as part of the design) instead of legs hidden beneath upholstery is one of the most effective ways to

ensure your room does not appear smaller. Furniture that sits on the floor without legs is amongst the top items home organizers say make rooms feel small. Other things to avoid include board game packaging and small appliances on your kitchen worktop.

7. Go For Neutral Pieces As A Starting Point

The sofa is going to be the largest piece of furniture in your living room, so it pays to get the color and size right.

‘A neutral sofa can help lighten the space, however it's worth remembering that neutral doesn't have to mean selecting a plain design. Opting for styles with beautiful details, such as curves, buttons or fluting, will add character to a small space without overpowering your scheme, advises Suzy McMahon, Buying Director at Sofology.

‘Additionally, cushions and throws in bolder shades and patterns can keep the look from feeling too pared back. Alternatively, an accent chair is a great way to add a pop of colour and will effortlessly lift a darker space.’

8. Choose Light And Airy Drapes

What you use on your windows is really important, dark heavy drapes will block the light and create a moodier feel in your living room – fine for creating an autumnal feel, but not conducive to a light and bright scheme.

Follow Jonathan Adler's lead – you can still use pattern and color, simply choose pale shades and a subtle design. These drapes enhance the living room perfectly and the design is reflected in the huge chequered rug – something else to consider as it helps to draw the eye to another light aspect in the room.

9. Invest In Good Storage

Ensuring you have invested in the very best small living room storage ideas is key to making a small living space feel bigger. Using vertical space is a key way to maximize storage potential while taking up the smallest of footprints.

5. Make Your Space Feel More Relaxing

Homes get messy—that's just a part of life. But that mess, as normal as it is, can quickly get out of hand and become a seemingly insurmountable problem. An excess of clutter and mess can affect our ability to feel comfortable in our own spaces. That's why having methods for home organization is so important. By implementing some home organization hacks, like utilizing multi-functional storage, designating a space for everything, and labeling

items clearly, you can transform your home into a more relaxing and peaceful environment. And even when things get messy again (which they will), you'll be better equipped with solutions to get your home back in order.



So, keep reading for our some of our best home organization ideas to help you make the most of your space.

Declutter Your Home

Clear the counters.

One of the fastest ways to remove clutter from your home is to clear your countertops and surfaces of anything that's unnecessary or out of place. Walk around your house in Brisbane with an empty bin or basket and collect these miscellaneous items, and putting them back where they belong as you go.

Get rid of items you don't use.

The next step requires a bit more time and energy, but it's worth it. Empty your drawers, cabinets, closets, and more spaces where you store clutter and take inventory of the things you really need—and the things you really don't. Put the items you no longer use or need into bags or boxes designated for donating or throwing away.

Create a Designated Space for Everything

Take everything out of drawers, cabinets, and closets.

It's going to get worse before it gets better. You've probably heard it before, but that age-old saying is especially true when it comes to home organization. But in order to truly organize all of the cluttered and chaotic areas of your home, you need to first take everything out of the spaces where things tend to pile up. So, completely empty your drawers, cabinets, and closets (you do different rooms and areas at different times), so that you can see what you're working with.

Put like items together.

Now that your storage spaces are emptied out, you can start putting things back. Make sure to put like items together and give each category of items a designated shelf, drawer, or location. For example, in the kitchen, it makes sense to put all of your glassware in the same area, so you know exactly where to go when you're thirsty. And in your closet, it helps to hang all your jackets together, so you can see all your options at once when you need to pick an outer layer.

Utilize Vertical Space

Utilize walls, ceilings, and the back of doors.



To truly optimize the space you live in, consider every square inch of your home as a storage or organization opportunity. Look beyond your existing built-ins and furniture to think about

different ways you can use your wall space, the back of closet or cabinet doors, and even the negative space between your ceiling and your floors. For example, hanging a rack for pots and pans from the ceiling or on an empty wall is a perfect solution to that overcrowded and unorganized cabinet in your kitchen.

Invest in vertical storage solutions.

A hanging pots-and-pans rack, a wall-mounted hat and coat rack, an office wall organizer, and more vertical storage items like this are worthwhile investments to clear up space in your home.

Use Baskets and Containers

Corral loose electronics and supplies.

Go around your home and identify the items that are haphazardly stacked, piled, or clustered on your shelves or in cabinets. (These would be the functional non-decor items—like extra chargers and electronics, or medical supplies—that you need, but don't have a great way to store.) Collect these items and start arranging them by category to see how many different storage containers you need.

