

## Design Session Tools

*Below are all of the tools that we have gone through so far in the Design Sessions. As we move through the Cliff 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 Cliff House family 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	Tool 20	The Business of Built-Ins
<b>Tool 5</b>	<b>Lighting a Home Perfectly</b>	Tool 21	How to Refresh Your Home
Tool 6	Beautiful Window Treatments	<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)	Tool 27	The Transitional Design Style
<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>	Tool 29	How Rebecca Became a Designer
Tool 14	Tips for Beautiful Bedding	Tool 30	Making the Most of Your Rental
Tool 15	<b>Accessorizing to Personalize Your Home</b>	<b>SketchUp</b>	<b>There are 11 Sessions detailing how to use SketchUp in "The Vault" section</b>
<b>Tool 16</b>	<b>How to Decorate with Throw Pillows</b>		

# The Design Process

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Before we hop into designing, please make sure to [click here to sign up for the exclusive Design Sessions member email list!](#)

## 1. Assess the Situation (**Tool 25**)

The first step in any design process is to assess what you are working with. Take a hard look at your family room and try to answer the following questions:

- What are the issues?
- What are the challenges?
- What are the things you love about the room?
- What are the things you can't stand?

*The Cliff House family room has that same million-dollar view of the ocean that the living room and master bedroom have. However, there were only a few small windows and one door leading to the backyard initially. To capitalize on the view, I installed disappearing sliding glass doors on the entire wall that looked out to the ocean. I also decided to close up a few windows on one wall because they didn't look out to anything, and I knew I needed a wall for the television to go on. The challenge in the family room was that it wasn't that large of a space. To make up for the lack of space, I chose to change the stairs' layout to open up the room. I also added a room partition to elongate the wall I placed the sofa on.*

## 2. Create a Floorplan (**SketchUp Sessions**)

I am an avid user of the 3D modeling program, SketchUp Pro. I highly suggest watching the Sessions available to you as a Design Session member where I teach you the basics of this program. There are eleven Sessions all about SketchUp located in the "The Vault" section. If you don't want to deal with SketchUp, use graph paper, and start measuring!

*Building a model of the Cliff House in SketchUp helped me visualize what the space could be before I called any contractors or bought any furniture. In my model, I could see how my ideas impacted the room's overall look and function. I was also able to determine a proper furniture layout because I can see walkways, entrances, and exits. This gives me a good idea of the sizes of furniture I can when I go inspiration shopping in the next step!*

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

Deciding how many pieces you need, where they go, and how the traffic pattern is affected is crucial to the finished result and the design process. This is where having a SketchUp model can be extremely useful. SketchUp is a to-scale model, so you will get a pretty good idea of the sizes of furniture pieces you can have. Once you have placeholders in your SketchUp model, it's time to go shopping. And by shopping, I mean window shopping! Window shopping allows you to see what's new, what's speaking to you, and what's in your budget!

*There wasn't a lot of space to work within the Cliff House family room. This room was for hanging out, watching television, and maybe enjoying a couple of drinks. I knew the essential pieces for this room were a large sectional, a coffee table, and a media console. During my shopping trip in Los Angeles for this project, I found a couch I knew I had to recreate in the Cliff House. I was also able to find a few other items that helped define the family room's style (**Tool 26**) and color palette.*

#### 4. **Identify Lighting Locations and Select Fixtures (Tool 5)**

With a solid furniture layout for your family room, you can now identify where to place lighting. Be sure to think of your lighting as layering and ask yourself the following questions to determine where you need lighting:

- Where will people sit in the room and need lights to light up their lap?
- Do you have a feature wall that you want wall washers for?
- Is there artwork in the room that needs an art light?
- Do you want any floor or table lamps?

