

Grand Living Newsletter

[| Locations](#) | [Website](#) | [Furniture & Accessories](#) | [History](#) |
[| Current Sales & Special Offers](#) | [Furniture Care](#) |

Two-For-One Deal

Contents

[Two-For-One-Deal](#)
[Ask The Expert](#)
[Up The Volume](#)
[Smart Interiors](#)
[Home Advisor](#)

Ask The Expert

Q - I've just taken a new job in the city, moving from an 1800-square-foot townhouse into an urban studio. The view's fantastic, but the whole apartment is barely 900 square feet! How do I choose the best pieces among my existing furnishings to make my new digs look less tiny, and what other decorating tricks can you suggest to help the space look bigger?

A. There are all kinds of things you can do to make a smaller space seem larger. Among furnishings, the key is scale. The good news here is that you're likely to have a lot of pieces from your old townhouse that can be repurposed for your snazzy new city dwelling with nothing more than proper placement. Choose pieces with classic, simple lines, and don't worry about mixing

A sleeper sofa is one of the most tempting pieces of furniture to consider buying, especially when living space is at a premium. A good sleeper sofa solves two furniture-function problems at once, providing comfortable seating for the den or living room and a spare bed for guests. A better dual-function piece of furniture is hard to find.

Your first consideration should be your budget, and, as with any standard sofa or bed purchase, you should buy the best quality sleeper you can afford. Most people keep their major upholstery pieces for five to eight years, and sofas get more use and wear than almost any other furniture in your home. This is almost doubly true for sofa sleepers. As with car-buying, you should make a sofa bed decision based on the expectation that you'll use it until it stops working, so bring home the best.



You'll also want to ask yourself, "Where will this sofa bed be used, and who will be using it?" Are you buying it for a dorm room or apartment? Will it go in the family room, living room, guest room/home office? Will it be used primarily as a sofa or a bed, or equally as both?

The answers to these questions will lead you to your next steps. Before coming in to Grand Home Furnishing to shop, measure the dimensions of the space where your sleeper sofa will go, and don't forget to gauge clearance when your new sleeper is opened out into bed mode. Next, take measurements for all of the doorways, hallways and pathways your sleeper will encounter on its trip into your home. Sleepers are quite a bit heavier than plain old sofas, and many are bulky, too: You may be able to remove the legs on your chosen model for added clearance, but anyone who's handled a sleeper delivery will tell you, you don't want to have to move one twice if you can help it.

traditional with contemporary: Blending styles like this will give you an individual, collected look with a clean edge that will make your studio seem more spacious.

The better news is that, after picking your favorite classics and then downsizing your furnishings to a consignment shop or local charity, you still get to go shopping—probably for upholstery. Even if your old sofa made it through the door of your new place, it's likely too big to work well. Consider swapping it out for a loveseat, or get rid of your clunky old bed in favor of a mid-century modern sleeper sofa (see the article next door) that can dual-function for you, leaving lots of room for living. If you stick with a regular bed, go for a platform style. Cover it with dozens of pillows in all shapes and sizes and it becomes the perfect lounge. Maybe two upholstered chairs can serve as the ideal living room area, with an upholstered ottoman in between to double as a coffee table or extra seating.

If you're allowed to paint, bright, light wall colors are great for creating a larger-looking environment. If you have wide crown or floor molding and can't remove it, paint it the same color as the walls to add height and depth. If you can't paint, hanging sheer drapes from floor to ceiling all the way across your largest windowed wall will give you the same effect, with a little drama thrown in. For all of your other windows, too, hang floor-length drapes from the ceiling line rather than from the window tops. Other trompe l'oeil (French for "trick the eye") suggestions for expanding your interior horizons? Hold a large window frame on a blank wall and have a friend mark the corners. Hire a muralist to paint a pastoral scene or city skyline within the lines, and voila, a seemingly endless view in an instant, stretching your apartment even farther into the great outdoors. Rather than chopping up your

Do you want a sofa with back cushions attached or loose pillows? Each offers a different level of support, and each style will create a unique look for your decor. Perhaps you have the space to consider a sectional with a sleeper built into the sofa component, an especially good choice if you need lots of seating in your family's busiest gathering place.

Then there's the cover to consider. Fabric is a good option because, for most sleeper models, it comes in every color, texture, print, solid and price point under the sun. If you choose fabric, be sure it's stain-resistant, either inherently or because it's received anti-stain treatment, and remember that your fabric-covered sofa bed should be thoroughly vacuumed every other month.



Leather is also an extremely popular cover choice for sofa beds, traditional or contemporary. It will raise the initial cost, but leather pays for itself very quickly with less maintenance and longer wear—and it looks and feels gorgeous. Just a good wipe-down with a leather protectant every six months, with the occasional vacuum in between, and a good leather-covered sleeper will outlast a fabric choice by years.



Your final consideration should be comfort. Never purchase a sleeper sofa without trying it out first. Pull the bed frame out several times to make sure the mechanism is solid and reliable. Lie down fully on the mattress, testing it as you would a sleep set. Sit on the sofa cushions, bouncing a little

to see how they react to your weight. The seat depth and the height of the back make a difference, too, as does the density of the foam used for the cushions. Also be aware that a sleeper sofa will have a much firmer seat than a sofa without a sleeper.

Deciding on your particular priorities beforehand will definitely help you find a wonderful sofa and a comfortable bed in the best two-for-one deal the furniture world has to offer. Let us help you find your perfect bed-and-sofa combination here at Grand Home Furnishing today.

