

# Interior-design COURSE

## PART 22: CREATE A PERFECT BEDROOM SPACE



'Your bedroom is a personal space which needs to balance comfort and practicality. Decoration should promote relaxation without being bland. The key to success is to consider your needs before picking up a paintbrush. You may find you need to compromise in some areas to get the best result. This in-depth guide will help you make the right choices to get the bedroom of your dreams.'

*Deborah Drew*

Deborah Drew (above), presenter of BBC TV's *DIY SOS*

BBC  
ONE







Try using patterned bedlinen as a focal point. 10883 wallpaper, £29 per roll, Harlequin. Curtains in Clipper cotton F5390/27 and F5490/10, £25 per m, Osborne & Little

## Plan your layout

- ★ Your bedroom is not only used for sleeping and dressing, but for reading, watching television, storing clothes and possibly even studying, too. Make a list of all the different activities that will take place in your bedroom, as you'll need to make provisions for all of these when planning the general layout.
- ★ Draw up a plan of your bedroom on graph paper, making a note of the position of windows, radiators, plug sockets and doors. Cut out shapes to scale, to represent each piece of furniture you need to accommodate. Experiment with the positioning of each piece on the plan until you find your ideal layout.
- ★ The positioning of the bed should take priority. Ideally the bed head should be set against a wall and have sufficient room on either side to make changing sheets and vacuuming easy.
- ★ Wardrobes – whether fitted or freestanding – should be the next consideration. Don't forget that, in addition to allocating enough wall space, you need to leave floor space to accommodate doors when they are open. As a general rule, 60cm should be sufficient.
- ★ If you have enough space for a separate chest of drawers, it should be positioned in such a way that there is enough room for you to stand in front of it when the drawers are fully open.

## Consider natural light

Before you decide on a colour scheme, assess where light falls at various times of the day, as this will affect how deep the shade appears. Remember, walls must look good when lit artificially at night as well as during the day, so paint small areas with sample pots to see how the shades look at different times.

North-facing rooms have a cool, blue light, so are best suited to warm colours that add brightness, such as yellow or pink. If you have your heart set on cool blues or greens, combine them with a warm base tone.

East-facing rooms get bright morning light, while south-facing rooms get sunlight all day, so they are well suited to both warm and cool colours.

Create a warm mood with soft neutrals and browns. Simply Chocolate matt emulsion, £13.99 per 2.5ltr, Crown Paints

Bold colours are good if you also use your bedroom as a socialising area. Deep Ultramarine matt emulsion, £13.99 per 2.5ltr, Dulux

Choose white soft pastel shades for a calmer feel. Pink Ground matt emulsion, £22.99 per 2.5ltr, Farrow & Ball







## Children's bedrooms

★ When it comes to decorating children's rooms, choose a calm, neutral shade for walls, then introduce colour and pattern through bedlinen, curtains and accessories. This way, the room can be updated as your child's taste matures, without the need to redecorate from scratch.

★ For the lighting, choose a combination of wall-mounted and ceiling lights to generate a soft coverage. Avoid floor-standing lamps that can be easily knocked over. A dimmer switch will enable you to create a tranquil mood at bedtime.

★ If you're designing a room for a baby or young child, choose versatile furniture that can be adapted to their changing needs. Some adjustable cots can be easily transformed into small beds as your baby grows, while wardrobes or drawers with adjustable clothes rails won't need replacing later on.

★ If you have the space, consider an activity table and chairs for children to enjoy drawing or craftwork. Some tables have built-in storage for crayons, paints and pencils, which will help reduce clutter. A desk is particularly useful for older children who need to do homework; make sure it's positioned near a plug socket for a lamp and computer.

★ An untidy environment interferes with our ability to relax, so promote a calm atmosphere in your child's bedroom by including efficient storage. Make sure there are plenty of shelves for books, plus cupboards or large boxes to keep dolls, games and Lego neatly out of sight when not in use.

▲ **Football fans will love a sports-based room scheme.** Football **bedset** with duvet cover and pillowcase, £40, Laura Ashley



Thick curtains are essential to block out light when children are sleeping. Regatta cotton curtain fabric, £37 per m, Nautica Organdy cotton voile, £32 per m, both Voyage Decoration

◀ **Choose bedlinen that comes with co-ordinating accessories.** Patchwork **bedset** with duvet cover and pillowcase, £40, Laura Ashley



◀ **This adjustable activity desk is ideal for busy children. The work surface can be angled, promoting good posture.** Luca **desk**, £129, Urchin



'To ensure a restful night's sleep, always buy a bed that's big enough for a child to sleep in comfortably. A bed that's not big enough will lead to sleep disturbance in the long term.'





Louvred slats are perfect for creating privacy while letting in plenty of light. Two-tier shutters, from £259 per sq m, measured, made and fitted, Hillarys

WINDOW TREATMENTS

★ Too much early morning sunshine in the summer months – or light filtering into the bedroom from the street the rest of the year – can be a major disruption to sleep, so a good window dressing is essential. To block out light, choose heavy curtains made with blackout lining, or go for a combination of blinds and curtains, or even shutters.

