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## 21 Decor Tips From Home Staging Experts

How to make your house feel more inviting.



By Caroline Bologna



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If you watch a lot of HGTV (or have seen the Amy Adams rom-com “Leap Year”), chances are you’ve seen the magic that home stagers can work on a place. [These experts](#) can transform spaces and make even the most unsellable houses sell.

So naturally, they are full of great home decorating advice. HuffPost asked a number of professional home stagers for their top decor tips — from accent walls to tabletop design — for everyday non-experts just looking to make our spaces feel more inviting.

Here's what they shared:

## 1. Make your bed a sanctuary.

“Making your bed can be a chore, whether dwelling or selling. The key to making it feel luxurious and hotel-like is simple when using crisp white linens and plump bedding and pillows. Plump, fresh white bedding is easy to find at most major home goods stores (can be a bed in a bag or a comforter and duvet and crisp sheets) and then simply layering in two or three of the same accent pillows in front, which is easy to change seasonally.” — Karen Otto, chief staging officer at [HomeStar Staging](#)

“In the master bedroom, create a magazine look using a comforter or duvet in a solid color or subtle pattern; put coordinated pillow shams on the bed pillows and add another decorative pillow or two for an updated look.” — Maureen Bray, owner of [Room Solutions Staging](#)



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## 2. Scent matters.

“Splurge on a great scented candle. This isn’t where you can go cheap — scent is everything. Done right, they make a room feel warm and inviting.” — Joni Rentz, co-founder and design director of [StylHaus](#)

### **3. Mirrors make a difference.**

“Brighten and amplify the light in a room with mirrors on walls opposing light sources. I love mirrors because they double the visual square footage of any room. Hang a series of three or four mirrors opposite a window to reflect the incoming light as well as the view.” — Cheryl Eisen, founder and CEO of [Interior Marketing Group](#)

### **4. Don’t forget the lights.**

“To set the right mood, add dimmers on all of your lights. Bright isn’t always right.” — Rentz

“Lighting — table lamps, chandeliers, etc. — brings a lot of style into a room! Go BIG vs. smaller table lamps!” —Kathy Burke, founder of [Sensational Home Staging](#)

“Replace dated light fixtures in the main rooms of your home to make it feel more inviting; use high-wattage bulbs in lamps and light fixtures for maximum effect.” — Bray

### **5. Think about texture.**

“Layer and mix textures to create visual interest. For instance, add textured pillows and a fur throw to create an inviting sofa.” — Rentz

### **6. Go big with your art.**

“Bigger is better when it comes to art. Large canvases add a statement to any room and can even make wall space appear larger.” — Eisen

“Paint an accent wall. It not only adds a focal point to a room but can function as a great backdrop for artwork.” — Rentz

“Wondering where’s the best place to hang art or other wall decor? Center it above whatever furniture is below it (sofa, sideboard, fireplace mantle, dresser, or console table) and make sure that the midpoint of the art is about 60 inches from the floor.” — Bray



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## **7. Drapes can create an illusion of height.**

“Create the illusion of higher ceilings with simple floor-ceiling drapes. Plain, white sheers can go a long way on a budget, but make sure they’re hung properly. Drapes should start all the way at the ceiling and just kiss the floor.” — Eisen

## **8. Don’t overlook bathrooms.**

“Add beautifully folded fluffy white towels, eucalyptus, a chunky bar of soap and a few, well chosen, decorative items to create a spa atmosphere.” — Rentz

## **9. Try something quirky.**

“Find a unique piece of furniture and make it a ‘corner quirk moment.’ For example, a Danish, mid-century wood chair with a fur pelt draped over it adds a level of authenticity to a design. You don’t want your space to look like a ‘set’ or a furniture showroom.” — Eisen

## **10. Less is more.**

“De-clutter and de-stress. Too many items on coffee tables, pillows on chairs and art pieces on walls make a space feel cramped. Stick to a few statement pieces and oversize art to give your room a clean, modern look.” — Eisen

“Less is always more! In other words, showcase your personality and style through thoughtfully placed accessories and art, and avoid unnecessary clutter.” — Florence Attinger, head of the San Francisco staging and design team at [Studio D](#)

