

How to Add Height to Any Room, According to Designers

These designer-approved tricks will help you make the most of your space.



BY MARY ELIZABETH ANDRIOTIS MAR 22, 2022



Anyone who has designed a room—or at least enlisted someone to—knows firsthand that sometimes, size can be a set back in the decorating process. But any good designer has a slew of tricks up her sleeve to combat that. So, how do you make a small space somehow look massive? Well, there isn't just one way to do so. Below, find five genius ways to add height to any room—ranging from color-related suggestions to innovative furniture ideas—featuring insight from the pros.

Add Some Stripes

At this year's Dorothy Draper Decorating Weekend at the iconic Greenbrier Resort, designer Carleton Varney (who has served as the resort's decorator since taking over the firm from Draper, who oversaw its expansive original design) revealed his preferred way of adding height to a space: adding stripes. Varney puts this method to the test in the State Suite at The Greenbrier (pictured above), which has vertically striped wallpaper. Fun fact: Princess Grace of Monaco (AKA Grace Kelly) stayed in this suite with her husband, Rainier III, Prince of Monaco, and their three children, Princess Caroline Of Hanover, Albert II, Prince of Monaco, and Princess Stéphanie of Monaco—so this design idea certainly has a royal stamp of approval!



A family room designed with paint from Jolie Home.
COURTESY OF JOLIE HOME

Lisa Rickert, the CEO and Creative Director of Jolie Home, advises homeowners to "maximize the amount of natural light the room receives and hang drapery close to the ceiling to draw the eye upward."

Remove Visual Barriers

While we all love the character added with crown molding, in rooms of less than grandiose scale, horizontal lines can act as a visual shortener. Luckily, that doesn't have to mean removing them, as Rickert recommends: Instead, she advises, "paint walls and trim the same color to avoid creating horizontal boundaries that can make the room feel smaller." You can peruse window treatment ideas here.

Incorporate a Mix of Mirrors



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"Large wall mirrors reflect the natural light and makes a room feel larger," suggests Gemma Pope, Head of Design at Andrew Henry Interiors. "A cleverly placed mirror can blend in with the room and play with our perception of space." She adds that this design hack will work especially well in hallways and landings.

Use Shorter Furnishings



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This one might seem obvious, but sometimes the best tricks are the simplest ones! "Using lower furniture pieces, such as sideboards with short legs and sofas that are closer to the floor [will] give the look of more wall space," says interior designer Jennifer Kay. Not sure where to look for shorter furnishings? We've got plenty of suggestions here.

Opt for Dark Floors



"A dark floor will ground any small room in the house, extending the space," says Yvonne Keal, Senior Product Manager at Hillarys. And, if you're renting a home and can't change the flooring, Keal recommends incorporating a dark-colored rug instead. Just "make sure the rug is large to take away from your ceiling height," she adds. Ultimately, "if you don't have the funds for a big room, lots of small rugs combined will create the same effect," she explains.