



10 point
GUIDE

of what NOT to do
when you design your
new home





Welcome.

Designing the interior of your home is an exciting opportunity to freshen up or completely revamp your living space. Whether you're redesigning an existing space or creating the interior for a new home, allow yourself to tap into your creativity, take some risks and – importantly – have fun!

Here at Ana Engelhorn Interior Design, we love infusing a place with character and charm – mixing the new with the old and adding carefully considered colour and lighting schemes to complement the furnishings and pieces. Above all, however, we want to let the owner's personality shine through, making it their home.

When it comes to the design process, there are different ways to approach it. With lots of details to sort out and decisions to make, it can be daunting and there are certain common pitfalls to avoid. With that in mind, we've put together a guide of the top 10 oversights NOT to make when you're designing your home.

Point 1

Stick to one style

Anyone who follows me knows I don't like sticking to one style. I particularly like mixing contemporary pieces with antiques. While you don't have to go to that extreme, using only one interior style would, in my view, be unimaginative as well as boring.



Not only would the process be less interesting, the interior would become dull for the person living there. A single style interior might look 'neat' at first glance, but it will likely bore you after a few months. For me, styles that don't arouse a sense or touch your emotions become bland with time. And it's not just me with this view!



Point 1



Masterpiece, one of the top interior design fairs in London, has a similar message: mixing old with new is en vogue. Last year I went to a talk hosted by Architectural Digest's Decorative Arts Editor **Mitch Owens**.

He was in conversation with **Rita König**, interior designer and journalist; **Tara Bernerd**, interior architectural designer; and interior designer **Jamie Drake**, and they were all about mixing styles, so you don't have to just take my word for it!



Point 2

Leave out colour or texture

White is an important tone in interiors. It's the sum of all colours and thus the basis of any interior design. There are 67 white tones and most artists have their biggest tubes in white. It cannot be reproduced by mixing other colours, which is why it has been said to be the fourth primary colour. For interiors, it's most people's go-to 'colour' – it will go with anything and creates a clean, neutral space.



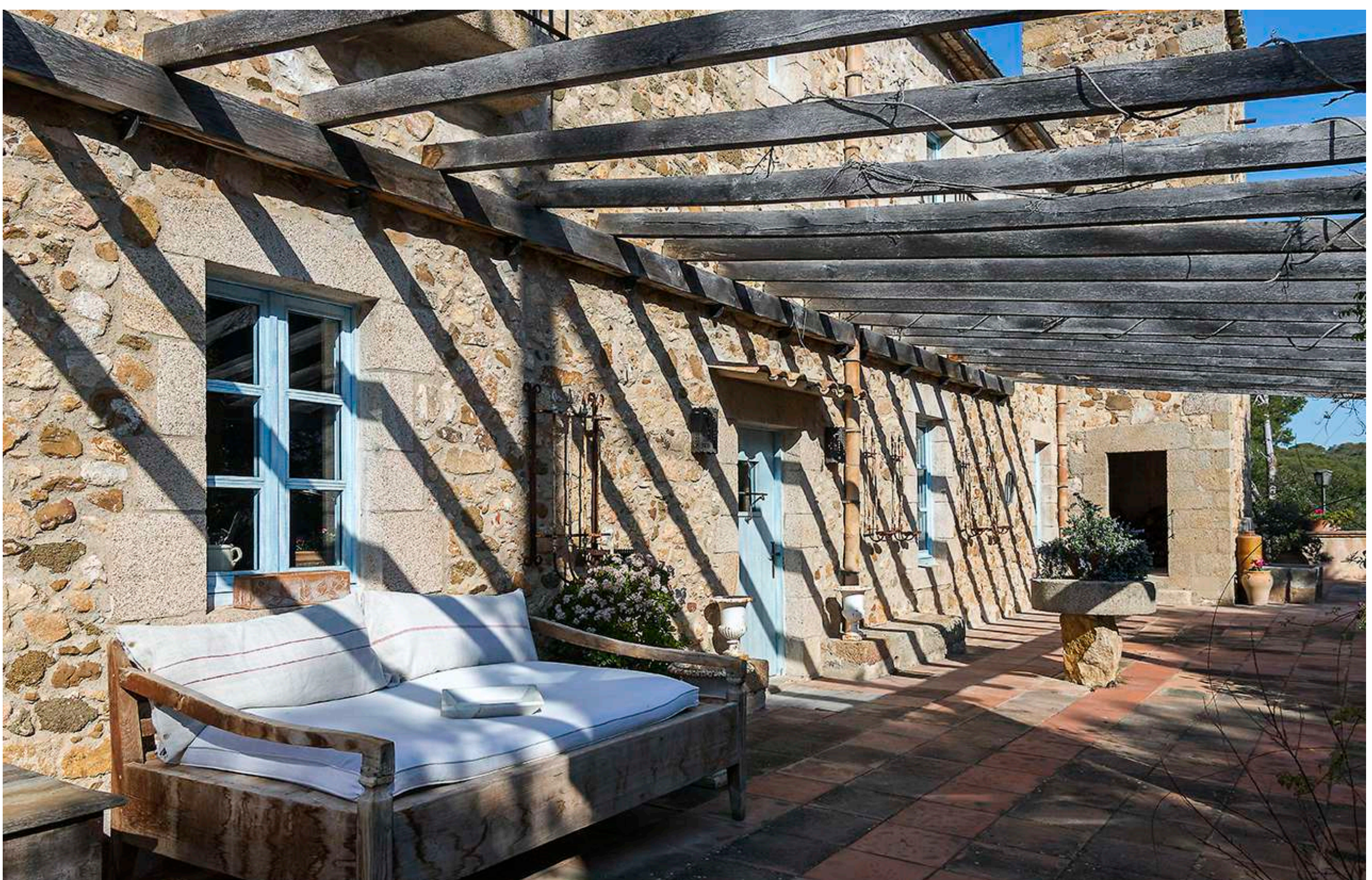
In climates where it gets very hot – like Formentera or the Greek islands – it's particularly nice to have white walls, and perhaps even paint the bricks white, with sheer white curtains everywhere. It gives a sense of cool and draught. Take that look into a London flat, however, where the light isn't as bright or intense, even in summer, and those refreshing, breezy features become quite the opposite. You might think instead of a fireplace or wool blanket, especially at this time of year!

