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Design Tips for a Bright Home or Apartment When Darker Days Arrive

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Whether you're ready or not, the temperatures are dropping, the leaves are changing colors, and soon you'll be [preparing your home for winter](#). Unfortunately, this also means shorter, darker days are ahead, which can wreak havoc on your sleep schedule and mood. The good news is – you can still keep your spirits up and enjoy your time inside by swapping décor that will make for a brighter home or apartment.

To help you know where to start, we asked experts from across the country to share their best advice on easy décor changes that will brighten up any room. Check out what they had to say so you can still have a bright home when shorter, darker days arrive.



The colors of your wall can help create a space you'll love

[KBCO Design](#), an Orlando-based interior design firm, shares how the colors you use in a space can make a significant difference. "A fresh coat of paint can instantly brighten a space. I love a nice crisp white room and

recently painted my entire home with Sherwin Williams Pure White. It's bright but not too bright and pairs with just about anything. If you want a bright and light interior, pair the white walls with a soft gray wood floor, white blinds, and white or black light fixtures. Then add a large-scale bright painting to define the mood."

Add mirrors for a secondary source of natural light

Brightening your home can be tricky when you don't have the advantage of abundant natural light or windows, but we have a few tips that are light game changers," says, the [Ferrera Team](#), a [Kirkland, WA](#) based real estate team. "Hanging a medium-sized mirror on a wall, that is opposite a window, can act as a secondary source of natural light which brightens any home or apartment."

Focus on your window treatments

"The easiest way to create a bright home is to let as much daylight in as possible," says [Studio SHK](#), an interior design company servicing the [San Francisco, CA](#), area. "To balance natural light and lofty drafts, use a light-colored sheer as your base layer. Sheers will filter in sunlight on a cloudy day, livening-up an entire room. Pair with a heavier curtain in a neutral color to provide an uplifting warmth. Hang curtain rods as high as possible to make your ceilings look taller, making your space feel more open and bright. "



Photo courtesy of Jessica Nelson Design | Photo Credit: Carina Skrobecki

Look for rich velvets and mohairs for your textiles

[Jessica Nelson Design](#), an interior designer located in [Seattle, WA](#), shares advice on embracing warmer colors with items like pillows and blankets. “You’ll want to switch out textiles. Swapping your existing pillows and throws for things like rich velvets and mohairs is a great way to warm up your space.”

Add plants and color to your home and apartment

[Very Handsome Studio](#), a boutique design firm based in [Houston, TX](#), recommends:

1. “Add splashes of joyful color or uplifting patterns to brighten the overall mood, but never sacrifice your personal taste for a popular trend. If you want bright red curtains and lacquered black ceilings, you should never settle for anything less!
2. Buy some plants to help improve air quality and reduce stress levels. The act of caring for a separate life also provides meaning and purpose to our daily lives, and who doesn’t love a splash of green here and there?

Move furniture away from windows, and hang mirrors

[AW Design Studio](#), servicing the [Dallas, TX](#) area, recommends experimenting with mirrors. “Mirrors are my go-to decorative accessory. Put them across from windows to reflect the natural light and brighten up the room. Move furniture away from windows so you’re not blocking any natural light.”

Brighten your home by adding soft textiles

“Soft textiles can include area rugs, pillows, and window treatments with a lighter background color. The added contrast will brighten against dark wood floors, sofas, and walls,” says [Florida Living Quarters](#), an interior design company servicing the greater [Orlando, FL](#) area.

Invest in candles to brighten your home

“When combating the cooler temperatures and darker days, our best advice is to invest in some candles you love,” says [Scout Modern](#), an interior and styling firm based in [Los Angeles, CA](#). “Instead of trying to fight the darkness, we say lean into it. Through a combination of scent and ambiance, you can brighten up what might otherwise feel like a dark and dreary space.”

Try a light therapy lamp on your desk

[Susan Rains Design](#), an interior design firm in the [Havertown, PA](#) area, shares, “With more of us working from home these days, one way to brighten your home and your mood are by positioning a light therapy lamp on your desk. When you first sit down to work, turn on your light for your recommended daily dose and feel energized, happier, and more productive.”



Lighten up a room with fresh flowers

“We love adding decorative vases to tables in the main rooms of a home so you can add some fresh flowers, especially ones with color,” says interior design firm [Bridget Beari Designs](#) servicing the [Richmond, VA](#), area. Tulips, roses, or whatever is available. A little color goes a long way to brightening up your home, and the smell is so good too.”

Experiment with wallpaper

“Add an unexpected touch to a ceiling with bright wallpaper. If that’s too much commitment, start with a peel-and-stick version for easy removal, perfect for [temporary apartment upgrades](#),” says [Delia Designs](#), a boutique interior design firm in the [Philadelphia, PA](#), area.

