

The numbers behind a well-decorated space

Photo: Will Reid

tip:

The ideal gap between seats should be between three ft. and 10 ft., and the gap between the sofa and coffee table should be about 16-in.

Measure by measure

by SARAH ST. AMAND

I'm going to let you in on a little design secret. Besides knowledge and a knack for creating stunning spaces, an interior designer uses simple math when decorating. To create a room with that certain *je ne sais quoi*, interior designers use measurements to ensure a room looks balanced and beautiful. In this article, I

break down four areas where accurate measurements play a role in the overall harmony of a well-decorated interior space.

Lighting

Lighting is important in every room for its function, esthetic and ambience, and when it comes to a ceiling fixture,



Photo: Mike Chajecski

the correct proportions are the key to achieving a desired impact. To determine the appropriate size of your ceiling fixture, measure the length and



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width of the room in feet, and add those numbers together. That sum, in inches, represents the ideal diameter of your light fixture. For example, a room that measures 15 ft. by 20 ft. would require a light fixture measuring 35-in. across.

Seating

Seating — and how it is spaced — is a factor in virtually every room in some capacity, but in the living room, it's everything. The sofa is the

centrepiece of a living room. Standard sofas measure about 84-in.-long and 38-in.-deep, but they can range from 72-in. to 96-in.-long, suited to smaller and larger rooms, respectively. The seat height of most sofas and armchairs is 18-in., so keep this in mind when choosing side tables and a coffee table, which should be about two-thirds the length of your sofa. When positioning your seating, give each piece enough breathing room.

pro-tip

Pay attention to the suspension height of light fixtures. If it hangs above a table or counter, the gap between the bottom of the fixture and the tabletop or countertop should be approximately 30-in. to 36-in. Otherwise, the space between the bottom of a light fixture to the floor should measure between six and seven ft.



Photo: Mike Chajecki

pro-tip

Leave a gap of 12-in. to 24-in. between the edge of the rug and the wall.

Area rugs

A rug forms the base of a furniture grouping, such as a living room sitting area or a dining room suite, so these measurements should be factored into the design plan from the beginning. If a room has one express function, such as a dining room, then the rug should be chosen relative to the size of the room and should accommodate the entire furniture grouping to create a cohesive look. If the area rugs are for a large, open-concept area, sketch out a floorplan and layer in all the individual "zones" that are planned for the space, such as the sitting area, the reading corner, the television area, the office nook, and so on. Adding rugs to these areas acts as a visual anchor and helps define them within a large, open

Photo: Will Reid



tip:

It's best to hang single artwork at eye level, with 60-in. from the centre to the floor being the magic number.

space. Each area rug should be large enough to accommodate the furniture grouping related to that particular area, with about eight inches of rug peeking out from beneath furnishings.

Art

Artwork provides visual interest and dimension to a space. When hanging artwork, consider the size and scale of the piece. I love to place large pieces over a sofa or console and group smaller pieces in corners. If you're hanging your art above furniture, it can be four to six inches above the piece. If the art is going above a sofa or console, the piece should be approximately two-thirds the width of the furniture. Lastly, think about layering art. This is especially effective in places such as the kitchen, pantry or in a bookshelf vignette.



Photo: Mike Chajecki

If you follow and play by these rules you will for sure create a great stylish place to call home.



Award-winning designer Sarah St. Amand is founder and principal designer for Sarah St. Amand Interior Design Inc., a multi-faceted firm known for curating uniquely personal livable luxury tailored interiors. Servicing Toronto and the GTA, and North America. stamanddesign.com @sarahst.amandinteriordesign

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