Point 2



Even in warm climates, however, splashes of colour are often inserted in furniture or fittings, such as blue shutters, and colourful sheets and throws. The different colours as well as textures of the materials create layers and evoke emotions, making the room more interesting.

Thus, mixing colours and textures in an interior scheme, even if only subtly, greatly enhances the space, whether in a hot or cool climate.



Point 2



If painting the walls in colour is too bold a step, white walls provide a perfect backdrop for then layering the room with colourful, textured curtains and furniture. The white walls bring the other items to the forefront, ensuring the furnishings or fittings don't blend together and become flat.

In sum, it's worth taking time to think about the colours and textures you want to put in your home to add depth and make it really shine.

Point 3

Use only one colour tone throughout your home



Following on from the point about adding colour and texture to interiors, remember that seasonal changes throughout the year will have a big impact on the light and warmth in your home. If you paint the walls of your home too dark, for example, it might be nice in the winter when you want a more cosy, homely feel, but less so in summer when the temperature rises. Short of redecorating every six months, if you live in a country with defined seasons, go for a look that can work both ways or think of items you can change depending on the time of year or the effect you want to create.

Point 3



For instance, furniture in the opposite colour spectrum to the walls can create a dazzling effect – imagine a red chair in a blue room!

Point 3

I love having different bedding for each season. A bed that looks too hot in summer is not appealing, and vice versa. There are also lots of throws that I keep in the living room for when winter months come along.

Colours that bring warmth are reds, yellows and orange – they can make large rooms appear cosier as the colour often appears as it comes closer.

Colours that bring a cooling effect are blue, green and purple. However, they are also soothing and calming, which is good for bedrooms or rooms you would like to relax in. They also make small rooms appear larger, because the colour looks like it recedes in space.



