

# Furniture & DESIGN Trends





# The Metallic Trend Continues

Finding the right element is critical to pulling off your vision

Design trends come and go, but metallics have had impressive staying power. It's probably because combining metals with wood finishes makes any space feel more contemporary. Whether you're upgrading your interior with new furniture or simply adding a few accents, adding metals can give it all a smart and modern touch.

## SELECTING WISELY

Different metals have their own specific aesthetic advantages and disadvantages, so it's important to select the right piece. For instance, chrome fixtures work very well with more industrial looks while oiled finishes can add some pop in a more traditional setting. Brass fits in with more rustic designs like farmhouse and Tuscan. If your look is more eclectic or you don't feel a great comfort level about balancing materials, consider reaching out to pros at local design studios or hiring an interior designer to help out. They'll be plugged into the latest trends, while also boasting an in-depth knowledge of classic design do's and don'ts that never go out of style.

## HOTTEST CHOICES

Gold and copper remain the most-used metallics, likely because they bring so much warmth to any room.



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Even a copper-adorned fireplace feels a lot more cozy. The green-living craze has led to more people using corrugated metals, which often have an array of textures. Wrought-iron banisters and railings offer a great showcase for metals, along with cabinet-door pulls and door hardware.

## FINISHING TOUCHES

One of the more intriguing things about the metallic trend is its great variety of finishes. Exterior gloss and brushed textures can change the whole character of this material. Polished metals offer a shiny look that works very well with modern designs, while satin or brushed versions blend into

contemporary themes where other elements are meant to stand out. Traditional oiled metals boast a richer antique look that fits with any classic scheme.

## FRONT AND CENTER

Creating a focal point for your metallic look can bring the whole design together. Whether it's used in a table, a large mir-

ror, mantel or perimeter trim, metals can add pops of color and intrigue — in particular if you combine different or opposing colors. Leverage the color temperatures of one metal against another to pull it off. You may just find that your design plan doesn't have to stick with “warm” or “cool” metals exclusively.



# New Window Treatments

Coverings were once simply white or neutral curtains, but not anymore

Custom styles have often been available, but they were hardly common — and never cheap. Today, window treatments are all about customization and, in some cases, automation. Yes, even your blinds can be tricked out with “smart” technology. You’ll also find a striking variety of choices in everything from materials to fabrics. And because choice has become standard, the prices have fallen — even if you buy new.

## GOING HIGH-TECH

Shades and blinds are now available with motorization options, and can even be controlled through smart assistants and phone apps. Louvered versions can be tilted remotely, or even set on a schedule. This functionality can be about more than convenience, in particular for those with mobility issues or window coverings that are placed in high or hard-to-reach places. Smart technology like this can also save money, since updated settings can adjust shades and blinds during certain times to keep the space cooler or warmer. Over time, they could end up paying for themselves.

## FABRIC OPTIONS

If you’re hoping for more natural light, choose simple, airy fabrics for your curtains.



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Monochromatic or natural materials can darken a room. Vintage, retro and organic fabrics can add new interest to shades, in particular those made of bamboo, sisal and jute. Layer curtains over blinds and shades to accentuate the window and provide additional colors and textures.

Add splashes of interest to

your curtains with natural prints, shades of blue or vintage floral looks — or go all out with brightly colored statement buy that offsets everything in the room while creating an exciting new focal point. Recycled options are increasingly available across every kind of window covering; you can also check thrift shops and consign-

ment stores for cheaper buys or up-cycling options.

## THE ALL-NATURAL WAY

Window coverings continue to trend toward natural, earthy tones. Curtains and sashes found in cream, rust and gray colors are all the rage, since they create such a warm and inviting atmo-

sphere. Just keep in mind that they are also so light that you may want to pair these window coverings with darkening liners in bedrooms or areas with full sun. Blinds made out of organic material like wicker and rattan remain on trend, and they’re even better at creating privacy and shade when paired with curtains.



# Join the Up-Cycling Movement

You can get a new look at a much lower price with a little work

Dated furniture is scattered about every yard sale, consignment shop and thrift store. You might even have some in your own spare room. That provides plenty of opportunities to tear it all apart in order to create something new, a process known as up-cycling.

## WHERE TO LOOK

If you don't have ready access to an old dresser or chair, widen your search in order to find the best buy. Find neighborhood sales, flea markets, antique shops and other places where older items are traded, consigned or sold. They're a great source of inspiration since you never know what you might find around the next corner. Ask family, friends and neighbors to alert you when they decide to upgrade their own furniture, since there may be up-cycling opportunities closer to home. Be on the look out for give-away options too. Some people simply discard furniture that still has plenty of life left in it.

