

How to create a blissful bedroom

Removing clutter and choosing calming paint colours can go a long way in creating a more relaxing sleeping space

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At the end of a long day, nothing feels better than stepping into your own private sanctuary, turning off the lights, and climbing into bed.

Your bedroom is supposed to be your retreat from the world, a serene and calming space in which to rest and relax before drifting off into a blissful night's sleep —

as such, it should be a stress-free environment.

To make it stress-free, I think the crucial avoidance has to be clutter. It doesn't do anything positive for the soul or brain," said Katie C. Bridgman, the interior designer behind Katie Charlotte Design.

"I always install dimmable lights and never place a TV in the bed-



Luxurious fabrics, an eye-catching chandelier make for a soothing bedroom decor. — COURTESY OF KATIE CHARLOTTE DESIGN



Casper mattress, blanket and pillow. — COURTESY OF CASPER

room, I also try to limit keeping the phone in there, too, as it emits light, and negative energy."

Keeping the bedroom clutter-free is key to making it more relaxing, and to promoting better sleep.

Keep clutter in an office or den, where it can be stored neatly. Wires contribute to clutter also, and seeing them is a personal pet peeve of mine; keeping them concealed definitely does help change the dynamic of the space," Bridgman said. "The mind needs to be free and clear at night, both internally and externally. The air should flow well around the room. It decreases anxiety and trapped energy, and increases the chances of having a good night's sleep."

If stress and anxiety weigh heavily at night, another way to make your bedroom — and bed — more relaxing is with a weighted blanket.

"Casper's new weighted blanket is designed to help reduce stress and anxiety, so you can relax and fall asleep with ease," said Jeff Capin, co-founder and chief product officer of Casper. "The blanket is filled with microbeads in durable, quilted chambers, and a breathable cotton cover. The microbead fill provides the weight that helps promote relaxation and reduce stress and anxiety."

"The blanket also offers superior air flow with a breathable cotton cover that helps circulate air away from your body, keeping you comfortably cool."

Weighted blankets look like regular blankets, but they're designed to simulate a comforting hug, which relaxes the nervous system. The Casper weighted blanket is available in three weight options — 10, 15 and 20-pound — and it's recommended that people select a blanket that's around 10 per cent of their own body weight, for optimal comfort and relaxation.

In addition to its weighted blanket, Casper has a variety of sleep products developed in-house, including mattresses, pillows, bedding and furniture, sold both online and at retailers, such as Hudson's Bay, Indigo and EQ3.

To transform your bedroom into an oasis, Bridgman recommends choosing calm, cool tones and incorporating lots of texture, especially in the bedding and drapery.

"The cooler tones are always winners: blues, greys, soft lilacs and greens. Normally, if you stay near colours that nature provides, you can't go wrong. It doesn't go to say that bold colours can't be used; they absolutely can. Just keep them to accessories such as throw pillows and decor objects. Patterns are fine to use also, just ensure they are balanced out with the muted tones," she said.

"I love to use many different textures in my designs and this variety adds depth, volume and interest. Flowing velvet drapes with a silk sheer, a soft fabric headboard, textured bed sheets, throw pillows and pretty lamp shades are all easy ways to add a soothing and

warm feel.

"Keep away from unnecessary mirrors, desks (unless it's a vanity), and anything that can allow clutter to build up."

Other suggestions include: Keeping the bedroom a device and technology-free zone. Using blackout curtains to keep light out;

Trying a pink Himalayan salt lamp, which makes an ideal night light because of the warm glow it casts, as well as its natural air-purifying abilities. Setting up a stylish, natural essential oil diffuser with your favourite nighttime scent, such as lavender, for some soothing aromatherapy.

Overall, to make your bedroom more peaceful, Bridgman suggests opting for a calm colour palette, dimmable lighting, scented candles, and window treatments that block light at night but let it filter in the morning, to help wake you up naturally.

"These aspects are what create the warm, safe and cosy factor," she said. "Go for flannel sheets in the winter, silk sheets in the summer, and definitely have a carpet under the bed, as it grounds the area and makes it feel homely."

