



# The Deal with Dens

*Tips for maximizing comfort in the most popular room in the house*

By Candice Adler

**T**he den is your family's gathering place. It cries out for total comfort. It's the place where your family comes together to watch TV, play games, catch up on day's events, and lounge around together. Much more relaxed than the formal living room, the den entertains friends when they come for a visit. It is nice to fill the den with board games, a great media area, and other fun details. There are den essentials required to ensure it functions as your family's lifestyle dictates. It is a cluster of seating, lighting, and casual casegoods.

The den is a place to experiment with a fun color or possibly a unique wall covering. I like to display collections of family pictures and perhaps special memorabilia that reminds one of the special times shared together as a family. It is the perfect place to display the things you enjoy as you spend significant time relaxing with those you love most.

Ideally, bookshelves work very well in a den, for not only display, but for storage as well. Place some attractive bins and baskets under a console or sofa table to give ample space for a throw or extra toss pillows. If young children spend time in the den, it is always nice to have a specific place to store their games or art supplies. There are also unique storage ottomans, which not only provide hidden storage, but serve double duty as added seating when entertaining guests. It's always a plus when the space can be versatile.

The den is the go-to room, whether you're enjoying a quiet evening for two or a 10-person gathering for a special occasion. For large families, I would suggest adding some oversized pillows on the floor to provide a soft spot for the younger children. This way everyone can be together to create the memories we all cherish. If there is ample space, think out of the box. Maybe add an area with a mini fridge for water and beer so you have chilled drinks right there when you desire. Maybe a wet bar, if that's a possibility. It's nice to entertain in the den without ever having to run to the kitchen.

A question I am often asked is; "How big the TV should be?" These rules of thumb should be helpful.

- A 32" TV should be 7 feet from the viewing area
- A 36" TV should be 8 feet from the viewing area
- A 42" TV should be 10 feet from the viewing area
- A 50" TV should be 12 feet from the viewing area
- A 60" TV should be 12 to 14 feet from the viewing area

If you have a massive TV, work around that focal point to ensure it

fits into the room appropriately. I tend to decorate around the TV, as it usually is the main draw to the room. Flat panels seem to serve a space nicely, while not intruding into the room and overwhelming it. If the space is awkward and does not dictate a clear TV space, an alternative may be to use a hinged arm. This would allow the TV to be accessible to the different places within the same space. Keep components out of sight if possible, as they can be a real eyesore. It is possible to keep your den aesthetically pleasing and functional if planned properly from the beginning.

Some easy den updates can really make big changes if carefully selected. By changing something simple, like a lampshade, your room will instantly be given a new glow. Try a different color, material, or shape. An easy update I do often is to change out old, dated toss pillows. This is an easy quick fix to making tired, old furniture appear new and refreshed. Some people change them seasonally just to keep things new and fun.

If you're not looking for a hefty price tag but need a new couch, try having a slipcover made for your existing couch. It's like buying a new couch without a long-term commitment. If you have a green thumb, add some plants to your den. They not only bring life to a room, but are wallet friendly and add style to any space. Odd numbers of plants always work best.

Thirty percent of what you see in a room is the rug, so use this to your advantage. Change it up with a new color or texture and pattern. Coordinate it with your new toss pillows and, voila, all of a sudden your den has a whole

new look.

Swap out the old photos displayed with new current ones. Maybe black and whites photos will give a new feel to the display area. Everyone really enjoys looking at photos and reminiscing about the special times shared together. It is what makes your home yours. Just remember ... you should love your home and the times you spend together in it. Now is the time to channel your inner stylist and add that personal touch to make your den the living space you've always dreamed of. ■

*Candice Adler is the owner and designer of Candice Adler Design in Cherry Hill, NJ, [candiceadlerdesign.com](http://candiceadlerdesign.com), 856-216-8170, serving South Jersey, Philadelphia, and the surrounding area.*

