

Inside *Design*

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Improving Relationships...Between Rooms That Is

The most important interior design element of any home is the layout of the rooms and spaces. The way the various rooms and spaces relate to each other is often among the features that attract us enough to purchase our homes in the first place. Changing the layout can involve major renovations, but there are some basic ways to improve upon the perceived relationships between rooms or spaces without having to embark on any structural work at all.

Common complaints that homeowners tend to have about the layout of their homes include:

Adjoining rooms feel as though there is no “flow” between them.

There is no evident delineation between usable space and walking space in open-concept layouts.

Adjoining rooms require different atmospheres but their proximity makes this difficult.

Open-concept layouts provide no privacy or separation (visual, audible, etc.) within the space.



Lack of continuity between the various rooms of the home in general.

These issues can be compensated for simply by how the space is treated both in terms of furnishings and décor. Solutions to the complaints listed above can often be done in the matter of a couple of days without requiring the dust, debris and chaos that can accompany a major renovation project.

To create a sense of flow between rooms that are adjoining without being fully open to each other, make sure to use the same colour scheme in both rooms, repeat various materials in both (i.e. if you have a leather sofa in one, have something with the same colour leather in the other), and strategically place mirrors to visually bring one room into the next. The mirrors will not only emphasize the relationship between the two spaces,

but they will also reflect light making both rooms feel brighter and larger.

In open-concept floor plans it can be challenging to properly establish walking space (an unofficial hallway, if you will) separate from entertaining areas especially if you tend to entertain more than a few people at a time. Space can be separated visually without actually requiring obstructions such as walls. Emphasize your entertaining zones by having the brighter lights focused at the seating areas, such as over the dining table, by the sofas, and at the kitchen’s work- and seating zones; this will automatically create spaces with less light and people naturally migrate toward brighter lit areas, leaving the dimmer areas as passageways. Other tricks include simply an abrupt change in colour or ceiling height to create the sense that one space is ending and another starting.

Adjoining rooms requiring different atmospheres tend to work best by simply using the reversed colour scheme in one of the rooms. For instance, if one of the rooms is blue with beige and grey accents, in the other room you can use the beige as the main colour and the blue and grey as accents. This keeps a nice continuity while emphasizing difference.

Open-concept floor plans leaving you with a lack of separation have to be treated with great care. Take care with your furniture layout to create individual zones within the space, leaving ample room between. If needed, back-to-back tall furniture pieces can create a physical division between “rooms”. If sound carries through very easily, add soft furnishings and accessories, such as a tapestry or fabric art instead of paintings, rugs, pillows or cushions on hard furniture, and so on. Soft items absorb sound, while hard surfaces reflect sound.

Creating a sense of continuity through a home is easier than most people anticipate. Choose your favorites and don’t worry about over-using them! If your favorite colour is red, don’t be shy to use it in varying quantities in almost every room – from two walls in one room, to a simple splash in the next, to the colour of the furniture in the next... The same should be done with favorite materials too, such as wrought iron, dark stained ash wood, textured glass... Your favorite colours teamed up with your favorite materials only need some neutral and contrasting basics to create a finished look that flows nicely without being too repetitive.

For more information or if you have a question on Design, please visit Karen’s website at:

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