
THE 7 ELEMENTS OF INTERIOR DESIGN

ABIDE INTERIORS

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ABOUT US

Abide interiors is a family owned home and lifestyle company based on the Sunshine Coast, Qld. We started the business in January 2017 with a desire to source and offer beautiful designs at a great price. Since beginning, our model has evolved to now offer our designs wholesale, trade and retail.

We are all coast loving people so naturally the inspiration for our look combines the coastal shoreline of the Sunshine Coast with other classic influences. We love spaces that feel put together, yet livable – well-traveled with a personal point of view. We believe home is like no where else, a sanctuary away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.



It's assumed that anyone involved in interior design would have a natural leaning towards creativity and flair, but there's an element of science that comes into play as well. A professional interior designer typically adheres to a set of unofficial rules, based on certain elements and principles of interior design. These elements include line, space, light, form, texture, color, and pattern; and the key to producing a visually pleasing interior is the art of keeping all these elements in balance.

Having these elements work together in harmony not only improves the appearance of a room, it also increases the room's functionality.

How to Begin

An interior designer will begin by assessing the room in question according to the elements mentioned above, then use these elements to improve or disguise the flaws or features of the space. At the very least, the seven elements as detailed below must be considered when creating any interior.



Line

Interior designers use a room's structural design and furnishings to form contrast, harmony, and unity. Lines - vertical, horizontal, and dynamic - are used to shape a room and guide the eye.

- **Vertical Lines:** Vertical lines evoke feelings of strength and freedom. These lines are created by features like doorways and windows. On a practical level, when vertical lines are accentuated, the room has the illusion of being taller. Vertical lines must be used wisely to ensure that inhabitants don't feel uneasy. These lines are most suited for use in entries, dining rooms, and offices.
- **Horizontal Lines:** Horizontal lines provide a sense of stability, efficiency, and formality. These lines are created by tables and other surfaces. In order to make a room look longer and wider, an interior designer will highlight horizontal lines and draw the eyes to a focal point. However, care must be taken to not over-emphasize horizontal lines, because this could make the space look uninspired and boring.
- **Dynamic Lines:** By dynamic lines we mean curved, zigzag and diagonal lines. These types of lines can be found in stairs – they provide movement

and energy. Dynamic lines are stimulating to the eye and capture our attention for longer. A word of caution though: too many dynamic lines in a room can overpower vertical or horizontal lines and become distracting.

Experienced interior designers know how to incorporate different lines, thereby striking the right balance. They do this by choosing one dominant feature line, as per their client's brief and the feeling they're trying to convey in the space.

Space

It's not difficult to understand the fundamental concept of space, because space is the foundation of an interior. It's what you get to work with. Because the space available typically can't be changed, as an interior designer you must now work within the confines of the physical boundaries of the room. However, as interior designers, we get to work within a three-dimensional space – length, width, and height. Depending on what you're trying to achieve from design and functionality perspectives, this three-dimensional space can be left empty - or filled.

With interior design, we categorize space as either 'positive' or 'negative'. Positive space refers to space that contains objects, while negative space refers to open or



empty space, which also includes spaces between objects. In order to avoid overcrowding, or sparseness, our aim is to strike the right balance between a room's negative and positive spaces.

The resulting balance will be determined by the client's requirements for the specific room or area, and the required functionality. For example, traffic paths require negative space. An interior designer must also consider the size and scale of the objects and furniture placed in the room because, depending on the desired outcome, these can be used to

make a room appear smaller or larger. For example, a tall item like a bookcase can give the illusion of height.

Different uses of space by an interior designer will be determined by different design styles; there will be way more negative space with a minimalist design than there would for your average eclectic design. Regardless of your design brief, how an interior designer uses and balances the available space can be the difference between a successful design concept or forgoing your next commission.

Light

Both man-made and natural light are critical aspects of any space. Without light, the other elements would not reach their full potential. For interior designers, light can be defined in three ways –

- **Task lighting** - for a defined purpose
- **Mood lighting** - to add ambience
- **Accent lighting** - to emphasize objects

When thinking about lighting for your space, your first consideration must be the activities that will be undertaken in that room, followed by an assessment of both the quantity and quality of lighting. Some simple examples are - office workers need to be able to see clearly and be alert, so they require bright lighting; alternatively, a softer touch can be used for living room lighting. For versatility, using a dimmer can add a new dimension to a space.

