

How to Make Your New Studio Apartment Fully Functional — But Still Super Stylish *Tips that'll serve you well past your first lease*

Though she be but little, she's all. freaking. yours. We're talking about your first apartment, and even if you've just signed a lease for a wee studio, she's a glorious blank slate of roommate-free personal space.

But before you can get to the really fun stuff (hanging pictures, playing hostess, walking around naked *just because you can*), you need to come up with a game plan. That is, how you're going to transform this itty-bitty empty box into a home — without it turning into a hot mess. Consider this your cheat sheet to walking the fine line between cozy and cramped.



Image credit: Corynne Pless Photography

Keep it under wraps. Hideaway, convertible and storage furniture pieces are essential for squeezing every last inch out of a smaller rental. Think sofa beds, murphy desks, nesting tables, lidded ottomans, couches with built-in drawers — you get the idea. And don't be afraid to ask your furniture to work overtime: if it can't multifunction, it's not deserving of a place in your lair. An open shelving unit, for example, can serve as a room partition, a TV stand or just a place to rest your wine glass.



Image credit: Chris Dorsey Photography

Keep it clean. There's no getting around it, girl: You're going to have to break the habit of piling your dirty laundry in one corner of the bedroom. Why? Because your bedroom is now also your living room. Your daily routine should include cleaning, organizing, decluttering, purging and picking up after yourself. It comes with the territory.

Keep it in the air. Or just off the floor. Shelving, hooks and bookcases will help you make the most out of your wall space. And remember to think vertically: Use the entire height of your walls, not just the width. Install shelves over doorways, for example. P.S. Don't forget to make use of hidden spaces, like the inside of cabinets, under sinks — even the hollow of an ornamental fireplace or a never-used oven.

Keep it together. "A place for everything and everything in its place." Mom's onto something: Bins, baskets, trays and catch-alls provide a convenient (and pretty!) place to drop your keys and wallet, store throws, stash magazines or hide whatever needs hiding when you hear an unexpected knock at the door.



Image credit: Anna With Love for The Everygirl

Keep it real. Just because your apartment is tight on space doesn't mean it has to be basic. Don't shy away from bold colors, splashy accents, temporary wallpaper or whatever complements your personality — as long as it won't sacrifice your security deposit.



Image credit: District Sparkled

Keep it creative. Don't have a closet or an entryway? Kitchen short on counter space? Create your own. Garment racks and hall trees are inexpensive and store a ton of clothes and coats, while rolling kitchen carts can be wheeled around to wherever you may need a flat work space.

Keep it curated. Only bring something (or *someone*, for that matter) home with you if you really, really like it. Stow out-of-season clothing under your bed, resist the urge to buy too much crap, and toss or donate stuff that's just taking up room.