

## Design Session Tools

We recently went through all of the Design Sessions and labeled them as specific tools. As we move through the Beach House room by room I am going to highlight every tool I needed in the process of designing that specific room. Below are all of the Design Session tools (excluding Christmas) with the tools I used to design the Beach House's great room in bold.

<b>Tool 1</b>	<b>The Key Principles of Accessorizing</b>	<b>Tool 17</b>	<b>Moulding and Wall Treatments</b>
Tool 2	Budget Friendly Ways to Buy Accessories	<b>Tool 18</b>	<b>How to Use Fabrics to Pull Things Together</b>
<b>Tool 3</b>	<b>How to Lay Out Your Furniture</b>	<b>Tool 19</b>	<b>Tile for Your Home</b>
Tool 4	Tablescapes and Entertaining for the Fall Season	<b>Tool 20</b>	<b>The Business of Built-Ins</b>
<b>Tool 5</b>	<b>Lighting a Home Perfectly</b>	Tool 21	How to Refresh Your Home
<b>Tool 6</b>	<b>Beautiful Window Treatments</b>	<b>Tool 22</b>	<b>All About the Flooring</b>
Tool 7	Bedroom and Closet Decluttering	<b>Tool 23</b>	<b>The Art of Stone Countertops</b>
Tool 8	Accessorizing for the Spring Season	Tool 24	BONUS: Lighting Trick
<b>Tool 9</b>	<b>Selecting Paint Colors for Your Home</b>	<b>Tool 25</b>	<b>Project Management</b>
Tool 10	Selecting, Placing and Arranging Art	<b>Tool 26</b>	<b>Discovering Your Design Style</b>
Tool 11	Hanging and Placing Wall Decor (3D)	<b>Tool 27</b>	<b>The Transitional Design Style</b>
<b>Tool 12</b>	<b>Furniture Arranging - How to Get it Right</b>	Tool 28	Small Space Design
<b>Tool 13</b>	<b>Tips for Area Rugs</b>	Outdoor 1	How to Boost Your Curb Appeal
Tool 14	Tips for Beautiful Bedding	Outdoor 2	Outdoor Planting with a Pro
<b>Tool 15</b>	<b>Accessorizing to Personalize Your Home</b>	Outdoor 3	Outdoor Decorating Tips
<b>Tool 16</b>	<b>How to Decorate with Throw Pillows</b>		

# The Design Process

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## 1. Assess the Situation (Tool 25)

Take a hard look at your room and try to answer the following questions:

What are the issues?

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What are the challenges?

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What are the things you love about the room?

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What are the things you can't stand?

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*Using the Beach House as an example, the main issue was that the current furniture layout was an ineffective use of the space and the client's use of their storage cabinets were inefficient. There was no storage. Since it is a smaller great room it was going to be a challenge trying to fit in a dining room, living room, bar area and some storage all in one room. The short windows also provided another fun challenge. What I loved about the great room? I mean how could you not absolutely fall in love with that spectacular view of the beach? Finally, for the things I couldn't stand (or my clients couldn't stand I should say) - the dark and out of date color palette and old furniture.*

## 2. Make a Floor Plan

My M.O. is to use the 3D modeling program Sketch Up Pro. If you are interested in learning this program you can download a free version of it, and also take an easy beginners class I teach on UDEMY. [Click here to check out that course.](#) If you don't want to deal with Sketch Up, no problem! Grab some graph paper and start measuring!

## 3. Decide on the Furniture Layout (Tool 3 & Tool 12)

Deciding how many pieces you will need, where they will go and how the traffic pattern will be affected is super important not only to the finished result, but to the design process as well.

## 4. Storage Solutions (Tool 20)

Now is the time to consider any built-ins. Do you need a built-in entertainment center? Can you use your wall height versus your floor space to store things while also adding visual interest with some accessories? *In the Beach House's case, I needed a place to store candles, placemats, centerpieces, games and such as well as a place for all of the client's liquor and bar glasses. My solution was to add a built-in serving bar on the East side of the room and drawers and display units on the West side near the dining table.*

## 5. Identify Lighting Locations (Tool 5)

With a solid furniture layout and built-ins all figured out, you can now identify where you can have lighting. The electricians are often the first sub-contractors in on a project. They will make a mess of the ceiling so it is best to get them in first. Be sure to think of your lighting as layering.

*In the Beach House, we installed direct lighting over the sofas and dining table. We also added ambient lighting over the dining table and spot lights over the window treatments. Lastly, we added a pair of lamps on either side of the fireplace. Lots of layers of lighting!*

## 6. Determine the Style of the Room (Tool 26 & Tool 27)

Having an idea of the overall style you envision for your room is super helpful at this point. You'll be selecting hardscape materials like wall coverings, base molding (**Tool 17**), stone (**Tool 23**), tile (**Tool 19**), etc. after this and they all depend on the style you are going for.

*In the Beach House I went for the coastal and Scandinavian styles. This helped me decide on painted brick for the fireplace, shiplap for the walls, base moldings and white marble for the countertops and built-ins. The goal is to create "flow" in my hardscape selections as explained in **tool 19**.*

## 7. Pick Your Flooring (Tool 22)

Flooring is a very important step in the design process. It covers a large percentage of your room so settling the right foundation is crucial.

*In the Beach House I chose a rustic 8" plank of hardwood in a sandy color because it was perfect for minimizing the problem of sand from the beach all over the floor. This was also the point where I decided on the size and location for the area rug I would have custom made (**tool 13**).*

## 8. Determine Where You Will Have Window Treatments (Tool 6)

When it comes to window treatments there are a few questions you should ask yourself: Do you need window treatments in your room? If so, stationary panels or traversing drapes? How high? How wide? Will they cover the walls or just the windows? Do you need privacy?