[Top](#)

Up the Volume

There's a major entertainment milestone on the horizon: As of Feb. 17, 2009, the federal government has mandated that all of television be produced in digital mode. The good news? It's a move that will make new communications technology possible for our police and fire emergency responders, and also bring clearer pictures, more channels and high-definition TV images to us ordinary folks in the bargain.

The bad news is that the change will make your old analog set obsolete. What better time, then, to prepare yourself for the switch. You could buy a DTV converter box that will convert



urban haven, portable room dividers can actually give you and your guests a sense of roominess. Partitioning your studio off into sections creates the illusion of rooms where none really exist. Try a shoji screen, a type of light-weight divider with folding panels that originated centuries ago in Japan. These screens can be pulled out or folded in on a whim, and the translucent paper or fabric covering the panels lends a light-infused look while still providing intimacy.

Align your old and newly acquired treasures to make the most of that terrific view and no one will notice the skimpy square footage. Remember, you're not living with less space, you're living with more life!

the digital signal into analog for your old television set, but where's the sense in that? You'd miss out on the sharper images and HDTV of the new digital age. Better to purchase a new set with a built-in digital tuner—maybe one of those sleek flat-screen models.

And what can you do, furniture-wise, to get ready for the change? Investing in a new TV gives you more options than simply setting it on top of your old TV stand, cabinet or dresser. Grand Home Furnishing's newest stands and entertainment walls offer features specifically designed for digital television technology. They're constructed to improve TV audio quality by virtually eliminating interfering resonance from the audio systems themselves. Many of our cabinets have the flexibility of deep adjustable shelves to accommodate various AV component sizes. And, since every component in your system will have multiple cables, generous cable management channels are provided in all of our newest entertainment furniture, offering a clean, spaghetti-free look to blend with your best decor.



If you decide that a wall mount is the way to go with your new flat-panel set, Grand Home Furnishing also offers a wide variety of consoles, sofa tables, chests and cabinets that can complement your mounted screen nicely while furnishing a display surface and storage space underneath. Whether your style runs

toward the traditional or contemporary end of the decorating spectrum, there's a wood or mixed-media flat-panel companion piece to suit your taste and budget.

You say you love your old entertainment wall unit and have made it the focal point of your entire room? Not to worry: Grand Home Furnishing has units in all of your favorite finishes and styles, built especially to accommodate your new set's dimensions and components, whether you choose to inset it on the central built-in stand or center it on the wall, surrounded by your new wall unit's shelves, cabinets and cubbies.

Make sure those digital-TV tax dollars are working for you long before next February by putting your own entertainment dollars to work for you and your family now. Selection and price are as good or better than they will ever be as we approach TV D-Day, so come in to Grand Home Furnishing today and let us help you prepare for the digital entertainment revolution.



[Top](#)

**Win a Trip to the American Idol Finale
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Win a Trip to the American Idol Finale May 21, 2008. 3 Lucky

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[Top](#)

The Sunny Side

This spring is the color of daffodils, say the experts, and every nuance of yellow in between. From palest wheat to spicy saffron, sunny shades are popping up all over the interior designer's April realm. Here are a few tips for working these happy jonquil hues into your own décor.



- To avoid that jarring smiley-face-yellow-explosion effect, tone down strong yellows with botanical greens like chartreuse, pine and deeper teal.
- Balance several shades of yellow with earthier neutrals such as bamboo and cork to create a garden retreat feeling in any room
- Incorporate warm, honey-toned wood furniture into any décor and watch how it lends an inner glow to the one rich yellow shade that you introduce into the existing color scheme.
- Try some of the classic combinations used by savvy designers for centuries: Bright butter walls, white molding, dark wood and blue-and-white chinoiserie accents are a good example.
- Go up-to-the-second contemporary with fashion-inspired florals and geometrics in fresh, young colors—including energetic yellows. They're making Art Nouveau colors and patterns 21st-century chic.
- Use a pop of bold, vivid yellow in accents such as pillows and side tables, magazine racks, shelves and picture frames, or pair it with one other powerful shade against white-white walls and large furniture pieces. Then, the trendy seasonal colors can be traded out or painted over when the next hot hue hits the scene.

[Top](#)

Slaying the Spring Cleaning Beast

Yes, it's that time again. The daunting spectre of scouring and rubbing and washing and sweeping and dusting and decluttering stands before you like a terrible foe that can never be vanquished. But what if we had a secret, a secret that, once revealed, would banish spring cleaning from your homeland forever? Let the gnashing of teeth and wringing of scrubworn hands be gone with the invocation of the following charms.



First, simply decide that good enough will be good enough for you. The world will not end if you don't get every smudge out of every corner of every window in your entire house. Lighten up and determine that there's a certain level of chaos you can live with.

Then, armed with a perfectly acceptable measure of cleaning imperfection, build a year-round cleaning schedule that the whole family can jump on, and pow! The spring cleaning monster is dead; long live

the obedient and manageable maintenance routine.

Break chores down into daily, weekly, monthly and seasonal tasks. Nearly everyone deals with dishes every day, but vacuuming and dusting can probably be done on a weekly basis. Monthly chores might include wiping down ceiling fan blades and wall-mounted light fixtures, whereas the patio furniture can certainly slide by with a thorough once-a-year scrubbing at the beginning of outdoor lounging season.

When all the chores have been assigned to their proper schedules, draw family members' names out of a hat to see who gets first dibs on his or her favorite task from each list. Keep to the cleaning calendar, and you'll never be threatened by the spring cleaning beast again!

[Top](#)

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