

A modern living room with a white sofa, a wooden coffee table, and a chandelier. The room features a white sofa with yellow and white striped pillows and two round white pillows. A wooden coffee table with a glass top holds a dark vase and a bowl of decorative stones. A chandelier with three white globe shades hangs from the ceiling. In the background, a kitchen with white cabinets and a stainless steel sink is visible.

Sizes. How to
Get Them
Right: Table
lamps, area
rugs and
chandeliers.

Sizes. How to Get Them Right: Table lamps, area rugs and chandeliers.

Using what you know about proportion and scale, choosing the right size for some room elements becomes easier. And you know that this decorating thing isn't guess-work, there are guidelines, principles, standards and even a few rules. So here we go on three of the most commonly missed size selections: Table lamps, area rugs, and chandeliers.

First of all, a bit of snobby insider-speak. Technically, a lamp is the bulb. It is held in a fixture which has a base and onto which a shade is attached. So, just beware of this when you go 'fixture' shopping. You and your salesperson may be speaking two different languages. For the most part, though, the public refers to the whole arrangement as a lamp.

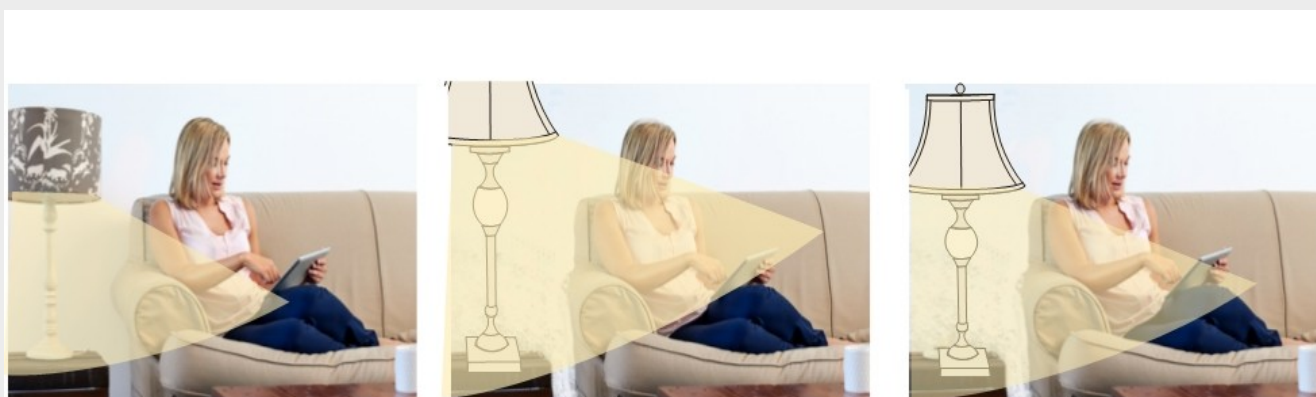


Table lamps.

The basic guideline. Please don't ignore this one truism for selecting a table lamp which is: *the bottom of the shade should be at eye level to the person sitting at the table.* How does this work for an end-table lamp beside

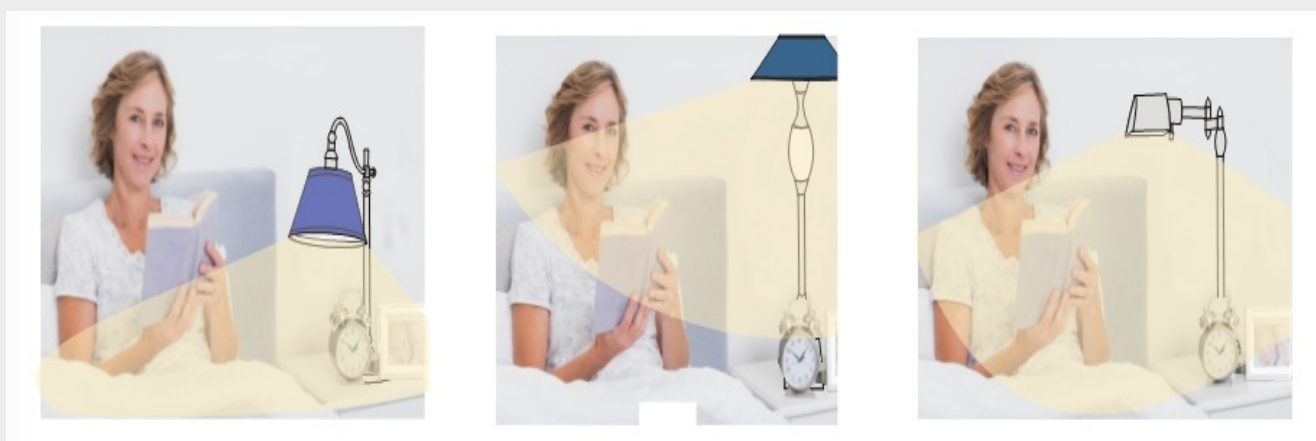
a sofa or chair? Easy. Sit down. Measure from the table surface to your eye level. That's the bottom of the base to bottom of shade measurement you should look for on your lamp. (Try for a shade whose diameter across the bottom edge is about half the width of the table.)