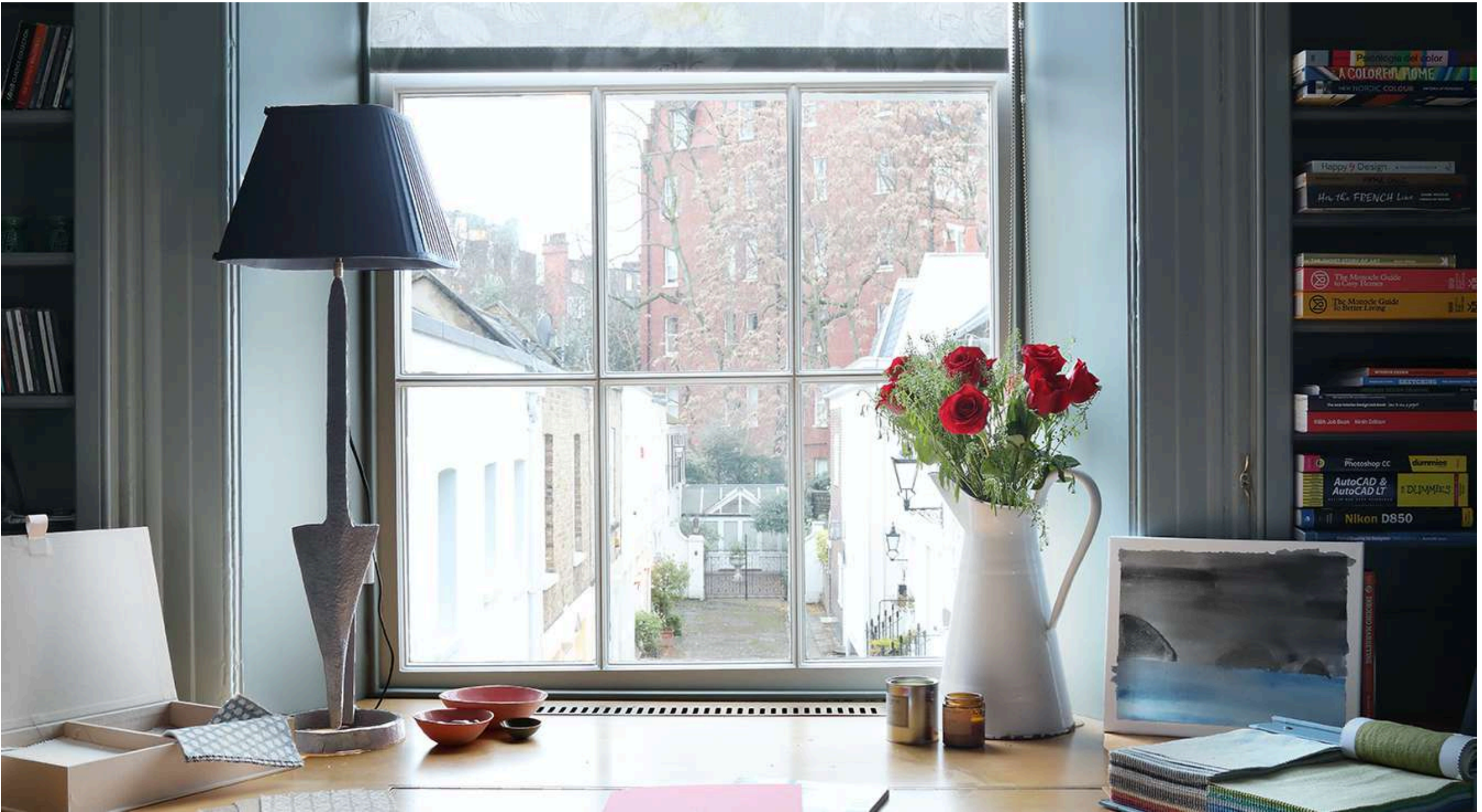
Point 4

Place lights too high or low



When you source your lighting, be sure to measure the dimensions of the light in relation to the ceiling heights. It seems like an obvious point, but it is a very easy step to leave out.

Point 4



Some pendant lights, for example, don't look good if they remain too close to the ceiling and don't have enough of a drop.



Point 4

If you're using pendant lights, make sure to check the elevations before buying so you know where they will hang. For instance, if the light ends up over a table, it can hang a little lower. On that note, as a rule of thumb, if a pendant light is going above a table, it should be 800mm above it – that way people can still see each other across the table.



If it is over a kitchen island, it should be approximately 1800mm above floor level, as you still want to be seen when standing. Note – if you have particularly tall people in your family, you might want to adapt this general guidance. This is why a normal pendant light should always be at least 2150mm above floor level.

Point 5

Put in a single layer of lighting

It is very important to have layers of lighting, which means light comes from different levels in the room. You can then more easily create different ambiances.



