

You don't need to break the bank to create a fresh palette for your home decor. A little bit of planning and creativity can really help to stretch your budget. Following just a few of these steps will start you down your path to savings:

## Be inspired

Find a "jumping off" from point or "focal point". Whatever term you use, it just implies to the beginning. Look for inspiration in areas such as: Nature, Decorative fabrics, pieces of art, fashion, food, sports, technology, locations or landmarks, seasons, culture, religion, animals, furniture, and architecture. Find inspiration in permanent pieces, or an inspirational piece that is harmonious with those that are permanent.



In this urban loft, the designer found inspiration in a wall mural which depicted a photograph of river rocks. The mural blends nicely with the concrete ceiling, a permanent fixture. The wall mural became the focal point and inspiration for an "organic" themed room.

## Set the tone or design theme

Your plan will take shape when your inspiration begins to transform into one harmonious design theme. This theme will serve as your guide as you select finishes and accent pieces and to not spend on things that don't fit within the budget.

Notice the finishing touches in the urban loft: coral accents, wood flooring and a sisal rug compliment the theme. The furniture and pillows blend with the greenery of the potted tree and bring a pop of color to complete the look.

## Take measurements and create a floor plan

The last thing you want to do is find cool pieces to use in your design and then find that they don't fit. So measure your room to see what kind of space you are working with.

Test different layouts. Try moving your furniture pieces around to see what layout will be the most comfortable for you. Don't forget to reserve some space in your floor plan for decorative pieces.

## What about the walls?

Bare walls can give your decor a dull, uninspired feel. That energy can affect your mood. Warm up your decor by adding some tasteful framed photos, prints, or paintings to your walls. One creative idea is to use wallpaper murals. [www.muralsyourway.com](http://www.muralsyourway.com) has over 5000 images to choose from so you can find one that fits your décor theme.

## Lighting

Once you've created beautiful walls you'll want to make sure that you can see them. There are four types of lighting to keep in mind: Task lighting, Accent lighting, Utility lighting and last but not least is Ambient Lighting. This is the general light in a room. It provides a soft level of light.

Energy-saving light bulbs are available for all types of lighting and they are available in all shapes and sizes. Visit <http://www.edf.org/page.cfm?tagID=632> where you can enter your lighting criteria and they recommend bulbs that are a good match.

## Furnish with Care

Furniture plays a large role in how a space looks and feels. Your budget should reflect this and furniture should represent at least half of your total budget. Second-hand furniture functions the same as brand new items, but buyer beware. You must carefully check the quality. If you're handy you can save a lot of money with minor repairs and touch up paint.

Another way to save is to repurpose and use what you already have and pick pieces that adhere to your design plan. Find creative ways to use furniture in ways for which it was not intended. In home décor, mismatched pieces can help add interest and create an eclectic ambiance, but beware that going to far can make a space look rather cheap and thrown together.

After doing this, the only things that you will need to buy are the things that are lacking.

## Shop for decorative accent pieces

Once you've set the theme or tone for your decor, created a floor plan and purchased or arranged furniture, you are ready to start layering. By working in the correct order you will be less likely to buy things that you don't need or worse, won't fit in the decor.

When shopping for accent pieces it's a good idea to purchase a multiple options and try them in your space. Hold onto your receipts and make sure that you fully understand each merchants return policy. You don't want to be stuck with the things that you don't want.

## Add some Life.

Plants bring the outside in and help us feel less cut off from the outside world. When shopping for plants, read their care tags to determine what kind of light each needs, and make sure they will thrive on the amount of light available in your space.

The possibilities of decorating on a budget are endless. Share your ideas at [www.muralsblog.com](http://www.muralsblog.com)