Sizes. How to Get Them Right: Table lamps, area rugs and chandeliers.



Of course, there will be differing measurements for taller or shorter people in your family, so find a happy medium. For example: If someone is six feet tall, and a child four feet tall, and you are in the middle, use your measurement.

This same guideline applies to bedside tables. Sit in the bed with a book on your lap, just as you would if you were reading at night. The bottom of the shade should be at your eye level. If it's too low, the whole page won't be lit, if it's too tall, the glare will hit you side-ways.



Sizes. How to Get Them Right: Table lamps, area rugs and chandeliers.

And this is a great trick if you are shopping and don't have your tape measure with you. Put your elbow on the table, extend your forearm up toward the top of the piece. The top of your fingers is really close to your eye level. (This tidbit came from a florist who uses this guideline for choosing floral pieces which must NOT be at eye level, such as dining room table pieces.)

Sometimes it's only a matter of an inch or so to the perfect height of the perfect fixture. Change the height by building up the base. Put solid book or two under the base, or cut a piece of wood to the exact size and paint or finish it in the same color as the base.

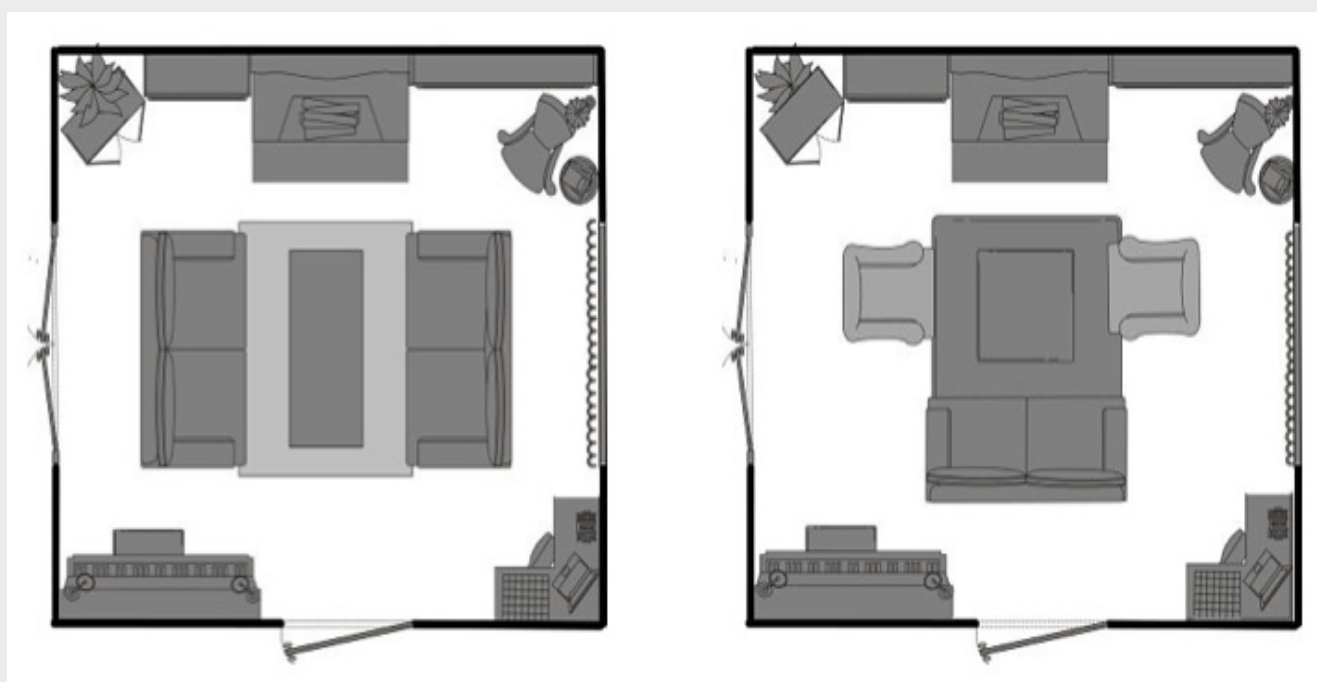
Area rugs.



