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### **Balance in Budget Decorating**

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Budget decorating is more than simply just finding good deals. Basic principals of interior design apply to any decorating project and using these principals of design does not cost a penny. Balance is one of these design concepts that needs to be considered with all decorating projects.

Good balance can make an interior look just right, especially when decorating on a budget. Conversely, incorrect balance can destroy an otherwise good design, even a room with high end furnishings. But what exactly is balance and how can a novice decorator achieve good balance in a room?

The simplest definition of the word balance in decorating is equilibrium. Often, designers use the word "visual weight" when they are referring to balance. A balanced interior features furniture, accessories, and colors that are distributed throughout a room in a way that bring a sense of stability.

There are a few basic characteristics of decorating that affect the visual weight in a room. Here are three basic concepts, ideas to consider when looking at visual balance.

- ♦ Large items appear heavier in a room.
- ♦ Colors that are warm, bright and dark appear to have heavier visual weight than colors that are cool, soft and light.
- ♦ Materials that are opaque appear heavier that materials that are translucent.

It is helpful to keep these concepts in mind when decorating. So now that you understand the term balance, here is how to put together a room to help achieve a balanced look.

- ♦ When arranging furniture, start with the largest pieces first. Furniture such as an armoire, sofa or bed will act as the anchor in a room to which all other furniture will work around.
- ♦ After your large items are placed, bring in the rest of your smaller furniture and place these items around the room. Distribute your furniture by varying the height of items throughout the room. For example, place a low chair next to a tall bookcase.
- ♦ Bring in your accessories. Consider placing a translucent item on top of a heavier piece of furniture to continue mixing up the visual weight in the room. If you have a group of small accessories, consider grouping smaller items together to give them more weight in the space.
- ♦ Use color to finish the look. If an area in the room is looking unbalanced in relation to heavier visual areas in a room, use a bolder and bright color in these places as an accent. This will add visual weight and a pop of color.
- ♦ Conversely, you can lighten the visual weight of something like a dark sofa by adding lighter colored pillows.
- ♦ Continue moving things about the room until a visual balance is achieved. You will know when you have the visual weight correct because suddenly the room will just "feel" right.

Keep in mind these tips plus the basic concepts of balance when working on decorating projects. Budget decorators that use the basic principals of good design are often the most successful in pulling off a great looking interior at a rock bottom price.