Find baskets and containers that match your decor.

Organization doesn't have to be an eyesore. Invest in quality storage baskets or containers that align with your decor style so that you can seamlessly incorporate organization strategies throughout your home. Use these containers to give a home to those items that were loose or untidy.

Make Use of Wall Space



Add floating shelves.

Wall shelves can be a great asset for both added storage and decor. You can use them display knickknacks and books, and you can hang them in areas where you don't have much-needed cabinetry or shelves. For example, if there's unused wall space above your washer or dryer, consider adding a shelf above to store supplies.

Mount racks and hooks.

Empty wall space is also a great opportunity to make up for closet space that's lacking in your home. For example, if you're missing a common-space closet, or don't have enough room in your bedroom closet, you can utilize wall-mounted racks and hooks to hang extra items.

Utilize the Backs of Doors

Organize clothing accessories.

Over-the-door organizers can be particularly useful for those extra clothing items that don't have a clear home, like purses, scarves, belts, and more. Adding one of these to the inside of a closet door can help utilize extra closet space and will keep clutter hidden when the door is closed.

Corral bathroom supplies.

An over-the-door towel rack is a common way to use up back-of-the door space in smaller bathrooms. But, that space can also be especially useful for organizing extra bathroom supplies when you're short on cabinet space. We especially love this customizable storage rack from The Container Store, which provides a spot for extra toilet paper rolls, cleaning products, hand towels, and more.

Use Hooks and Pegboards

Declutter entryway tables and surfaces.

Entryways quickly get cluttered with all of the items we unload and toss to the side when we get home. Utilizing hooks and pegboards—especially ones with designated areas for hanging keys and purses, or setting down mail—in the entryway can be a great way to keep some of those items from cluttering up nearby surfaces or the floor.

Hang miscellaneous supplies and tools.

Hooks and pegboards can also be useful in often overlooked spaces, like storage and utility closets. Use hooks and hanging wall organizers to create a more tidy system for things like brooms, mops, trash bags, and more items that tend to pile up without order.

Invest in Multi-Purpose Furniture

Add storage to your entryway.

Your furniture should work double duty—especially in the entryway. A multi-purpose furniture piece, like a storage bench with a spot to put on and store shoes, can help streamline your routine and make your home look much less cluttered.

Incorporate seating and stools with hidden storage.

Just like a clever storage bench in the entryway, storage furniture can be incorporated all throughout your home. Consider adding an ottoman with hidden storage in the living room, or investing in a bed with added storage for off-season clothing.

Make Use of Labels

Shop for labels that work for your storage containers.

Different storage containers will require different labels. For example, your plastic food containers may work well with standard sticker labels. But the woven baskets you may use to corral laundry supplies, may need a clip-on option.

Use broad labeling categories.

Don't get too specific when labeling storage bins. For example, you probably don't need to dedicate an entire container to just "Fabric Softener," so it might make more sense to label that container with something more broad, like, "Laundry Supplies." That way, you can use it to store fabric softener, detergent, dryer sheets, and any other laundry supplies you may want all in one place. Similarly, with your food storage containers, it may make more sense to label something with a more general category, like "Cereal"—rather than the specific type or brand—so that you can reuse the label and container as you swap out your groceries.

Keep a Cleaning Schedule

Divide chores into weekly, monthly, and yearly tasks.

Home chores can feel constant, and never-ending. While some cleaning tasks, like dishes, need to be done daily, others can be a part of your weekly, monthly, or even yearly cleaning routine instead. For example, you may want to designate every Sunday as your day to wash all your bedding, while an organizing task like cleaning out your closet may be better to do seasonally, every few months.

Having a routine schedule for different cleaning and organizing tasks can help you stay on top of everything, and keep these chores from feeling too overwhelming.

Organizing every room and corner of your home can take time. So, go slow, and work your way through your home by tackling one small project at a time. It may seem like a lot to deal with at first, but payoff of a tidy and organized home is so worth it.

6. Best Cleaning And Organisation Tips For Small Spaces



Keeping a small space clean and organised is the most tedious task. A home with limited space looks messy and dirty if not maintained on a regular basis. Therefore, it becomes imperative to develop proper organisational and cleaning skills to keep clutter at bay and promote a spacious, relaxed and healthy home environment. This will also reduce stress and boost mental health. You can go creative with shelves and storage units to maximise space while purging unnecessary items can help maximise space in your home. Here are some best cleaning and organisation tips for small spaces. These will make your rooms look spacious, beautiful and, of course, clean. Let's Get Started!