★ If your bedroom is overlooked, aim for a

solution that provides privacy in the daytime without blocking light out altogether, such as sheer voile panels or a semi-opaque window film teamed with curtains.

★ Alternatively, choose bottom-up blinds, where the roller is fixed to the window ledge and pulled upwards. They are a streamlined option if you decide to opt for a more contemporary room scheme.

▼ Fitted wardrobes maximise space in a room with a sloping ceiling. Melody fitted furniture, from £2,501, including design and installation, Hammonds

Opt for flexible lighting

Lighting needs to be flexible in a bedroom as it has to range from stimulating in the morning to restful at night. The best way to achieve this is to choose a variety of lights and lamps connected to a dimmer switch, and position them at different heights to vary their intensity. A pendant or chandelier is a stunning centrepiece but should be supplemented with table lamps or wall-mounted lights on each side of the bed for reading.

A dressing table should be illuminated with a wall or table lamp on either side of the mirror, so that light falls evenly across your face when you look into it. In larger rooms that would benefit from a cosier feel, a series of floor-standing lamps in the corners or wall-mounted downlighters will project soft pools of light and help create an intimate glow.



▲ An ornate chandelier will add an elegant focal point to a romantic bedroom. Five-light cream or gold Lavenham chandelier, £175 Laura Ashley

Choose a floor covering

Bedroom flooring should be soft enough for bare feet to walk on and muffle noise. Fitted wool or natural fibre carpet is good for this, and as the floor area suffers from less wear and tear than in other rooms you don't have to worry so much about choosing a pale colour.

Alternatively, wood floorboards are popular, whether stripped and varnished or painted, and provide a neutral base for the rest of the décor. Add a rug for comfort. This is also the best option if you have allergies and need to keep dust to a minimum. Tiles, while popular in warmer countries, are best avoided in the UK as they will be cold underfoot.



'Be inspired by the co-ordinated lighting collections available from stores like Next and John Lewis. They offer separate pieces like wall lights, ceiling pendants and table lamps all in the same design.'



Add interest in a neutral bedroom with a woven floor covering. From left: Cotswold wool carpet, £39.44 per sq m, Woodstock sisal floor covering, £31.95 per sq m, Banbury wool carpet, £43.45 per sq m, Burford wool carpet, £39.45 per sq m, all Fired Earth





‘Specialists in fitted wardrobes are worth investigating if you want to incorporate a home office in the bedroom as their furniture can be adapted to accommodate filing and computer equipment.’

◀ **If your room includes a study area, choose fitted furniture to make the most of space.** Harmony White units, from £2,501 inclusive of design and installation, Hammonds



## Fitted furniture

Floor-to-ceiling wardrobes provide more volume for the amount of room you have available, while corner units fitted into alcoves will also make the most of small or awkwardly shaped rooms.

Before you decide on a fitted system, weigh up the size of your room. Consider how much storage you need and whether you have enough wasted space that could be better utilised to justify the installation costs. The inside of any system should have a range of pull-out drawers, adjustable rails, shelves, hooks and shoe racks.

## Freestanding options

If you have a lot of space or want the flexibility to move items around, freestanding wardrobes, cupboards, drawers and dressing tables come in a range of shapes and finishes to suit most styles and budgets.

You could even opt for freestanding pieces of antique furniture. These will enhance period architectural features and are not necessarily more expensive than the reproductions you'll find on the high street. Be aware, however, that some antique wardrobes made before 1900 can be too narrow for modern coat hangers, so check the dimensions before you buy.

## Consider storage

Adequate storage will make all the difference between a chaotic bedroom and a tranquil space for rest. Don't forget to accommodate all your smaller items. Bedside tables with a built-in cupboard or

drawer will prevent cluttering up your floor space with books, alarm clocks and other bedside items, while dressing tables with integrated drawers are ideal for keeping toiletries and cosmetics in order.

High-level cupboards won't be easy to access on a day-to-day basis without standing on a chair, but they are ideal for storing less frequently used objects like blankets, books or photo albums. If wall space for cupboards is limited, make use of any dead space underneath the bed. Divans with integrated drawers or boxes on castors are ideal for storing out-of-season clothes or bedding.

▼ **If space is limited, choose a fold-away bed.** Folding bed and units, from £4,000, Neville Johnson

**Mirrored doors** ▶ will maximise light. Provencale wardrobe, £1,575, Laura Ashley





## Select the right bed

- ★ Buy the best mattress you can afford – the better the quality, the longer it will last.
- ★ The base is important to maximise the support you get – the spring of a new mattress will be lost on an old divan.
- ★ Decide how much support you want. Try about three different levels of firmness in the shop by lying on them in your normal sleeping position and turning. Place your hand in the small of your back and then try to move it about. If your hand glides around too easily, the bed may be too hard for you, but if moving your hand is difficult, the bed is too soft. Ideally you should be able to move your hand with just a little resistance.
- ★ Look out for mattresses designed to suit two people with different needs. If you and your partner don't want the same kind of support, choose a mattress with one side firmer than the other.
- ★ Take accurate measurements of both your room and its doorway to ensure the bed you choose will fit inside.