Some designers are adamant: a floor plan is THE most important part of decorating a room. As well as telling you where to place your furniture, among other things, it shows you what size your area rug should be.

Sizes. How to Get Them Right: Table lamps, area rugs and chandeliers.

If you don't have a floor plan, you will be working with a tape measure and the floor, rather than a ruler and a piece of paper. If you don't have a floor plan, think about either making one or having one made before you do your next furniture or decor change.



It will also save you money – you won't make size or balance mistakes.

The shape of an area rug should mimic the shape of the space it occupies. A square opening in front of a sectional or sofa and two chairs, for example, suggests a square area rug. If two sofas or love seats are placed facing each other, with a rectangular coffee table between, the rug needs to be rectangular.

Sizes. How to Get Them Right: Table lamps, area rugs and chandeliers.

Furniture should sit on the rug. If the sofa is against the wall, the rug should extend under the front feet by at least eight inches. Wherever possible, side chairs should sit on the rug.

Now you know the shape of the rug best suited to your room. Measure the size it must occupy, including the part under the furniture, and you have the right size for the space.

This same method applies to dining room area rugs with the exception that the rug must be wide and long enough to allow pulled out chairs to say fully on the rug. This is about 36 inches from the table edge but is dependent on the chair size. Pull the chair away from the table as if you were to sit in it. Measure from the table edge to the back of the chair. Add an inch or two for ease, and that is the distance you need on each side and end of the table.

With both rooms, be very aware of traffic flow, too. If the corners of a rug fall in the traffic flow path, consider an oval, round or octagonal rug instead. But remember that oval, round and octagonal tend to promote a more formal mood.

Sizes. How to Get Them Right: Table lamps, area rugs and chandeliers.

Chandeliers



We don't all have chandeliers, the marvelous glittery things, but many of us have hanging fixtures, some all one piece, some with arms. But the method of size calculation is the same for all.

Add the width of the room, in feet, to the length of the room in feet. The result is the number of inches of diameter your fixture should be. For the length of the chandelier: Allow 2 to 3 inches for each foot of wall height. For example, in a 9-foot room, the chandelier should be 18 to 27 inches long.

Hang the chandelier so the bottom is no less than 30 inches from the table surface in a dining room and no less than 7 feet from the floor in a hallway or stairwell. These guidelines will affect the length of the piece, so adjust accordingly.

Sizes. How to Get Them Right: Table lamps, area rugs and chandeliers.



Consider that a stairwell has a perceived wall height of two stories and calculate the length of the chandelier accordingly. Two-story entries should be treated similarly.

As always, there are provisos to these guidelines:

Calculate the diameter of multiple chandeliers over a focal point by dividing the diameter of the table by the number of hanging chandeliers plus 1. For example, a

table 54 inches wide partnered with two chandeliers needs them to be 18 inches in diameter, hung 18 inches apart over the center of the table. If you want three fixtures, they would be 14 in diameter and 14 inches apart. 'Apart' is center to center.

Sizes. How to Get Them Right: Table lamps, area rugs and chandeliers.



Choose a rectangular chandelier for a rectangular table that is in keeping with the proportions of the table. For example, for a table that is 54 inches wide and 72 inches long, the diameter should be 27 inches. Subtract 27 inches from the length of the table for the result of a length of 45 inches. The rectangular chandelier best proportioned to this table would be 27 inches wide and 45 inches long.

If you want to hang a fixture over a conversation area in an open concept room, which is centered around a table or area rug, use half the table width as the diameter guideline for a fixture over a table, and the length and width of the area rug added together and called inches as the fixture diameter over an area rug.

And there you have it.

Sizes. How to Get Them Right: Table lamps, area rugs and chandeliers.

Sources for all photos:

woman sitting on sofa reading: Copyright: semmickphoto / 123RF Stock Photo Chandeliers over table: Copyright: kuprin28 / 123RF Stock Photo

cover of living room Copyright: kuprin28 / 123RF Stock Photo

second sofa lamp Copyright: warrengoldswain / 123RF Stock Photo

bed lamp reading Copyright: wavebreakmediamicro / 123RF Stock Photo

black and white kitchen Copyright: bialasiewicz / 123RF Stock Photo

Shag area rug Copyright: worldwidestock / 123RF Stock Photo

Shag area rug Copyright: worldwidestock / 123RF Stock Photo