



The True Measure Of A Room Is Found In The Scale

By MaryAnn Shanks

One of the biggest mistakes homeowners make when redecorating or designing a room, is neglecting (or not taking the time to fully understand) the element of scale.

Scale is the most important consideration in designing a room. From furniture to floor coverings, kitchen appliances to crown molding – scale is *everything*.

Below are some examples of common scale-related errors, and what you can do to fix or avoid them:

Molding Mistakes

When dealing with molding, it's of vital importance you consider the size of your walls before determining the size/style of your molding:

- 12' ceilings (or higher) can easily accommodate a 10-12" crown and at least a 6" base.
- Although a big base and crown are very impressive on "tall walls", you should never attempt it with ceilings 8' or shorter. You can, however, use one or the other, effectively. For example, 8" baseboards look wonderful in a room with 8' ceilings (provided there is not a crown).

High Ceiling Considerations

Extremely tall or vaulted ceilings pose problems for most homeowners. You loved them when you bought the house, but now you're stumped by how to incorporate them into the design. Here are a couple of tips:

- Run beams across your vaulted ceiling to give your room a cozy, rustic feel. Make sure your beams are quite *substantial* in size, otherwise they'll ruin the aesthetic completely. Again, it's all about the scale.
- Raise the mantles in your high-ceiling rooms to give the space a better sense of proportion. (The opposite is true in low-ceiling rooms: lower that mantle.)

The Scale Of Your Seating

Seating isn't just a place to plant your tush. Sofa and chairs play a vital role in the aesthetic scale of your space:

- Watch the height of your chair backs and sofa back. If your room has low ceiling, you really shouldn't be using high-backed furniture. Got high ceilings? Then, go for it!
- Very deep seating pieces only belong in rooms with very little furniture (or a whole lot of open space). Also, the comfort of your guests should be of concern in rooms where you entertain. Therefore, keep a careful eye on the depth of any new seating pieces. If the chair or sofa is too deep, it can be very difficult to get up (especially for elderly guests).

Sizing Up Your Accessories

Here are some quick, easy solutions to the common scale issues with room accessories:

- Bedside lamps always seem to pose a problem – often, they're just too small. When buying bedside lamps, make sure they're tall enough to help your read and in proportion to your bed (the taller and more substantial the bed, the tall and more substantial the lamp).
- Mirrors always seem to be an issue. So when shopping for a mirror, use this simple tip: when in doubt, go big! Better to err on a mirror that is too big, than too small.
- A rule of thumb for over-a-table chandeliers, the width of the piece should be $\frac{1}{2}$ the diameter of the table.

Overall, always make sure scale is the *first thing* you take into consideration when purchasing an item for your home. And don't forget to measure, re-measure...then, measure again!

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