## TRANSFORMING UP-CYCLING ITEMS

You'll need a truck, van or roomy car to get many of these items home. Borrow one or go with a friend if you think you've found a suitable up-cy-



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cling candidate. There are key tools you'll need once you've gotten the piece home, since you could be repainting, resurfacing and re-covering. They include good quality brushes for priming, straining and painting, sandpaper and sanding equipment, sanding sponges and a well-fitted res-

pirator. In some cases, you'll need woodworking tools including files and perhaps a table saw. Don't be afraid to ask to borrow some of these items from others at first, since they can be expensive. Pawn shops and thrift stores may also have these tools on sale for less.

## HAVE FUN

Once the piece of furniture has been stripped back to the basics, it's time to get creative. That might mean adding a fun design to the side of a cabinet, a warm and inviting stain to an end table, or a bold new fabric to a chair. You won't be an expert in the beginning, but

that doesn't mean you can't have fun as you learn. As you become more of an up-cycling expert, these once-outdated pieces of furniture can become centerpieces that define your living space. Some people even turn this kind of project work into a second job — or even an entirely new career.



# Need An Interior Designer?

If you've run out of design ideas, consider hiring someone with expertise

Interior designers arrive with a wealth of knowledge about what has always worked, and ideas gleaned from the very latest trends. Then they gather information on likes and dislikes in order to help homeowners express themselves through color schemes, home decor, furniture and staging. If that sounds like a needed service, here's how to get started.

## RESEARCH

Begin by researching various interior designers in your area, paying close attention to local reviews. Touch base with family, friends and neighbors who may have used these services in the past. Social media and community sites like Nextdoor may also prove to be invaluable in learning more. Once you've found a few worthy candidates, dig into online portfolios in order to examine before-and-after photos. They'll tell you whether this particular designer fits your style. Narrow it down to a few candidates and then schedule meetings.

## INVOLVING YOU

There are number of questions which must be addressed through the interview process with a potential interior designer. Perhaps the most



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important is how much of a role you will have in this process. Some of these experts prefer a hands-off approach with clientele. They may ask you to trust in their vision, while granting complete creative control. Does that work for you? If not, keep looking until you find someone who will encourage you to take a more active role.

## EXPERIENCE COUNTS

The longer an interior designer has been working in the industry, the more experience they have in a variety of situations. They've seen trends come and go (and sometimes return again), they've worked in spaces large and small, and with clients requesting everything under the sun. This bolsters their problem-solving

expertise, a critical element as designs sometimes reach unexpected roadblocks involving things like the budget or materials. Ask for references, since past clients can often share needed information about how things unfolded.

## CREATING A BUDGET

Once you've connected with an interior designer who meets

your needs, it's time to make all-important budget decisions. Even those with robust savings can find themselves at their financial limit, in particular if delays or other unexpected issues crop up. Prioritize certain elements of the project with your designer, and discuss which things can be trimmed — or simply altered in order to save critical dollars.

# Defining Mid-Century Modern

You've likely heard of one of design's most enduring trends — but what is it?

Mid-century modern design is here to stay. Based on so-called “space-age” concepts, the movement takes in looks, concepts and colors which were popular in the era from the 1940s through the 1960s. But considering how popular they still are, you'd never know these designs are from so long ago.

## WHAT IT IS

The “modern” version of mid-century design relied on clean lines with minimal embellishments, functional form and organic curves. There was also less reliance on a single kind of material or color palette, whether it was contrasting woods and metals or blending natural tones or bold colors with graphic blacks and whites. In some cases, colors would even be saturated to add more zest.

## MORE THAN DECOR

Mid-century modern ideas aren't simply limited to in-home concepts. Architecture was part of the same movement, as shown in homes like the one featured on TV's “The Brady Bunch.” They had lower and often flat roofs, open floor plans and oversized windows. But even there, designers had to follow some general concepts in order to achieve a cohesive look and feel. You'll need to balance fur-



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niture sizes, material textures and colors.

## COLOR CHOICES

Mustard yellow is particularly trendy these days, but should be paired with other warm colors so as not to be overwhelming. Greens, browns and teal are other mainstays. While saturated colors were once in vogue, they

haven't translated as well into the current design trends. Wood tones are generally darker and richer, though lighter woods can mesh very well with the more neutral side of the mid-century modern color wheel. Some of the boldest choices associated with this look, including clear lucite chairs or retro textiles, may prove to be overwhelming in

time — and might even lower your resale value, depending on how extensively they are used.

