

The ENGLISH HOME



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LEFT In a small room, bespoke joinery is the only way to ensure that you are able to use absolutely every millimetre of space, from wall to wall and floor to ceiling, as in this pale and pretty kitchen by Lisette Voute.

BELOW In this North London apartment, glazed and closed cupboards, fitted floor to ceiling along the length of a whole wall, provide copious storage, leaving enough space for a full-sized Esse range cooker and a double butler's sink. Note the use of pale colours, including a Carrara marble worktop and beautiful, natural floorboards. This is a Real Shaker Kitchen by deVOL.

Attention to light can also make a room appear much more spacious and pleasant. "Bounce light around by using mirrors – it will really open the room up," says Mudie. A mirror positioned opposite a window will distribute the maximum amount of natural light, whilst a mirror near a light fitting will reflect its brilliance around the room. Glass, too, really opens up a home. If having building work done, consider enlarging windows or replacing solid doors or walls with glass, but for quicker, cheaper solutions, glass or acrylic furniture or see-through accessories such as lamp bases, door knobs and vases can be a useful aesthetic resource.

Another means of enlarging the apparent size of a room is with a clever use of colour. Generally speaking, pale colours seem to recede, enhancing a sense of spaciousness, whilst darker colours absorb light and therefore appear more enclosing. A unified, pale colour scheme will always seem more bright and airy than a scheme that involves differing shades of dark colours. Paint radiators, cupboards and shelves the same colour as walls, so that they disappear. However, those who love bright colours of course should use them, whilst the current trend for very dark colours will definitely look fashionably moody – perfect for a room in which to feel cosy and enclosed. Try using pale colours in the centre of the room, with vivid colour on the floor (or even the ceiling) only, or, as Mudie advises, use similar materials and colours overall to create a sense of space. Where a space needs breaking up – perhaps in a multi-functional room – use contrast colours to create a visual 'full stop'.

When in doubt, the formula for a tiny room is relatively simple: more storage and more light, but less colour and slimmer furnishings. Plan for each and every millimetre to fulfil its potential, looking out for clever, off-the-shelf solutions, but not being afraid to commission a custom-made piece to suit your space when necessary. And just remember: small is beautiful. ■

Plan for each and every millimetre to fulfil a room's potential

