



IT'S NO SMALL THING

WE'RE
TALKING
900
SQUARE
FEET.

...to live large in a tiny home. But professional organizer Beth Zeigler Penn has pulled it off in a big way. Here are 17 of her best tips to make your own rooms feel roomier.



Max out a micro bedroom

Despite what your instinct may tell you, the best thing to do in a tiny bedroom is fill it with large-scale furniture, because a few statement pieces look a lot less cluttered than a bunch of small ones. A gallery wall brings in a big dose of beauty. Challenged by closet constraints, Beth needed a catchall for out-of-season stuff, so she re-created a floating credenza that she had seen on the blog *The Brick House*: Ikea kitchen cabinets wrapped with wood planks (glued and screwed in) and mounted at waist level.



16
Don't be shy with a gallery wall

A bold array of art helps a small space feel high-end. Designer Talia Laconi of Homepolish, a Web-based decorating service, gave this one a sophisticated look by mixing flat, framed pieces with 3-D art. A wiry sculpture lets light pass through; the mirror below plays up the flowers in front. An Ikea swing-arm lamp illuminates the room without swallowing up surface space.

17
ALWAYS INCLUDE AN ACCENT CHAIR

No room for it? Just angle it! Remember: Every corner is a commodity. Happy seating.

Got a wall? There's your office

You don't need a spare room to set up an organized work space. Beth carved out hers along one side of the family/guest room, lining the wall with a slim DIY desk: an 11-inch-deep sustainable-pine plank (from timelinewood.com) mounted with brackets. Whiteboard paint turns the wall into a message board. Choose chic, non-officey chairs that can double as extra seating when friends come over. (Check out chairish.com or wayfair.com.)



05

Exploit mountable storage

Magazine racks are an alternative to floor-hogging file cabinets. Add a cup-holder below to put pens in easy reach. For a big array of wall-mountable storage options, go to ikea.com or containerstore.com.

04


Try a simple strip of cork

It's sold at Staples, and it's all you need to pin up lists and notes. (Adhere it to the wall with 3M Command Velcro strips.)

MEET THE SMALL-SPACE STRATEGIST

Beth Zeigler Penn is the owner of the organizing firm Bneato Bar and the genius behind this tricked-out Los Angeles home. She lives with her television writer/producer husband, Adam Penn; their dog, Marty; and their cat, Garbo.





01
Metals are magical
Metal objects—
in this case,
shelving—
bounce light
around a room,
making it
airier. For extra
reflectiveness
in this family/
guest room,
Beth replaced
the top and
bottom
shelves with
mirrored glass.

02

Get a tall
coffee
table

Look for one
that's 28
inches or so
(the average
table is more
like 16") to
draw the eye
upward and
make the space
feel
more spacious.
An open base
and a glass
top help the
cause, too.

Written by
Betsy Goldberg
Photographs by
Thayer Allyson Gowdy



10

You can fake a dining room, too

Instead of the standard, skimpy bistro set, go glam—and substantial—when it comes to furniture and accents. Formal touches (cushy banquette, oversize artwork) make a small space feel more special and established. Beth balanced the bulky pieces with lighter ones, like a legroom-friendly pedestal table and see-through acrylic chairs. Find more smart picks for small dining spaces at cb2.com and worldmarket.com.

11

Remember the classic curtain-rod trick

When you hang curtains as close to the ceiling as possible, it brings the focus up high, making the room appear loftier. If this move calls for longer curtains, you can sew two of the same fabric panels together.

12

Organic shapes are less confining

A floor covering with a curvy outline, like this hide rug, gives more visual flow between areas in a room.

Find similar rugs at overstock.com or rugsusa.com. (Search for “hide rug.”)

13

REPURPOSE A CLOSET

An out-of-the-way, underused shallow closet becomes an eye-catching curio when you ditch the doors and line the back of each shelf with light-reflecting mirrored glass (cut to fit and just popped in—not even glued). Beth stored books and extra cords (in lacquer boxes) in hers and painted the surrounding wall gray to help the spot pop.



14

Make sure furniture is flexible

In a compact living space, a pair of versatile end tables works better than one long coffee table. When you have guests over, you can move the tables around to create conversation areas. Short on floor space for the party? Tuck the tables into a corner.



06
DON'T
CROWD YOUR
SURFACES!

Ignore the instinct to fill every inch of space in a tight spot—that only makes the area look cramped. Breathing room between objects on shelves sends a message that you have space (ahhh) to spare.

07
Stick with neutrals and naturals
A calming color scheme on the walls and in the furniture eliminates visual noise and ups the luxe factor in a small, standard space. Here, the walls are painted a creamy white (Swiss Coffee by Dunn-Edwards Paints).

09
If you're a plant person, exercise restraint. Greenery naturally opens up a room with its outdoorsy vibe, but a plant that's too bushy can overwhelm a space. Try a sleek, spiky one (like this dracaena) in a glossy, clean-lined container, and sprinkle in some smaller succulents if you like.

08
You can fake a foyer

It's easy to turn a bare spot by the front door into an inviting entryway. Anchor it with a tall, open bookcase to put objects on display, and corral everyday essentials (sunglasses, keys) in a pretty container. To keep the floor clutter-free, turn a woven basket into a shoe drop and park your go-to bag on a weighty hook hung at eye level.