

## Real Simplifier

# Plan Your Space Like a Designer

THE PROS HAVE A KNACK FOR PICTURING HOW A ROOM WILL COME TOGETHER. TRY SOME OF THEIR BEST SPACE-ENVISIONING TIPS TO AVOID AN EXPENSIVE MISTAKE.

By Leslie Corona



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## FURNITURE

You can determine the right size and placement without doing too much math. In the dining area, there should be enough space to comfortably walk around—not shimmy sideways—when the chairs are occupied. That means the table belongs at least three feet from the walls or other furniture. The sofa you select may fit through the door, but don't add it to your cart until you have a grasp of its bulkiness. Mark the width, height, and depth with painter's tape on the floor and wall, then fill in the outline with furniture or boxes so you get a sense of volume. (Use this trick with other potential pieces, like armoires and desks, too.)



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## AREA RUGS

If you plan to cover most of the floor, the edges of the rug should land about two feet away from the walls. If you absolutely love a vintage or off-the-rack rug that's just too small, consider placing it over a larger, natural-fiber rug for a layered look. And if you have a big, open-concept space, delineate cozy conversation areas by using a few rugs instead of a single huge one.



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## LIGHTING

When choosing pendants and chandeliers, start with an easy calculation: Add together the length and width of your room in feet. The diameter of your light fixture should match that number in inches. So if your room is 10 by 12 feet, find a fixture that's about 22 inches in diameter. In most rooms, the bottom of the light should be about 7½ feet off the floor. (Imagine basketball players are coming over—you want them to feel comfy!) In the dining room, though, aim for about three feet between the bottom of the fixture and the tabletop.



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## KITCHEN FIXTURES AND APPLIANCES

These built-in (and often pricey) elements call for more preparation. To create the ideal workflow, follow the fundamental rule of kitchen design: Your sink, fridge, and stove should form a triangle, and each side of this triangle should not exceed nine feet. Filling out your cook space with an island? Be conscious of how close it is to your counters—placing it three to four feet away should do the job. That will let you open doors and use appliances and still have room to walk.

### SEE IT IN YOUR ROOM

Some big-box retailers, like Wayfair, Target, and Ikea, now offer a free augmented reality function on their apps so you can try before you buy. Scan the room with your phone's camera, and in seconds the product you're interested in will appear on your screen. Other digital platforms, like Roomle and Homestyler, let you create 3-D mock-ups using blank templates and floor plans along with images of furniture from a variety of sellers.

### OUR EXPERTS

**GINNY MACDONALD,**  
FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL  
OF GINNY MACDONALD  
DESIGN IN LOS ANGELES

**EMILIE MUNROE,**  
INTERIOR DESIGNER  
AT STUDIO MUNROE IN  
SAN FRANCISCO

**TANIYA NAYAK,**  
TV PERSONALITY AND  
INTERIOR DESIGNER  
AT TANIYA NAYAK DESIGN  
IN BOSTON