



Feeling Cramped? Add A Spacious Feel To Your Small Spaces

By MaryAnn Shanks

Nothing crushes the soul like being confined to cramped, cluttered quarters.

Luckily, constriction is in the eye of the beholder! Any space, no matter how “cozy”, can feel lighter, airier...happier. Use these 10 simple tricks to open up your small space and, finally, let it breathe:

1. Run Furniture Around the Perimeter

Small spaces lose the right to “float” furniture. Anchor pieces to the walls, leaving central areas and walkways as open as possible.

2. Kick Your Window Treatments Out Of The House

Window treatments take up space...but windows look bare without them. So have your drapes or shades mounted from the outside for a happy, stylish compromise.

3. But If You *Must* Keep Treatments Indoors...

Make sure they encroach on the window as little as possible (i.e. - valances that cover *only* the very tops of the window casings). Leaving the glass portion of your window free and uncluttered lets in more light, and makes windows and ceilings seem taller.

4. Avoid Heavy Draperies

Can you tell dressing your windows properly has a lot to do with making a small room more spacious? Fabric choice is also very important here. No heavy draperies. Ever.

5. Prints Should Match The Size Of The Room

Sofas and love seats with LARGE prints only look good in LARGE rooms (sorry!) So find neutral or small print upholstery for your main furniture pieces, and save the LARGE prints for accents, like pillows or dining-chair cushions.

6. Use Mirrors Wherever You Can

Mirrors add depth and *faux* spaciousness to a room. Take into consideration what your mirror is reflecting; a beautiful chandelier or photo wall echoes beautifully. Always position mirrors to reflect the outdoors, especially if you have a lovely garden view or fountain to admire.

7. The Wrong Color Can Constrict You

Color is your friend – never be afraid to be bold! However, dark, dramatic colors on every wall will “close in” a small space. So go with lights or neutrals, and save the drama for one accent wall and smaller accent pieces throughout the room.

8. Keep It Simple!

Living well in a small space means making tough decisions about what stays and what goes. When in doubt, lose it! Keeping organized – and simplified – is the difference between cluttered and cozy.

9. Don't Let The Wrong Shutters “Shutter” You In

Nothing gives a space that warm, cottage feel like shutters. But tiny rooms can't accommodate floor-to-ceiling shutters. So use shutters sparingly, and only in small areas (i.e. - as art on a wall, or framing a small kitchen window).

10. Scale Is Everything

Big goes with big. Small goes with small. Make sure the furniture you buy is a piece your room can handle. Otherwise, you'll soon come to hate that big, bulky sofa every time you walk into your small space.

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