## MIX AND MATCH

The best approach with mid-century modern is not to go overboard, but instead to mix and match elements of the movement into your larger design scheme. You'll get a

more personalized look and feel, while avoiding some of the concept's more over-the-top excesses. For instance, lucite furniture may really open up the space, but it's far less durable — and actually pretty uncomfortable. Doing everything in mustard yellow will come off as cartoonish. Better to use these ideas as moments of contrast.



# Wallpaper Is Back

In years past, we were tearing it all down — now it's going right back up

Everything old is new again, and wallpaper's resurgence in popularity is proof positive. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it didn't return unchanged. Wallpaper of old was often decorated with smaller, more delicate patterns, in stark contrast to the bold designs of today. This new trend has also been marked by far more reserved usage, as savvy decorators tend to use wallpaper as an accent rather than on every available surface. Here are some additional design ideas.

## WRAPPING THE FIREPLACE

Fireplace inserts tend to be plain and uninspiring. That's where wallpaper comes in. Wrap your insert with an exciting design in order to make it the focal point it should have always been. You'll make a star out of an element that used to get regularly overlooked.

## JAZZ UP YOUR BACKING

Highlight your collection by inserting some fun into the back of your bookcase. Then take this concept into the rest of your home. The same trick works to bring excitement under and inside kitchen cabinets, in the closet and on otherwise utilitarian shelving units. And because they're tucked away inside your larger



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room design, you can afford to be bold with patterns and colors.

## CREATING A HEADBOARD

If your bed doesn't have a headboard, frame it with wallpaper instead of splurging on one that might look like a million others. Frame the space with molding in whatever shape and size is preferred,

then place wallpaper inside to create a unique look.

## STAIRCASE UPGRADE

Feeling even more adventurous? Place sealed wallpaper directly on the steps of your staircase for an exciting upgrade, or lay in strips of wallpaper along the front of each one. Together, they can provide a whole new way to

experience these colors and patterns.

## ACCENT ON FUN

Instant upgrades to small spaces might mean nothing more than adding wallpaper to one wall or space, while painting the other walls in a less dramatic, complementary color. But whatever you choose to do, enter into the

process with the intent of having fun. These accent walls, stairs and headboards are meant to breathe fresh ideas into everything that surrounds them. Don't be afraid of huge flowers, bright colors or wide regimental stripes. Then build outward with paint colors, accessories, linens and other smaller decor items that complete everything.



# Selecting the Right Mattress

We're learning more every day about the importance of a good night's sleep

Mattresses used to be more utilitarian, and often were used well past their recommended lifespan. These days, consumers understand that what you sleep on is just as important as other lifestyle choices in determining how the night will go. Mattress technology has raced forward, leading to a trend of regular replacement and far more options.

## HUGE ADVANCEMENTS

Mattresses have long been built with inner springs, but now there are additional options like memory foam and air-based versions. Inner-spring mattresses support your body with coil springs which are typically individually enclosed. Look for a standard of around 400 coils for optimal comfort. They're typically firmer, which may be preferable for those with back pain or larger frames.

Memory foam versions have varying densities that specifically respond to shapes, temperature and weight. This eases typical pressure points while also absorbing movement, a critical deciding element for some couples. They're also particularly adept at capturing warmth, which may be important to those who live with extreme winters. Air mattresses look like



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the typical inner-spring versions, but include air chambers under a layer of foam instead of coils. These are recommended for couples who have different preferences for things like firmness, since they are more easily adjusted.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

The best mattresses support the body in a neutral sleeping

position, making sure the spine has a natural curvature and that your body — including legs, shoulder and head — is properly supported. Because the materials used can create so many different experiences, it's important to conduct an in-depth test in order to see which one works best for you. Assume the position in which you would nor-

mally sleep, and remain there for a few minutes. Stores will often provide a pillow, but feel free to bring your own if that will help in your evaluation.

## WHEN TO BUY

When you purchase a new mattress, it will often come with a long-term warranty — but that doesn't mean you should keep it until the cover-

age runs out. In fact, experts recommend buying a new mattress every six to eight years, for a variety of reasons. Mattress parts may fail over time, in particular if you sleep in the same position nightly. Our bodies may change. And then there's the unpleasant reality that mattresses collect dust, bacteria, mites and even fungi over time.