## Which mattress?

Open-sprung mattresses have individual hourglass-shaped springs connected to one another with a spiral wire, and they are framed by an outer rod for extra strength.

Continuous-sprung versions are made from a single wire woven into a spring mesh. They are generally softer and more flexible than open-sprung versions.

Pocket-sprung mattresses are the most luxurious and expensive option. They have smaller, lightweight springs that are sewn into individual fabric pockets. Because the springs work independently of one another, they can mould themselves to your body shape and prevent pressure points on the spine, which makes them well suited to couples of very different weights.

Foam mattresses are made from multiple layers of foam, each with a different thickness and density, and are mostly used with slatted bases and adjustable beds.

Foam comes in various forms, each with their own properties. Latex, for example, is anti-microbial, making it ideal for allergy sufferers, while visco-elastic, or Memory Foam, reacts to body temperature as well as weight, moulding itself to your shape.

If space is limited, select a bed with built-in storage. Kyoto bedstead, from £275, and under-bed drawers, £149 for a pair, Next



## CHOOSING A DUVET

A duvet's insulating capability is measured in tog ratings, with higher ratings offering more warmth. Ideally, you should have a light quilt for summer and a heavy one for winter. An all-seasons duvet comprises both a 4.5 tog for hot weather and a 9 tog for cooler months. In winter, they can be fastened together to create a cosy, combined 13.5 tog duvet.

### ▼ Futons are a good budget option.

Grankulla **frame** with Massum **mattress**, £109, Ikea



## BED BASE OPTIONS

A **divan** is basically an upholstered box with castors or legs. Solid or platform divans have a wood frame with a rigid panel, while more luxurious designs have a spring unit on a wooden or metal frame.

**Bedsteads** come in a variety of styles, from ornate wood to solid upholstered versions. They generally have a wooden slatted base that supports a separate mattress. Adjustable beds are ideal for anyone who watches TV in bed or

needs to sleep in a raised position. They can have flexible wooden slats or sprung upholstered sections. Some designs have adjustable sections for head, upper body, legs and feet, while others simply adjust the head and feet.

**Futons** are essentially sofa beds that have slatted frames and mattresses made from layers of cotton or fibre wadding. They are a great budget option, but they don't provide the same support as a sprung or foam mattress.

**Flotation beds** have a vinyl mattress filled with water. The support level can be altered by varying the fluid levels. This option provides pressure-free support and is a good choice for allergy sufferers.



## ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE



**Andrew Jennings**

British Gas Engineer of the Year  
answers a heating repair query



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**tradesman I can trust and at the right price for me?'**

Chris Peacock, Oxford

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**British Gas**

## 7-PAGE INTERIOR-DESIGN COURSE



### Pull the look together

★ Use colour and pattern in moderation – too much detail can be overwhelming in what should be a relaxing room. Try striking wallpaper on a feature wall, colourful decorative bedlinen or a dramatic window dressing to create a focal point.

★ When picking fabric for soft furnishings, bear in mind that texture can make a difference to the mood. Velvet or damask can add a sumptuous feel, while lighter cotton or silk creates a cooler style.

★ Don't be afraid to use more than one mirror in the bedroom. As well as being practical, they will enhance the sense of space and light. Try to choose frames that blend with your chosen décor – ornate antique mirrors with mottled glass add character to a period room, while sleek silver or leather frames blend well with more contemporary fixtures.

★ As your bedroom is the most private room in the house, you can make it the most personalised. This is the place to display photos and collections, but avoid creating a cluttered feel by grouping things together. A wall of photos in similar frames, for example, looks tidier than individual photographs scattered throughout the room.

▲ **A white floor and walls look serene.**  
Rococo bed, £1,360;  
headboard, £640;  
cabinet, £600, all  
Gustavian



'Colour is the key to creating atmosphere – cool blues and greens are soothing, bright tones inject a sense of fun and deep, rich shades add warmth.'

**Mix and match velvet and satin fabrics to create a sumptuous feel.**  
Rivena double duvet cover, £45, Rivena silk and velvet throw, £140, Nouvelle satin rib throw, £50, all Ditton Hill



## ESSENTIAL CONTACTS

**Hammonds** (0800 251 505; [www.hammonds-uk.com](http://www.hammonds-uk.com)) supplies well-priced made-to-measure bedroom and office furniture in a range of styles and finishes.

**The Sleep Council** (01756 791089; [www.sleepcouncil.com](http://www.sleepcouncil.com)) offers advice on how to choose

beds and mattresses, and also provides tips on making the most of what you've chosen. Its website has a list of other useful links.

**Laura Ashley** (0871 230 2301; [www.lauraashley.com](http://www.lauraashley.com)) has a wide range of reproduction beds, furniture and linens. The store also

offers an interior-design service to help you bring the look together with wallpaper, paint and soft furnishings.

**John Lewis** (08456 049 049; [www.johnlewis.com](http://www.johnlewis.com)) is a great one-stop shop for beds of all designs, mattresses, bedding, bedlinen and furniture.