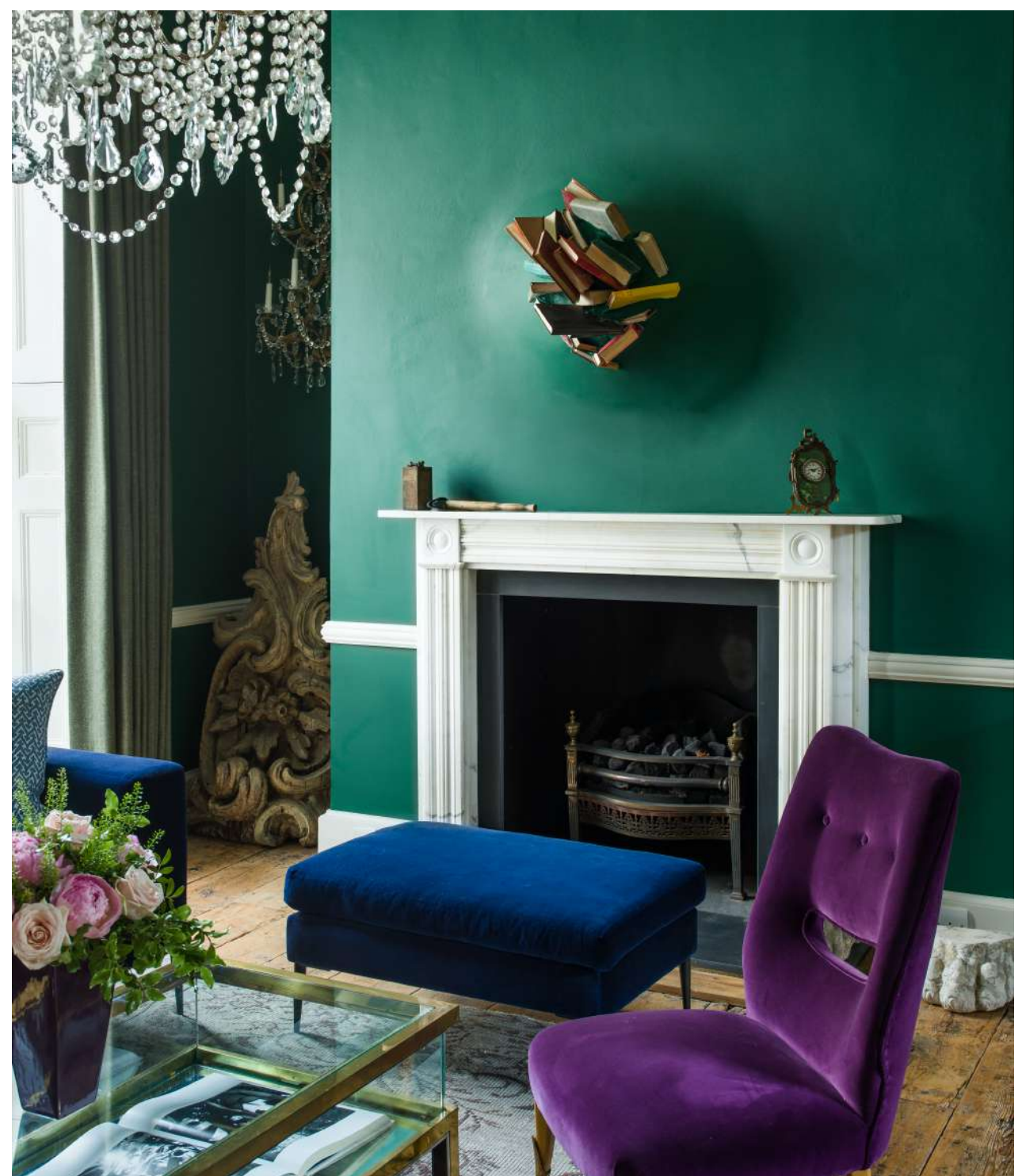
Only having downlights, for example, can make the atmosphere cold and depressing, and it can feel as if the light is pressing down. Even only having pendants (my favourite type of light) can be slightly depressing as, again, the light is only coming from above.

Point 5



The ideal scenario is to have pendants or downlights for task-oriented areas, and a variety of lamps – table and floor lamps and wall lights spread across a room.

