

6 Little Details Everyone Forgets in Their Room Makeovers, According to Pros

When making updates to a home, no one wants to focus on minor details. It's much more exciting, at least in the beginning, to embrace in-your-face changes like knocking out a wall, choosing new floors, or painting walls. It's only after those big moves have been made that their smaller counterparts come into focus. And if you're not careful, that supporting cast can steal all the attention from a space's leading stars.

"The great Charles Eames once said, 'the details are not the details, they make the design,'" designer Kate Lester says. "Truer words have never been spoken. Those little details are what elevate a space from good to exceptional."

Taking on an update is a big-picture task, but once your project begins to take shape, don't forget to notice the odds and ends that will make it all look complete. We asked three designers—Lester, Anne Carr, and Lauren Meichtry—for their thoughts on the small things that take away from an update's appeal, no matter how good the larger view looks. These are the six issues that bug them the most, including how to fix them.

Lacking accessories

Given how many beautiful couches are on the market these days, it's understandable that an upgrade could revolve around a coveted couch. But Meichtry says that leads to a common problem.

"One big mistake people make when it comes to the small details is spending so much on the big-ticket items and not leaving a good enough budget for the smaller things," she says. "So, you splurged on your new couch and now you have no pillows on it and your side tables are empty. While having a nice couch is great and all, if you can't finish the room because you overspent on the couch, it isn't going to come together."

To balance the spotlight your couch deserves with the comfortable feeling you were probably after in the first place, Meichtry recommends setting aside funds for accessories. This can be done with a few stacked books on a coffee table, a gallery wall above a console, or various plants for a corner.

“As for pillows, I recommend spending less on larger, solid pillows that will go in the back corner of the couch and splurging on the two pillows that will be front and center,” she adds.

You can also save big bucks by DIYing accessories—think: dying your own pillow covers, spray painting thrifted vases or candlesticks, or making your own expensive-looking planter.

Too much matching

It might seem like buying a room’s furniture all from the same store just makes so much sense. After all, if everything is available, then why not make the most of it? The downside of this efficient thinking is this: As soon as every piece is in its place, it all looks like an ad for the store. That’s why Meichtry advises against it.

“If you got a little carried away and your living room looks like it’s straight out of a furniture catalog, try choosing one item at a time that you’re willing to swap out,” she says. “A great way to do this is to take photos and post the items for sale online before you buy something new. Then you’ll have some money in your pocket to put toward the replacement and you’re not putting anything to waste. Win-win!”

She advises replacing smaller pieces, like matching side tables, to automatically make the room look more personalized. That being said, make sure that your chosen materials and finishes all look sharp no matter how you arrange them. “The small details are often the things people notice the most,” Meichtry says. “You can dress up an IKEA couch with beautiful pillows and no one will be the wiser. But putting cheap-looking pillows on an expensive couch won’t work so well. Be realistic about your purchases.”