## **11. Consider color.**

“To add new life to your seating areas, use some new throw pillows in colors that complement the art or wall decor on nearby walls.” — Bray

“Trying to get a pop of color in your space and it never feels quite right? Try using one color accent three times in the room! The eye naturally travels in a space and when you carry a color through the room, whether it be in the rug, art, pillows or décor accents, it almost always works and feels right.” — Otto

## **12. Float your furniture.**

“If a room just doesn’t ‘feel’ right, it probably isn’t. We often push furniture against walls to create what we feel is a more spacious environment, but it really ends up feeling like a waiting room and not very conducive for conversations. Instead of wall hugging, try floating your furniture.

Find a central point in the room (often around the fireplace, under a ceiling fan, or if you must, around the TV area). If you have solid surface floors like wood or tile, I would recommend getting an area rug no less than 6’x9’ in size. The right scale area rug will ground the space and the furniture. Anchor a coffee table in the center point of the rug and gather your furniture around it leaving at least 18 inches between the soft furniture and the coffee table. You may have to choose a larger piece of furniture to anchor the coffee table on if your furnishings don’t all work at that distance. It is perfectly acceptable to place the front feet of the soft furniture on the rug and the back feet off!” — Otto



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### **13. Paint and repaint.**

“A fresh coat of paint is inexpensive (and DIY-friendly), but the effect can be HUGE in the way a space looks and feels.” — Attinger

“Walls that are freshly painted in a neutral color will show off your furniture and wall decor to their best advantage (and also make the house feel well-maintained). Painting the wood trim around baseboards, doors and windows also makes the space more appealing, especially when using white paint to contrast with the wall color.” — Bray

### **14. Go neutral for staples.**

“Go with neutrals for those large pieces — sofas, beds, rugs, lamps, etc. You can add color/interest/drama with your art and accessories. ... Clients spend a fortune on a bright-colored or highly stylized sofa that they are tired of in three years. When you’re tired of the ‘look’ you have but not over-invested, you can, on a budget, redo your look again with art and accessories. Choose a new color or a new style. It’s easy, fun and not expensive!” — Burke

### **15. Don’t be afraid of the dark.**

“Strategically using dark paint and dark pieces will not only add depth to a space, but also create mood and drama.” — Eisen

## 16. Customize your furniture.

“Custom furniture can be easy. Add your own handles, paint and even different legs to ordinary pieces to make custom items at an affordable price.” — Eisen

## 17. Create centerpieces.

“Odd numbers rule for designing to dwell, or staging to sell. For tablescapes, keep it simple if you don’t want too much stuff out, and remember the numbers one and three. You can use one good scale piece or three of the exact same type decor pieces (think succulents in pretty planters, hurricanes [candle holders] or a large metallic bowl). These are easy, affordable centerpieces, whether it’s for your dining room or coffee table, and these can be changed seasonally too.” — Otto

“When creating a centerpiece for your tables, start with a tray and select three objects of varying heights: a hardcover book or two, a plant, and an interesting object work well together. Large coffee-table books also work well when two or three of them are stacked on a coffee table.” — Bray



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## 18. Let the sunshine in.

“Swap out heavy, dark, or dated window coverings with simple panels that let more light into your rooms; the space will feel larger and more appealing.” — Bray

## 19. Mix high and low.

“Not everything needs to be bought brand new or have a designer label on it. In fact, good design is all about balance; and sourcing from all different places and price points will keep your space feeling authentic and inviting.” — Attinger

## 20. Find inspiration from experts.

“I think the most important advice one can give for everyday people is follow the experts — the fabulous home decor publications such as Elle Decor, World of Interiors, Architectural Digest, etc. — so you get a feel for what is wonderful design from a variety of different styles. Everyone has their own look or vibe. Find a designer you like, and see what their approach is.” — Nahila Chianale, owner and head designer at [NCC Luxe](#)

## 21. Ask for help.

“I think there is a lot to learn from the internet. Use it as a tool to help you learn. But never buy things online as a non-professional — 99.9 percent of the time, you will be disappointed or the proportions are wrong. Go into the showrooms and ask for help.” — Chianale

*Responses have been lightly edited for clarity and style.*

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