



Surface Charm

Tips to upgrade your room using transformative wall treatments

Walls serve as the canvas for all the furnishings and accessories in a room. Sometimes they can be the main focal point of a room, or simply a backdrop to add just a layer to the overall feel of your space. As a design professional, I often use the walls to accentuate existing architecture. Other times, I may use them to camouflage a certain area.

Walls can transform a space to create an open soft feel, or can be used to make the drama you're looking for come alive. Depending on your goal, you can use patterns which are bold and bright, or you can cover them with something more subtle; with a soft texture and a muted color scheme.

There are so many different options to choose from it may seem overwhelming to commit to a particular color or style. First, I like to decide if the walls will be the star of the show or just a soft neutral backdrop for everything else in the room. A change in your wall covering is an effective way to refresh your surroundings without making a huge investment. I tend to keep the color scheme consistent throughout the home to ensure the entire look is cohesive. By using the same color throughout the space, the furnishings tend to define the look.

To begin with, define the wall color, as it will make the most dramatic change in a room. The richness of the look will depend largely on the impact of the wall covering. It can make a room more intimate, tie accent elements together, create a feel of spaciousness, or just bring life into a room. But before committing, there are several factors to consider. Think about the lighting in the room, the proportion, and any architectural features you may want to enhance.

One of my favorite wall coverings is

wallpaper. It is difficult to surpass the versatility of wallpaper and, in recent years, has come a long way as far as the available styles and price points. You can source anything from traditional stripes, florals, and checks to modern geometric designs and textures.

Wallpaper is very practical as well. It can hide flaws, as well as make the room look longer or wider depending on the pattern. Usually when I use a pattern, it is the jewelry of the room and I play down the furnishings letting the paper paint the story. Wallpaper can also be washable, so no need to worry about



scrubbing or staining and is ideal in a kitchen, powder room, or children's room.

When selecting the perfect paper, you must consider several elements. Think about the colors in the room, the other textures and fabrics, and the amount of wall space you're working with. It is imperative the scale of the pattern balances with the space allocated to get the impact of the paper correctly. Also, keep in mind the lighting of the room — whether it is

natural or artificial — enhances the paper to its greatest potential. Most importantly, make sure you have an experienced paper hanger to ensure proper amounts are ordered and it's hung properly. There is an art to paper hanging and can make or break the success of a room.

Wall texture is an amazing way to add warmth and dimension to a room. This can be accomplished in a number of ways. You can cover walls with fabric or a great wallpaper to add incredible depth to a space. Some people choose to add thickly-applied plaster to create an even more unique look that is custom to their needs. People love when they come into space and they can actually feel the texture when they touch the walls. A patterned surface will look dimensional depending on the light and shadows in the room, making your room feel rich and look exquisite. Sometimes I choose to use bricks, wood paneling, beadboard, or even tile on the walls to add texture. Depending on your furniture and elements in your space, you can play up the texture or minimize it depending on your needs.

Beyond paint and paper, think outside of the box. There are so many ceramic and glass tile options that can add the dramatic flare you are seeking. Use them to cover one focal wall or the upper or lower portion of all four walls. Just take into consideration where the room is located, what it is being used for, and how difficult it will be to maintain the material. Since walls are the largest surface in your home, make the most of them. Design your home be what you want it to be, and love it each day you arrive home. ■

Candice Adler is the owner and designer of Candice Adler Design in Linwood, NJ. candiceadlerdesign.com, 609-927-5652