1. Regularly Declutter Your Space

Start with basics because decluttering can make your work a lot easier when living in a small space. It is good to prevent the buildup of clutter or unnecessary household items. For that, take one room at a time and create a pile of items you no longer need. This includes outdated electronics, torn clothing, old furniture, books, gym equipment, broken items, expired food containers, etc. You can dispose of hazardous items carefully to reduce carbon

footprint in the environment. Believe it or not! Decluttering can make a huge difference in maximising space in your studio apartment. Tip: Get rid of clutter before the arrival of professionals for bond cleaning Brisbane if you are preparing a rental property for the final inspection.

2. Invest In Multi-Purpose Furniture

Whether you are downsizing your home or facing a storage shortage problem, it is good to invest in dual-purpose furniture to maximise space. Many furniture pieces come with spacious storage solutions to help hide items out of your sight. You can invest in a coffee table with multiple drawers to store magazines, books and remotes or a master bed with spacious storage boxes to help store comforters, quilts, clothing and much more. This will make your house look clean and organised without any stress in Brisbane.

3. Use Vertical Space

Of course, horizontal drawers and shelving work in most home designs, but go creative with vertical space to organise your small house. This means you can use the space between your floors and ceiling. You can vertically organise a hall closet or linen closet to store your items. For instance, Tall items like vacuum cleaners, spray mops and ironing boards can be stored behind closed doors, and you will get more space. You can even install floating shelves on the walls, hanging organisers and over-the-door storage tools. This frees up floor space and makes it easy to sweep and mop the floor.

4. Go Creative With Kitchen Countertops



There is no denying that organising a small kitchen is the most challenging task. Besides managing your cabinets and drawers, make sure you pay attention to the countertops. It is good to clear it by removing unnecessary items. This will give you more space during meal preparations. You can do the following things to organise your kitchen countertops:

Use the backsplash area as a vertical storage space to store chopping boards and utensils.

- Install wall-mounting storage options
- Add caddies, hooks and shelves in your kitchen to organise your utensils.
- Install a sink caddy under the sink to store your dishwashing liquid, sponge, rags and cleaning supplies.
- Make use of cabinet doorknobs to hang tea towels.

Do not forget to clean your countertops regularly. Use baking soda to remove oil splatters, food spills and grime. Also, clean your dishwasher, kitchen appliances and other belongings to prevent the spread of germs.

However, if you are vacating a rental property soon, make sure you book professional bond cleaners in Brisbane for the hassle-free retrieval of your bond money.

5. Utilise Unseen Spaces In Your Home

There is no rocket science behind organising and cleaning small spaces. With a little planning, you can manage everything and make the most of your beautiful abode.

Look for overlooked areas, corners, blank walls, and shelves where you can store your items in a streamlined manner. This includes:

- Install a bookshelf above the entryway/doorway
- Add hooks under your kitchen wall cabinets
- Use unused fireplace to store household items, such as books
- Install a drop-down desk in the corner of your room

6. Focus On Quick Clean Rituals

Cleaning a small space needs proper planning and an optimistic approach. Instead of piling up cleaning chores for weekends, dedicate 15-20 minutes daily to clean up your home. Making a bed, dusting hard surfaces, doing dishes, vacuuming nooks and crannies, etc are a few tasks in a quick cleaning routine to help maintain a clean home environment. Read on tips to clean a kid's room in 15 minutes.

7. Reduce Open Surfaces

If possible, avoid open shelving and countertops to prevent dust, clutter, and grime buildup. Instead, opt for trays, baskets and containers to sort and store items.

8. Smartly Create A Deep Cleaning Schedule



Whether you are a working professional or a full-fledged homemaker, it is always good to schedule deep cleaning for the entire house in Brisbane. Dedicate each week for specific areas. For instance, deep clean your kitchen one week, the bathroom the next week, bedrooms in the third week, etc. Also, keep reducing clutter from closets and cabinets. Make sure you hire a reliable company for a detailed bond cleaning Brisbane if you are concerned about your bond money. They follow a pre-approved checklist to help pass the rental inspection without any dispute.

Conclusion

In conclusion, living large in a small space requires a blend of strategic planning and creative expression. By choosing multifunctional furniture, utilizing vertical storage, and defining distinct zones, you can make the most of every square foot. Light colors, mirrors, and well-placed lighting can further enhance the sense of space, while personal touches and greenery add warmth and character. With thoughtful design, your small apartment can become a stylish, functional, and inviting sanctuary that truly feels like home.

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