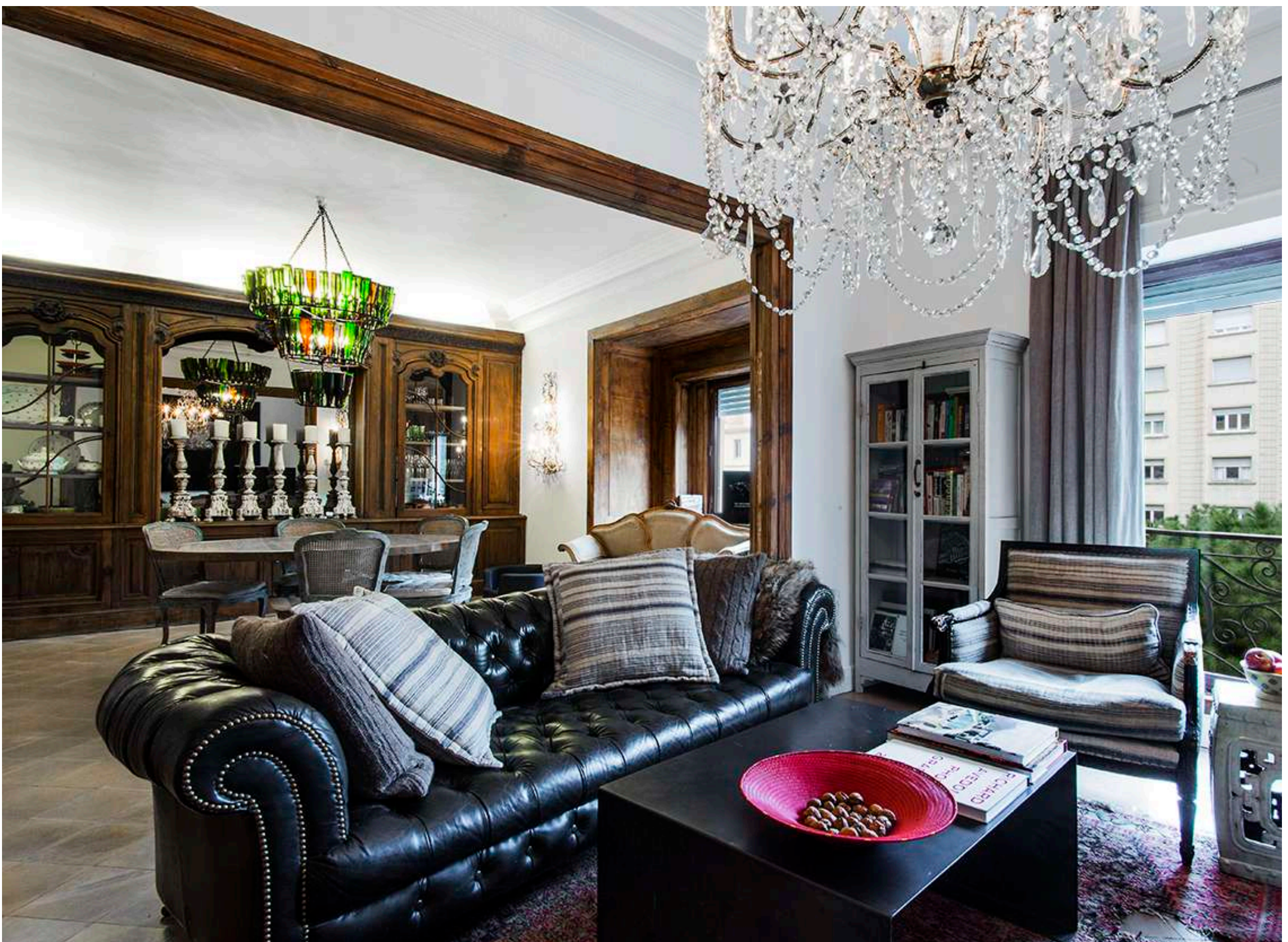
It is great, for example, to have a floor lamp next to a sofa, perfect for reading a book, or to have a lamp on a side table to fill an otherwise dark area.