Get as much natural and artificial light as possible in the morning

[Designing Lighting](#), a lighting company based in [Brentwood, TN](#), says to get as much natural light as possible. “When darker days arrive, start your morning by turning on most lights and opening curtains and blinds—get as much natural and artificial light as possible in the morning. However, in the late afternoon and early evening, it is time to dramatically lower the light levels in the home. As you get closer to bedtime, ensure that all bright and harsh lights are either dimmed or off.”

Add layers of lighting to spaces

[MAKING DREAMS Realty](#) servicing the Southern Wisconsin area, recommends adding layers of lighting to spaces in your home to create quality brightness. “As you observe the natural lighting coming into a room throughout the day, consider all three types of layering options – ambient, task, and accent lighting. Add various layers of lighting after you have witnessed shadows and dark corners within the room while also staying mindful of the use of the room and the focal point.”



Photo courtesy of Mary Patton Design

Combat the season blues by making simple swaps in your home

As the days get darker, seasonal depression is very real, and there are some things you can do to combat it. [Mary Patton Design](#), based in Houston, TX, shares “First, you’ll want to declutter. The extra stuff you don’t need makes you feel emotionally heavy. Try to donate and recycle what you can. You’ll also want to change your bed linens to white and lighter colors during the winter. And lastly, make sure you have enough lighting. I hate overhead lighting and recommend at least three lamps in every room.”

Add artwork that reflects light into your home or apartment

When looking to brighten your home, look no further than a well-placed art piece. [Eden Gallery](#), located in popular U.S. metros like [Miami, FL](#) shares, “Artwork with bright colors, such as red, orange, and yellow, is the perfect way to beautify a space and add liveliness and excitement to your life. The best way to brighten up your home is with artwork that reflects light. Adding a piece of art with materials like glass and metal that reflect light naturally can add light into darker corners, and it has the bonus of being art and adding beauty as well.”

Sample a paint color before committing

“Since we are located in South East Florida, the sunlight is plenty and daylight is bright. However, there are still areas in our homes that could use more natural light. We suggest painting the room a beautiful light color; there are many white tones, and picking the right tint will make or break a room, and remember, sample the color before committing,” shares [North Light Design](#), a full-service design studio.

Start by decluttering your space

“Most people don’t realize the amount of stuff they have in every room, and it can weigh down a space. By being intentional with what you keep, you gain some breathing room and a sense of openness – which will make the space feel brighter,” says [Reflections Interior Design](#), located in [Cleveland Heights, OH](#).

Opt for cozy elements in your home

[Dirt Road Candle, Co.](#) shares, “Adding brightness is all about upping the cozy elements in my home, especially as we head into cooler months and shorter days. This can be as easy as some new throw pillows, and a couple of cozy throws heavy weighted ones are my favorite. Adding wood elements, bright green plants, and various textures is a must. And don’t forget to really set the tone with a couple of candles. Candles can up the brightness in any space and create a [cozy apartment](#) or home.”





Add rugs, artwork, and lighting for a brighter home

[Elam's Home Furnishing](#), servicing in [Longview, WA](#) recommends adding three elements to your home. "Opt for new rugs to tie in your space. There are so many styles and options to add vibrant colors to any room. Adding art can also help bring life into any room. A new family photo or an interesting canvas can add cheer and warmth to a space. Once you have a rug and art, top it off with lighting. New lamps for end tables or adding them to your bedroom nightstands is a fun way to decorate and brighten the room."

Reflective surfaces are a go-to for a bright home and apartment

"Reflective surfaces such as mirrors or metallic finishes are my secret weapon to adding gentle illumination to space during darker months, says [Anna's Home Furnishings](#), located in [Lynnwood, WA](#). "It can be as simple as adding a hanging mirror to your room to amplify the natural lighting entering through your windows or the flickering glow of a candle."

Three simple hacks to make your space light

To brighten your home and apartment, [KODA Interiors](#) recommends considering three elements. Think about your windows, lighting, and colors.

1. "Hang your drapes so they stack on the walls *next* to the windows, not covering the sides of the windows. You'd be surprised how much more light you'll have by moving the drapes over just a few inches and letting the entire window peek out.
2. Add solar tubes. Solar tubes are inexpensive options to add abundant natural light to areas such as hallways, stairwells, and other areas of the home that are too far from windows to receive any natural light.
3. Small kitchens feel larger when you keep your colors light and bright. Creamy white cabinets with variegated quartz composite top, a textured neutral backsplash, and creamy white walls always feel larger than dark cabinets with a busy countertop and distracting backsplash."

Add multiple layers of lighting with your windows

[Hello Home Studios](#), an Interior Designer and Home Builder suggest, "By adding multiple layers of lighting in combination with windows, you will never be short of brightness. With your windows providing natural light, a primary overhead light source such as a chandelier or pot lights, and then secondary sources of light such as table lamps, you will have multiple options to provide the much-needed brightness to any space."