Always take natural lighting into consideration, and this can be cleverly manipulated through the placement of windows, doors, and even mirrors.

Of course, light can also be used to set the mood of a space, whilst simultaneously defining line, color, and texture. An experienced interior designer understands the importance of lighting fixtures; that they in themselves are a visual

feature and can add the final touch to any design.

Form

From an interior designers point of view, 'form' refers to the shape of a room, in addition to the objects within that room. Basically, it refers to the physical form of anything that's three-dimensional. Interior designers describe form as either natural, geometric, or open.

- Natural form refers to more organic forms that appear to be created by nature
- Geometric form refers to square edges and hard lines - typically looking man-made
- Open form refers to objects that can be closed or looked into – self-contained.

When considering form, an interior designer must consider the scale and proportions of a room when compared to the objects being placed in the room. Adding similar-shaped forms can create balance and harmony, while the addition of too many differing shapes can result in a confusing effect. When a dominant form is repeated in smaller objects throughout a space, the area will typically look more attractive.

Texture

By texture, we're referring to the tactile surface of a finish or object. While texture has the ability to add a unique dimension to a space, it's an element that is often overlooked. Similar to mixing pattern and color, an interior designer knows how to mix textures within a space to provide a subtle sense of depth. Consider coarse, glossy, smooth - from furniture to fabric to accessories - texture adds detail and interest to an area, and gives feeling to a room. Basically, it makes it visually appealing to the eye.

In interior design, there are two forms of texture –

- **Actual Texture:** Also known as tactile texture, actual texture has 3D characteristics and can be felt or seen. An example might be a soft and fluffy colorful cushion which can be appreciated with both the eye and with touch.

- **Visual Texture:** This refers to texture perceived by the eye. It's the impression of texture you get simply by viewing an object. You'll typically find this effect in the form of a pattern.

When there's a feeling that a room is missing something, an experienced interior designer will know if it's due to lack of texture. Texture must be managed from the ground up, with careful consideration, because it plays an important part in every object chosen for an area. Each object's placement in contrast to the texture of the object placed beside it adds contrast and emphasis to the completed design.

Color

Color in itself is a science, and is a very important element that must be mastered by all interior designers. Color has the power to define unity, create mood, and alter the perception of how small or



large a space may be. Don't ever underestimate the psychology of color. It can stir emotions and evoke memories; it can stimulate both physiological and psychological responses in our bodies. We know that blues and greens are suited to bedrooms because they promote calmness; we also know that red is often featured in kitchens because it entices appetite.

When thinking about color schemes for a room, your first considerations must be what this space will be used for and the activities that will be occurring in that space. Your next consideration should be how both artificial and natural lighting will affect your chosen color in both daytime and night-time, remembering that light can alter our perception of color. Your final consideration should be the size of the space. Experienced interior designers know how to give the illusion of more space by incorporating brighter or lighter colors in smaller spaces; whereas if you have a larger space, a powerful dimension can be created by using darker colors.

Pattern

When pattern is paired with color, it can add great appeal to a room. Repetitive design is what creates pattern, and this will often be found in soft furnishings, wallpaper, fabrics, and rugs. There are various types of patterns, like geometric, stripes, organic, pictorial, animal

prints, and motif.

Your first consideration when implementing pattern is to consider the style and size of the room. If you're working with a small room, be very sparing when introducing pattern to prevent overwhelming the space. On the other hand, patterns that create horizontal or vertical lines can be used to achieve an enhanced sense of space. Rooms can be livened up with complex patterns incorporating contrasting lines and colors, but they are typically more effective when used as a feature wall. If you're working in a large space, large-scale patterns can become a prominent focal point in a room.

As far as style goes, it's imperative that the interior designer understands the category of the pattern, to ensure they maintain the essence of the room. For example, incorporate organic, floral prints for a traditionally styled room, while abstract and geometric prints can be experimented with for a contemporary touch.

When used correctly, patterns can be fun to use because they provide an element of functionality and can bring a room back to life. However, experienced interior designers know that it's wise to include at least three patterns that all emanate from the same color scheme.