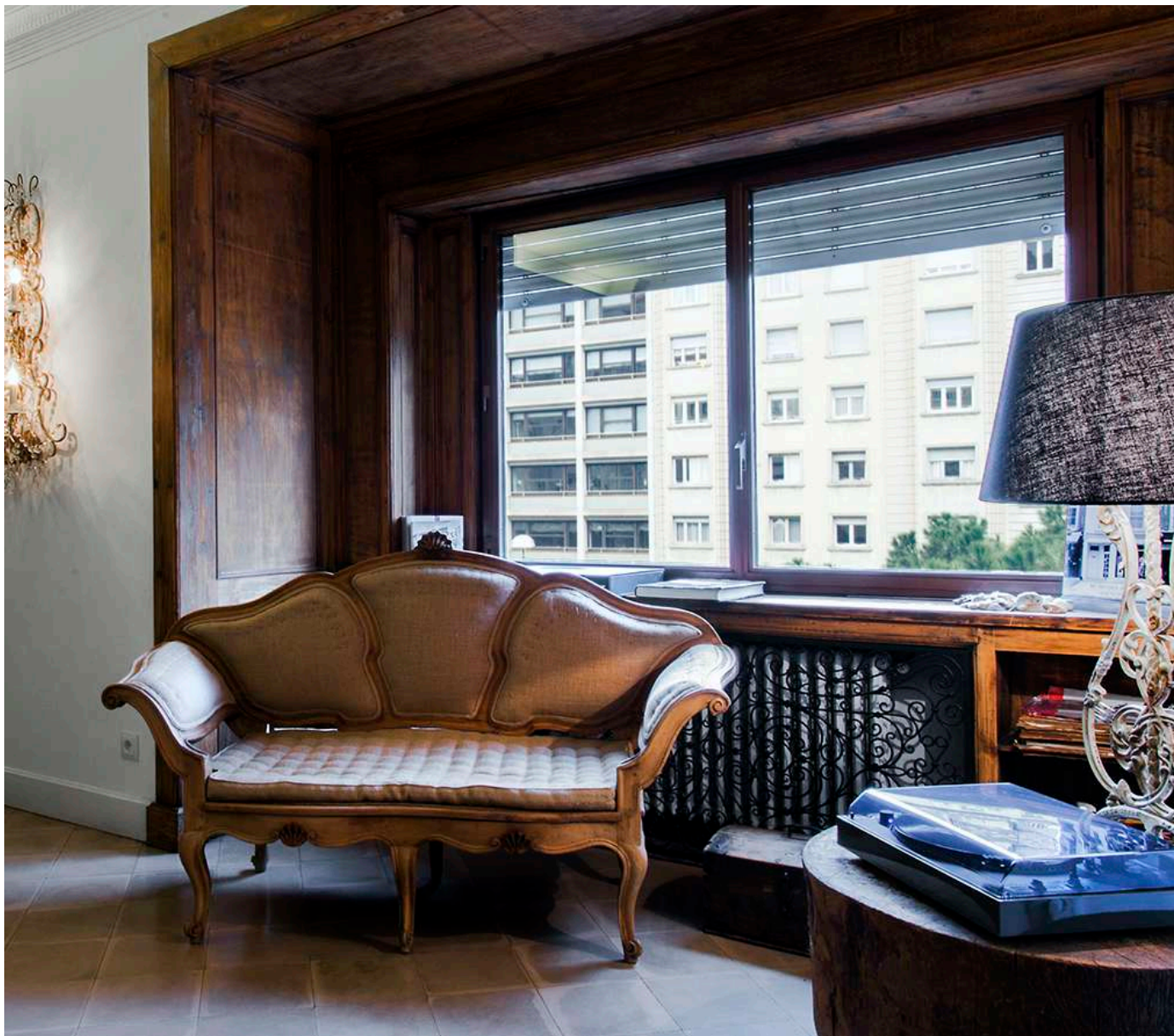
Point 6

Hang art where it can't be seen properly

You would be amazed that this is an issue, but I have gone to endless houses where I have to crane my neck up to see a painting or even a wall light. Art should be hung at a height where a medium-height person could look straight ahead and see the main focus of the painting.



Point 6



An exception is when hanging art in a group collage, the centre point should be the centre of the collage.

Smaller pieces can be hung lower so that you look slightly down at them, like when you are hanging items on a wall along a staircase.



Point 7

Leave out dimensions in your planning



Don't worry about not being able to take your perfect piece home, most modern furniture is made to order, and if you would like to tweak a certain dimension you usually can. There is nothing worse than buying a headboard and having to change the position of your wall lights because it doesn't fit between them!

When you buy something, resist the urge to fall in love and make an instant purchase without thinking. Make sure the dimensions are correct for the space.



Point 8

Neglecting to account for delivery times



For building materials, as for furniture, there is a lead time – the time it takes a product to be made or indeed shipped and delivered, which can sometimes be up to four months or more – depending on the circumstances.

Plan in lead times when doing any building or interiors work, as once contractors start you don't want them to be standing around waiting for materials, and then go, get involved in a different job and delaying your project further. If you're doing a full renovation, order your furniture while the building works are going on. Once the house is done, you will want to move in as soon as possible and won't want to wait for your sofa to arrive to watch TV.