*The window treatments at the Beach House addressed 3 issues - the window heights, the fabric panels and the need for privacy. For the window height issue, I designed white transoms to artificially raise the height of the windows. For the fabric panels, I determined the height, width and that they would be stationary. Finally, I added motorized transparent shades and black out shades to add some privacy. Keep in mind, the actual design and fabrics have yet to be selected at this point. This step merely identifies the locations and overall height and width of the window treatments.*

At this point you've settled on the overall style, some finishes and materials, the lighting layout and the sizes of everything you need in your great room. I hope that by going through the design process you are able to see that there is a lot of planning and problem solving that takes place before you even buy a thing! If you've done all of the eight steps above, you can officially move on to the fun stuff..

**SHOPPING!**

# The Shopping Process

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## 1. Select the Furniture Pieces (Tool 18)

There are three questions you should be asking yourself when it comes to picking out your furniture pieces:

### A. How many furniture pieces and what size furniture pieces do you need?

You've already made a floor plan so that will help you determine the size requirements for each furniture piece. Make sure you bring your floor plan with you while you're shopping to have it as a reference.

*This is how I went about choosing furniture pieces for the Beach House. I knew I had to seat 18 people in the living room area. I found a curved sofa that comfortably seated 7 and got two of them (14 seats total now). Then, I looked for a coffee table to fit in the center of both of the sofas. I ended up finding one that had a hard surface to place food and drinks on, but also had storage for four ottomans underneath - 18 seats! For the dining table, my model showed me that the optimal size for the dining table was 117" but it would need to be unusually narrow at 35" max. My choice of a live edge table with custom options was perfect! The acrylic legs created a floating look, and it was the perfect place to sit and enjoy that amazing ocean view!*

### B. What kind of finish do you want for each furniture piece?

Keep in mind the selections you have already made during the design process (flooring, walls, acrylic, metals, etc.). This will be important info that will help guide your selections for furniture finishes.

*In the Beach House the dining table had a rustic, hearty finish in a medium color that paired well with the hardwood floors. I had the bar console bleached to look like a piece of driftwood on the beach. For the coffee table, I went with a deeper stain to help anchor the piece in the center of the room. I was able to add some black to the color scheme through the dining chairs and bar stools. The spindles on the chairs were stainless steel, which I repeated elsewhere in the room with cable lights over the sofa areas and spot lights on each window treatment.*

### C. What kind of fabric do you want for each furniture piece?

For fabrics you have to ask yourself a few things: Does this room get a lot of wear and tear? Does your lifestyle allow for precious fabrics? Do you want solids or prints?

*In the Beach House I kept it clean, light and family friendly. I chose an outdoor fabric for the sofa that could be bleached if necessary. I got the ottoman upholstered in a soft cognac color and chose a leather that is durable and not easily marred or scuffed. Once I had my upholstery fabrics selected, I moved onto the fabrics for the window treatments. I selected a fabric that would enhance the cozy feel of the room and drape nicely. I wanted the panels to add to the feel of the room but not steal the show. I found a medium, soft to the touch linen and decided not to line them for fear they would lose their flowy, soft look.*

## 2. **Pick a Paint Color(s) (Tool 9)**

Most people choose their paint color first. BIG MISTAKE! You should go through the entire process above and then choose your paint color. Why? Well, at this point you'll have selected nearly every important item in your room. Now it is easy to lay out all of your selections and fabrics and choose a color that blends beautifully!

*In the Beach House I used Benjamin Moore's "Simply White" for the brick, ceiling, shiplap, transoms and baseboard trim. We did a satin finish on the brick, shiplap, transoms and baseboards, and a flat finish on the ceiling.*

## 3. **Add Accent Pillows (Tool 16) and an Area Rug (Tool 13)**

If you've made it all the way to this step, you are almost there! These last few steps are all about the final touches that add charm, personality and warmth to your room.

*In the Beach House I went with the established black and white theme and added mud cloth pillows for a light and breezy feel. To that I added additional throw pillows in a rush or raffia look to really bring home that beachy feel. I used different sized pillows to keep it casual, and even added a couple mud cloth pillows to the dining room chairs. Then, I selected my rug colors and pattern that coordinated with the throw pillows to create a cohesive look.*

## 4. **Accessorize (Tool 1 & Tool 15)**

My absolute favorite step in the entire process! This is where you have the chance to pull everything together. Remember to repeat colors and finishes throughout. Add personal photos or collections to personalize your home with things that your family cherishes.

*The accessories in the Beach House were a mixture of wicker baskets, light wood candles, color coordinated books and games, black binoculars, glass pieces, white pottery and botanicals. I made sure not to overdo the accessories and always kept symmetry in mind. This helped complete the room with a unique style that doesn't overwhelm the viewer!*

## 5. **Make Your Home a Smart Home**

Of course if you want to get fancy make your home a smart home! This step adds to the ease of use, and you can control most everything in your home all in one place!

*In the Beach House we had all of the lights and electronics hooked up to one system so our clients could easily turn everything on or off right from their iPad!*

You've made it to the end of the design process for a great room. I hope that this Design Session and PDF are able to give you a clear guide for how to go about creating a beautiful and cohesive great room! Now there is only one thing left to do...

**SIT BACK, RELAX AND ENJOY YOUR GREAT ROOM!**