*In the family room of the Cliff House I installed a gorgeous feature wall that the sofa sat on. To make this wall pop I placed wall washer along the entire wall. I also had one piece of art on the wall that I had an art light posing to. Then, I went along the entire sofa and placed canned lights right about where people's laps would be. I also added canned lights above the ottoman and the bar area. For a wow moment I found these stick lights that added a stunning architectural moment on the wall with the television.*

#### 5. **Select the Finishes (Tool 19, Tool 22 & Tool 23)**

Selecting the finishes of a room is an essential part of making your entire home look cohesive. I always carry the same flooring (**Tool 22**) throughout a whole home. If you use hardwood in your home, select a tile in a hardwood finish with the same look as the real hardwood to place in areas like a kitchen, near exit doors, and bathrooms. Also, at this point, select any tile (**Tool 19**) and/or stone (**Tool 23**). Don't forget my flow principle if using stone or tile on a wall - go all the way up and all the way out! As you select finishes, make sure to take photos and measurements, and always ask for samples to take home with you. These will be extremely helpful to you later on!

*Because I was designing the entire Cliff House at one time, I carried most of my finish selects I made throughout the whole home. Since this home's ground floor opened up to the outside patio, I opted for wood-looking tile on the ground floor that matched the hardwood upstairs for a seamless transition from inside the home to the outdoor patio. I repeated the look of the backend steal I had going on in the kitchen in the bar area. I chose a dark stone called Star Wars for the countertop and a backsplash that brought in the brass/bronze going on elsewhere in the project.*

#### 6. **Select the Area Rug (Tool 13)**

An area rug can determine the entire look and feel of a room. I typically find an area rug that sparks inspiration and helps determine the rest of the room's color palette and style. Make sure to select an appropriately sized area rug. The biggest mistake I see in most homes are rooms with area rugs that are way too small! An area rug should extend most of the way underneath the furniture that rests on top of it.

*I selected an area rug with a pop of color for the family room! I used the rug colors elsewhere in my room in accessories, throw pillows, and artwork to tie the room together. I had the rug cut to the exact size I needed to allow for a border before the door and a walkway from the stairs to the outside.*

## 7. **Select the Fabrics (Tool 18)**

Texture can really make or break a room. The key is to layer different textures, but make sure every texture pairs back to something so it isn't overwhelming to the eye and blends cohesively.

*There was a lot of texture and fabrics in the Cliff House family room, but they all spoke to one another. I selected a hemp fabric for the ottoman that paired well with the room's media console and wood. The throw pillows brought a splash of color to the room and complimented the area rug.*

## 8. **Select the Paint Color(s) (Tool 19) and/or Wallpaper (Tool 17)**

Most people choose their paint color and/or wallpaper first. BIG MISTAKE! It would be best to go through most of the design process and then select your paint color and/or wallpaper. Why? Well, at this point, you'll have chosen nearly every essential item in the room. Now it is easy to lay out all of your selections and choose a color that blends beautifully!

*After I selected the furniture pieces, area rug, finishes, and fabrics, I chose the wallpaper. I picked a neutral vinyl wallpaper for added texture and an easy-to-clean wall treatment!*

## 9. **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 Cliff House, we had all of the lights and electronics hooked up to one system so our clients could quickly turn everything on or off right from their iPad! I also used the Samsung Frame television for the room so my clients can display a beautiful photo when the tv is not in use instead of having to look at a big black square! [Click here for the link to the Frame television I used in several rooms in this project.](#)*

## 10. **Add Accent Pillows (Tool 16) and 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.

*I used some accessories that meant something to the client to decorate the family room in this project. I also placed books and a lot of greenery throughout the space to bring in an organic feel. On the bar, I decorated the metal and glass open shelves with typical bar items like glassware, bottles filled with liquor, and a champagne saber. To finish off the room, I displayed a family photo gallery wall on the wall that was the passthrough hallway from the family room to the laundry room. In a gallery wall, I highly suggest that you use the same frames throughout so your mind isn't overwhelmed by all the different frames and can go straight to the photos. To further blend all the images, I got them printed on canvas and finished in a soft, sepia. Of course, I added art lights to make the gallery wall shine!*

