

Decorating Your Home

Colorful Ways To Expand Small Spaces

by Mary Rice

(NAPSA)—You can have a new home—at the old address—for a lot less than you may realize.

Start by expanding how spacious your home feels with some simple tricks and fool-the-eye color cleverness.

- **Because pale colors tend to recede** visually (move away from you), the lighter the color you choose for your walls and your floor, the larger your room will appear.

- **Cool colors** such as blues, greens and purples also seem to recede, making small spaces visually appear more open and spacious.

- **Shiny surfaces** can help you expand space even more. That's something to remember when selecting paint sheens. For example, you can use a semigloss sheen to visually expand a small kitchen or bathroom. Use a softer sheen, such as satin or eggshell, in bedrooms (these are especially great for kids' rooms) and living areas to offer a more subtle finish.

- **Trim, molding and even furniture** placed at various heights can affect a person's perceptions of space. Furniture kept at the same height level can help make rooms appear more spacious. To avoid decorative boredom, add a few simple level breakers such as a tall plant, wall art or an attractive floor light. In any case, don't go for the massive and the overstuffed. Sleek furniture and clean lines keep the room looking large.

- **Try the “same palette” trick.** To make a small place appear larger, use the same palette of colors throughout but vary how you use it. For example, if using two different colors for your walls and trim, try repeating the colors in a connecting room, but use the trim color on the walls and the wall color on the trim.



To make a small apartment or home seem larger, use the same palette of colors throughout, but vary how you use them.

- **Open the door to a confined corridor** by painting it with light, cool colors. Then mount a tall mirror at the end. The space may seem to go on forever.

- **You don't have to raise the roof over low ceilings.** Instead, paint it a shade or two lighter than the walls to open the area up visually. Also, extend the wall color a few inches onto the ceiling.

- **Another tip-top notion** is to install crown molding around the perimeter of the ceiling and paint it in a darker color than the ceiling itself. This will help to draw the eye upward.

- **Put patterns into play.** Those with a strong directional feel (stripes, for example) can really help to visually expand your space. Vertical stripes tend to make rooms seem taller, while horizontal stripes make rooms appear longer.

- **Let the sunshine in.** Minimize window treatments to let

in the light and add an air of openness.

- **Paint your baseboards** the same color as your walls.

Keep these tips in mind and you may find you can enjoy the illusion of a much bigger home without seriously slimming your wallet.

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- *Ms. Rice is a color and home design expert at Behr Paints.*