"I love mixing drapes and sheers," Bridgman added. "It offers a whimsical yet warm, hotel-like Velvet drapes and light sheers, or even silk blinds with silk sheers — something to mask the harsh lines of the window frame and help with sound insulation, also."

When pricing your home, let the experts chime in

Determining the right price for your home relies on several factors. A chartered real estate appraiser can give the most thorough property assessment available

MEGAN MARTIN

When it comes to pricing your home, sometimes relying on comparables alone is insufficient. If you're looking to sell your property and would like to have an estimate of your home's market value, the common approach is to consult with a handful of real estate brokers to give you an idea of an acceptable list price, and then let the market speak. But there are many situations in which a more precise process is required. That's when hiring a chartered real estate appraiser is appropriate, as these experts will provide you with the most thorough property assess-

ment available.

The complex process of a professional assessment is undertaken by an expert property appraiser and a team of technicians, all highly trained and specialized.

"The chartered appraiser must determine the value of the property according to several elements including statistics and market observation, and human factors such as behaviour; social, economic and governmental forces; and the physical environment," said Elaine St-Denis, chartered appraiser and president at Bourassa Jodoin Inc. "The work is done on a given date, occasionally according to certain working hypotheses and different

evaluation objectives or goals."

To do this, appraisers must study the property down to its minute details. This is done through a visit and a technical survey of the premises.

"The appraiser must also consult various documents such as a list of renovations done on the property since its last assessment, and any plans for work yet to be carried out," St-Denis said. "The previous inspection report and the certificate of location must be examined as well."

The mathematical calculations involved in subsequently determining value are complicated, and take years of training and continu-



There are many reasons to hire a chartered real estate appraiser to evaluate your home. — GETTY IMAGES

ing education to fine-tune.

There are many reasons to hire a chartered real estate appraiser to evaluate your home.

"The assessment will be used by the owner for tax purposes and as evidence to a buyer or a city official for different types of reports," St-Denis said. "If you're planning to sell, the valuation of your property by a certified appraiser is particularly important because it will allow you to not only know its market value, but also gives you access to an impartial professional who knows the market."

There are also several situations in which a property not listed on the market requires a value estimate by a chartered appraiser. A common example would be in a divorce, when one spouse is buying the other out of their half of the family home at fair market value. The price would need to be determined by an appraiser.

Another example is when homeowners are looking to refinance their home and take a new or larger mortgage. They will need to have an appraisal done in order for the bank to establish how much they can lend.

In addition, if an owner is changing the defined use of a property — for example, from a primary residence to an investment property — an appraisal may be required as a benchmark for tax authorities to establish any capital gains.

"In our work with charitable organizations, we sometimes see property being donated to a non-profit in exchange for a tax receipt," said Jay Deakin, real estate broker and owner of Deakin

Realty. "In this case, a fair market value appraisal is needed from an appraiser to establish the amount of the tax receipt."

As for homes on the open market, banks often require an appraisal as part of their due diligence and compliance as a condition to the loan to ensure that the buyer is not over-paying for the property.

"Banks will only lend a specific percentage of the market value so if you're paying too much, they may restrict the amount," Deakin said.

Appraisals are usually valid for three to six months, but that was true in a market before COVID-19. Now, assessments performed before the pandemic and subsequent lockdown are generally no longer applicable.

Still, having an up-to-date assessment report is a means of protecting the investment you've made in your property, which for many homeowners is the largest investment they will make in their lifetimes. So if you're considering a sale in the coming months as the real estate market begins to unfreeze, having an assessment done can be extremely valuable.

"The appraisal report identifies the potential of the property and can be of great importance during sales, purchases, inheritances or municipal disputes," St-Denis said. "The report will provide you with an essential negotiating tool for the sale of your property, as it includes the qualitative and quantitative parameters of the property, which will allow you to identify and anticipate the elements that can be negotiated."



The complex process of a professional assessment is undertaken by an expert property appraiser and a team of technicians. — GETTY IMAGES