

Tips and considerations before you begin

- Will the style of your new interior be based around items you already own or will you be buying all new?
- Think about functionality. Rooms such as the kitchen and bathroom are practical work rooms so this should come before aesthetic considerations. In the living room, consider where the best position for the TV/Media should be; furniture placement will depend on this.
- How much storage (cupboards and/or shelving) will you need and will this be built in?
- Before you begin, compile a mood board of the styles you like by browsing magazines or Pinterest.
- Shop around and compare prices.
- Take measurements of your room or even a floor plan with you when you're out shopping so you know if something will fit well.
- Take photos of the things you like while you're out shopping. Furthermore, take a sticky notepad with you so you can jot down the name of the shop and attach it to the item before you take the photo. That way you won't forget where the things you like are.
- Factor in time – time to get jobs done, time for delivery of products, timing of installation (for example, items that need to be installed before other things can happen).
- Which jobs can you do yourself and which will need professional labour for?
- Hold off picking paint or wallpaper. Don't confuse this with not settling on a colour palette, that's definitely among the first decisions to make. But if you can wait until you've chosen the bulk of your furniture and accessories before you pick the colour or pattern of the walls you'll get a better result. How? With thousands of colours, tints, tones and shades available, it will be much easier to match the paint with the stuff than the other way round. Holding out a while also means you'll have a better idea of how the room looks in the light of day and artificial light at night.
- Give yourself room to move. If you're investing in a lot of new items, list them in order of importance and work your way down. If you think there's a space needs filling, it's easier to add things at a later date than to have to cram a lot of things in and overdo it from the get go. Great news if you're working on a budget; invest in good quality statement pieces that don't have to fight for attention.
- What's the right height for artwork? Artwork is there to be admired so no matter how high the ceiling, it needs to hang at eye level. Easy rule of thumb, hang it so the centre (midline) is no lower than 145cm and no higher than 152cm from the floor. To get your artwork in just the right place, take a picture of the room, print it out and draw on it where the pieces would go. You'll need to work out roughly the right scale so you can tell if the piece is too big, small or just right. It's also wise to rest the pieces on the floor, leaning up against the wall for a week or so before hanging them so you get a rough idea of how they look in the room.
- Try to avoid 'themes'. This is the quickest way to date a room. If you really like a theme, pick a couple of your favourite elements and build a looser style around them.
- Create a focal point. Pick one thing to be the dramatic piece that draws attention in the room and work outwards from there. The best spot for a focal point is usually directly across from the entrance.
- Give your knick-knacks the Coco Chanel treatment. Coco Chanel's accessorising motto was this: "Before you leave the house, look in the mirror and take one thing off." In the case of ornaments and other accessories, if it's just not working in the room find a new home for it.
- Be bold and be you. The tips above are just that, tips. If you don't agree with them that's ok. Ultimately you have to enjoy living in this space so fill it with things that make you happy and comfortable.