

Create a Reading Space

In our hyper-connected world, taking to time to unplug and take a break from smartphones, monitors and television screens is more important than ever.

Many turn to reading for pleasure to relieve the strain, escape and relax. Whether you're a casual or avid reader, creating a warm, comfortable space in your home to spend time with your books can be as easy or involved as you'd like.

NOOK OR LIBRARY

Once upon a time, as many classics might begin, homes were designed with libraries as a standard feature. They tended to be dark, wood-paneled, men's club spaces, and indeed many were just that — salons for an after-dinner cigar and digestif — and not much reading likely took place.

Some homes still have library spaces, or at least rooms that occupy spaces that were once reserved for libraries but are now used primarily for offices. Because these rooms are mostly located away from main living and gathering spaces, away from distractions, they're the perfect place to create your reading space.

If you're a casual reader, you'll still want a calm, quiet space to read, and there are likely several options to choose from. Living rooms are less used these days than kitchens, dens or great rooms as gathering spaces and are a logical choice for a reading nook and



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library shelving. A smaller bedroom or window alcove is a cozier space, if you have access.

DESIGN, FURNITURE AND DECOR

If you opt for a nook, pulling that space together can be relatively easy. You'll want an area that features good natural light, a comfortable chair and ottoman, a side table for books, beverages and snacks, and a lamp for night reading.

From there, the design and decor choices are open. Cozy chairs don't necessarily have to be the traditional, bookish leather wingbacks. Soft, push chairs are equally stylish and fit easier in small

spaces. Let the choices reflect both your personal style and emphasize comfort. You might also want to add an area rug, shelving or a divider to cordon off your space for more privacy.

LIBRARIES FOR BOOK LOVERS

True bookworms deserve a formal library, a reading nook on steroids, as it were. Most book lovers dream of such a space, a highly personalized room designed to hold and display a collection along with proper, comfortable seating. As with the book nook, your tastes will drive design, but there are some basics to consider.

Shelving: Avid readers who've never had a proper library have likely kept

their collection anywhere it fits — closets, basements and boxes, after any existing shelves are filled. In your dream library, it's time to configure roomier shelving, units or built-ins, to house your treasured works.

Seating: Proper seating is crucial. The size of your space — and if you share it with a home office — will determine the seating area. Because the room is your own, there's no rules. Comfort and personal style are the order of the day. Go big on your primary reading chair, whether traditional leather or soft fabric. If you have the extra room, you may want to add a secondary chair for guests or a small sofa for gatherings.

Lighting: Good lighting is essential in your library. You'll want an ambient lighting scheme that reflects the warmth and style of the room overall, with individual lamps and fixtures lighting bright enough for comfortable reading.

Coziness: While this term is not an official expression of design elements, a sense of warmth is of chief importance in your library. Rugs, pillows, perhaps a warm, soft blanket add to the cozy factor and are all traditional accouterments of a home library.

Decorations: In addition to your books, your library will also likely house various memorabilia, artwork or posters that reflect your interests and passions. Display them with pride!

Keep all these thoughts and ideas in mind when designing your library or nook, regardless of its configuration or sizes. After all, your library is intended to be an oasis where you can indulge yourself — even if it isn't like the grand library rooms of old.



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REAL ESTATE 101



Tips and Ideas for Library Design

Books are a necessity of life for passionate readers, not merely display items meant to impress others. The most devoted readers collect and curate their libraries, even without the physical space to do so. But when they do, these spaces become almost sacred. Every avid reader has ideas about their dream libraries, but check out The Spruce for more inspiration at <https://bit.ly/2whyL8C>.

HOMEWISE GLOSSARY

Sweat equity: The equity earned as a result of the owners' labor in upgrading and improving the property.
SOURCE: MLS.com

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