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REAL ESTATE | DESIGN

How to Avoid the 5 Worst Bedroom Interior-Design Mistakes

Unrestful décor is the last thing we need right now. We asked architects and designers how to avoid the most common errors.



MAKING conference calls from under the covers was once a sick-day anomaly. Now, of course, you can spend a whole workday supine, with your boss none the wiser. But when you blur the borders between desk and duvet, said Brooklyn designer Highlyann Krasnow, “it becomes much more difficult to view the bedroom as a sanctuary.”

The need to compromise our inner sanctums so we can WFH has turned Mik Hollis’s pre-Covid pet peeve—TVs and other screens in the bedroom—into a *bête noire*. Once the factory whistle blows, the Pasadena, Calif., designer said, “homes need at least one space that is a respite from the ubiquity of screens.”

Some bedroom-decorating missteps were already bad ideas before the pandemic and remain so now. It’s just that we’re in our homes so much more today, we rub up against these errors more frequently. Here, designers tell us the six most vexing bedroom décor goofs they see people make again and again, and what you should do instead.

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A Litter of Pillows

Unless you have a slumber party scheduled, “too many pillows can look very fussy,” said New York designer Cara Woodhouse. A pillow pile is an unnecessary barrier to crawling under the covers, she said, and will quickly make you dread making the bed.

Instead: Ms. Woodhouse sticks to four king-size shams for sleeping and only a single bolster or pair of decorative pillows to remove before bed. “Anything more in my opinion is too much,” she said.

Clutter Galore

Disorderly piles of papers, unnecessary tchotchkes and that one chair in the corner

overflowing with not-so-freshly laundered clothes will overshadow the serenity of even the most carefully selected fabrics and furnishings, warned Nashville designer Carolyn Kendall.

Instead: Edit family photo frames down to the one or two most special and employ a flat-top storage bench at the foot of the bed to house magazines and blankets, suggested San Francisco designer Elizabeth Cooper. Ms. Krasnow, meanwhile, saves space on tiny bedside tables by opting for wall sconces (plug-in styles are available) rather than tabletop lamps.

Postcard-Sized Rugs

If you’ve invested in a bedroom rug, you shouldn’t still be swinging your feet onto the cold, hard floor each morning, said Atlanta designer Candace Rimes. Too often she sees clients, in an effort to save money, make the “bathmat mistake” of buying carpets that are too small to extend much past the bed.

Instead: Lay rugs away from the headboard wall, starting roughly 4 to 6 inches in front of your nightstand, and size them to extend past the footboard 2 to 3 feet, advised Austin designer Stephanie Lindsey. Then lift the bed back into place, and take a well-deserved, well-designed rest.