

TEXT MARTHA UNIACKE BREEN
PHOTOGRAPHY LAUREN MILLER

When the temperature dips, nothing beats curling up by a fire in a room that exudes coziness. Melanie Hay, designer of this elegant but relaxed open-concept space, shares her advice on decorating for warmth.



DESIGN, Melanie Hay Design. PAINT, Cosmopolitan CSP-100 (wainscoting and trim), Muslin OC-12 (upper walls), Benjamin Moore. SECTIONAL SOFA, Modern Komfort. ARMCHAIRS, CB2. Basket-weave CUBE OTTOMANS, HEXAGONAL OTTOMANS, MIRROR, Wayfair. FLOOR LAMP, round COFFEE TABLE, UPHOLSTERED BENCH, Crate and Barrel. RUG, THROW, Pottery Barn. Large VASE (on pedestal), West Elm. PEDESTAL, Bettencourt Manor. PILLOWS, VASE (with greenery), Celadon ARTWORK, Elte Mkt.

Comforting THOUGHTS



Tip #1

NO MUSS, NO FUSS This living room is elegant enough for entertaining, but there's nothing that's too delicate, fussy or hard to clean. Spills can be wiped from most surfaces; pillows are washable or easily replaced; and, with a toddler in the house, almost nothing is breakable. "When you come home, you want to be able to relax, kick off your shoes, put your feet up and not have to worry about the furniture," advises designer Melanie Hay.

Tip #2

SOFT & SOOTHING Earthy, natural tones and textures make a room feel instantly familiar, cozy and inviting. Take your colour cues from nature – cinnamon, terracotta, stone, wood, sand, mossy green, even sky blue. Texture is also key to this room's comfort: the nubby feel of the throw and rug; the comfy upholstered armchairs; the subtle veining of the coffee table's marble top. For a final touch, piles of toss cushions in a spectrum of earthy colours bring even more texture in materials like velvet, silk, cotton, linen and wool.





“At the beginning, visualize how you want the space to feel and use that vision to guide every decorating decision you make.”

DINING TABLE, Article. **WINDSOR CHAIRS**, Urban Barn. Small **SIDECHAIR**, Design Within Reach. **DRAPERIES, BLINDS**, Melanie Hay Design. Capri **SCONCE** in Aged Iron, **CHANDELIER**, Generation Lighting. **MARBLE TRAY**, Elte. **CANDELABRA**, Shop by Sarah Birnie Interiors. Black and white figurative **PHOTOGRAPH**, Elte Mkt.

Tip #3

A COLOURFUL LIFE “Don’t be afraid to put colour on your walls. I’ve come to realize there are a lot of nuances in colourful walls,” says Melanie. In this case, the choice of painting the upper walls in a sophisticated linen shade with a slightly darker greige for the wainscot and woodwork raises the profile of the trim and imparts a romantic old-world feeling. Says Melanie: “It also helps to bring the whole room together, even though there is a lot going on here.”

Tip #4

LAYERS OF MEANING Think in terms of layering. Melanie tossed pillows and a nubby throw onto the sofa; devised soft but neatly proportioned treatments for the windows and sliding door; and added layers of lighting. “You need overhead lighting, but shaded lamps for different areas are important, too, for task lighting and to create zones,” she says. “A second chandelier over the dining table would have been too much, so we added wall sconces instead, which makes the dining area feel like its own space.”