Point 9

Buy everything from the same supplier



Unless you want your home to look like a catalogue from OKA or IKEA, it is best not to buy everything from the same store, even if it is extremely time efficient.

If you go for quality pieces, you should live with them for 10-20 years (or more!), so it's important to take time to choose pieces that are not only different but complement each other. If you choose a couple of stores where you buy more than one item, you can sometimes ask for a discount.

Point 10

Focus only on how the space looks not how it works

Last but not least: function versus form. A space should look good, but it should also work well. There are rules and then there are rules that are mean to be broken.

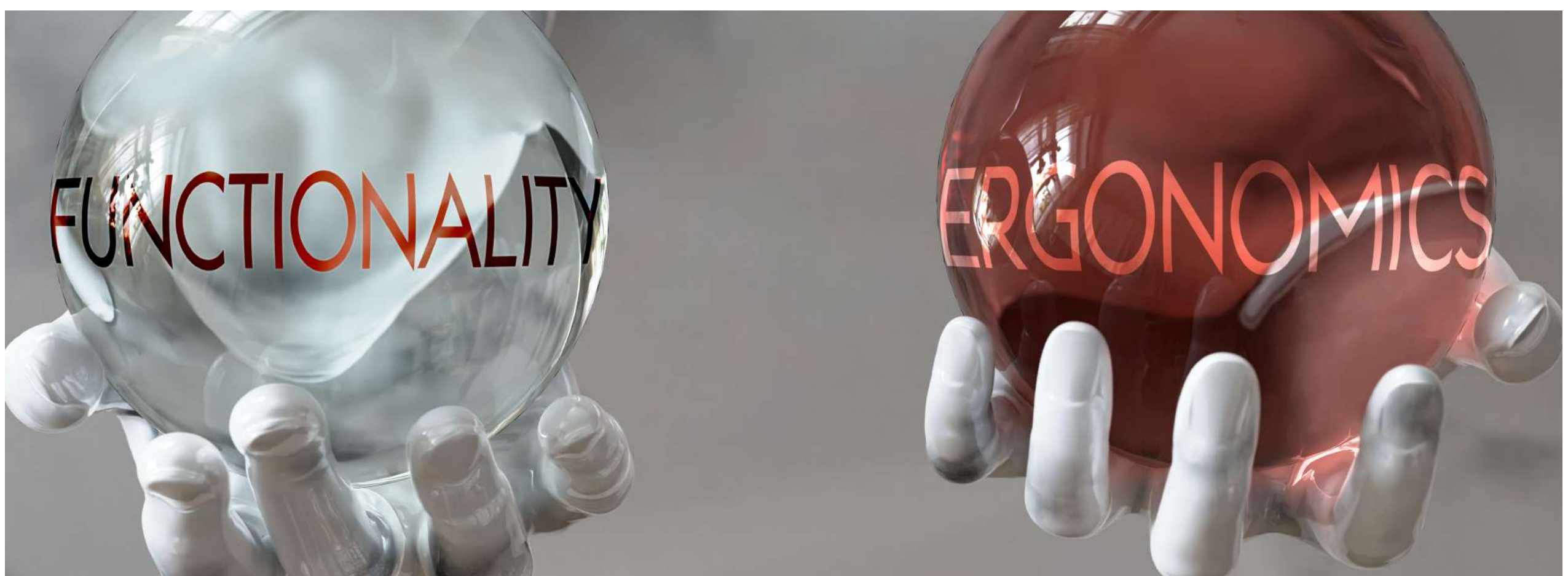


Think of ergonomics, how YOU live in a space, and what you really want. Design around that. It is no good to have a TV only in the living room if you are someone who loves to watch the news in the morning before work.

Point 10



What is the point of a bath if you don't like to sit in your own water? ;) If you come home with muddy boots every day then put in a drying station by the door. The list goes on ...



These are my top ten tips! I hope you have enjoyed reading this guide and it's given you some points to think about when designing your home – or at least to think twice about! As always, we at Ana Engelhorn Interior Design are here for you if you would like help to design an interior that is not only beautiful but comfortable and interesting.



Thank you!

I'd love to discuss your projects or get to know what you would like to learn in the new Guide

Contact me

+44 (0) 74988 84723

info@anaengelhorn.com

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