

# Ep #16: How to Decorate Your Open Concept Floorplan Successfully



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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## Ep #16: How to Decorate Your Open Concept Floorplan Successfully

You are listening to episode 16 of the *Decorate Like a Design Boss* podcast. And this week we'll be discussing open concept floor plans. These floor plans are currently all the rage but they can be difficult to decorate. But after today you'll have more tools in your toolbox for handling this type of project. So, grab that pen and paper if you aren't driving and get ready to take notes as I share with you my top tips for success with your open concept floor plan. So here we go.

Welcome to *Decorate Like a Design Boss*, a podcast for design lovers who want to create beautiful spaces in their very own homes. My name is Kimberly Grigg and I'm a professional interior designer who teaches design lovers like yourselves how to decorate. And when I say decorate I mean decorate like a design boss. If you're ready to create a space that your family loves and your neighbors can't stop raving about well, buckle up honey because it's time to design.

Hello there, my fabulous design divas. I have an announcement for you. We have added a monthly Design Diva Deep Dive Party to our repertoire of benefits for our interior design Insiders Club. Our Insiders Club is a group of likeminded design enthusiasts like yourselves who love learning to become their own interior designers of their own spaces. The membership program contains over 100 hours of video training covering every topic imaginable in the design world.

Members also get my interior design superstar course which is a fundamentals course all about how to create your own designs in your own spaces. And now we've added a monthly live Zoom call which we refer to as the Design Diva Deep Dive Party. Each month I conduct this live call where members get to have one-on-one time with me. It's like your own consultation. And I answer questions about your specific design dilemmas. It's a really deep and specific dive and it's a lot of fun.

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The members are loving getting to know one another in this way. And of course, inside the private Facebook group. If you're interested in the membership and this Design Diva Deep Dive Party, well, simply head over to [kimberlygriggedesigns.com](http://kimberlygriggedesigns.com) and sign up to participate.

So, in today's episode I want to talk about open concept floor plans and how to decorate one successfully. This episode is for you if you struggle with what to do about color in an open concept plan, how to determine rug choices in the various individual spaces within this very large space. How to furnish and accessorize the spaces cohesively and what to do about the various windows that are a part of this open concept floor plan.

So first let's start with what an open concept floor plan is. Around 15 or so years ago builders began to introduce open style plans and over the years they've become quite popular. The plans typically were embraced to promote open spaces and gathering. These plans incorporate rooms that flow into one another without much separation. Often columns or islands will serve as the only means of separation so that all the rooms are very connected to one another.

Usually this encompasses a kitchen, usually an eating kitchen area, a separate dining area or space, a living space which may or may not be a formal type living room. And often and sometimes even one more space which is typically a family room. All of these rooms connect and are open to one another. I have worked with plans that only have one dining area and plans that eliminate the second living type space. But for the most part there is very little separation within these spaces. These plans are extremely popular but they can also prove challenging to decorate.

I receive similar questions about this topic over and over. So today I'm going to focus on each question that I most often get and offer you some solutions that I have found have worked well to solve these design dilemmas.

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The first question I often receive is what to do about wall color in this type of space. People want to know, do I have to paint everything the same color? Can I paint each space a different color to give each space its own individuality and personality? What if I want to use wallpaper in one of the spaces? Is it best to paint everything one shade or is this going to get boring and am I going to get tired of this color? So, here's my advice on how to achieve success with color in this type of space.

As usual the first step is assessment. Are there break points or what I refer to as start stops within the space? If there are solid demarcations and separation within the space then you have some opportunity to vary your color scheme or wall coverings. You can successfully add wallpaper that flows nicely within your color palette if there are these start stop moments or points within the space. This can be displayed in the form of many walls, columns and/or moldings.

Anything that separates the room or space even if a start stop should be clearly defined. This can be achieved by some specific decorative items that separate the space. Again, look for columns, varying ceilings, moldings or perhaps even many walls.

Next, you want to assess any elephants in the space you are not willing to change. For example, are there bookcases, built-ins of some sort, a fireplace, kitchen cabinets? If these elements are remaining then you need to consider that your paint color or colors are going to need to be compatible with this material. For example, if you have a stone fireplace then you will want to consider a color scheme that works well with the stone, which is typically going to be color or colors in the warm family.

If you have white cabinetry or architectural features then you can consider cooler tones. If you have wood cabinetry and features and elephants, well, you most likely will want to stay in the warm families if you're not willing to change these specific elements. Or as I like to say, if you're not willing to

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change the elephants. As you are assessing this make sure that all of your features within the space are harmonious and that they go together well.

For example, if you have that stone fireplace and warm toned woodwork then you are a-okay and are presenting a unified look. Unity is the key in an open floor plan concept. If, however you have that stone fireplace and white, white cabinetry the look and feel of the space will be off and you'll need to consider either warming up the cabinetry or painting the fireplace. The main thing to remember in an open concept plan when it comes to color is that unity is key and it's important to have elements that work well together. I refer to this as getting the bones right.

Now, back to your questions. Once you have assessed you can go about approaching color and specifically what will go where. If there are no clear separation points then you will need to paint all the walls the same shade. If you have clear separation points then you can vary your shades a bit and you can even add elements like wallpaper. You will however want to stay within the same color family. Open concept floor plans are like family. They can be individual but they need to fit together.

I like to pick one shade that works well with the architectural elements of the space. Then I might add a little wallpaper that coordinates beautifully to the entry and/or dining area again, depending on the separation points. And then I might deepen the shade a little as I travel through the space. I make the space that I want to draw you into the darkest of the shades as a general formula. This really provides cohesion and will make sure that the rooms flow seamlessly throughout the space.

I have often used a significantly darker shade of the main wall color, or kitchen cabinets, or a complementary dark shade and placed that shade on cabinets and built-in cabinetry. This is not only dramatic but it's quite chic as well.

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Another question that I recently received about open concept floor plans is what if I'm moving into an open concept plan and I have casual furniture from my previous family room and I have formal furniture from some of the other spaces that I had in my previous home like the dining room? Can I blend these? And if so, how? Again, an assessment of the space will typically reveal the answer.

If there are significant points of separation and a formal type living and dining space coupled with a kitchen and casual living area. Then you can use your formal furnishings in the more formal areas and easily incorporate your casual pieces in the family room and breakfast spaces even though they open up to one another. If not you can perhaps blend the two together by using a juxtaposition technique.

I typically achieve this by using one of your formal pieces with a casual piece. And then I use abstract artwork to blend the two styles together. This is tricky and it doesn't always work. But I have had some success by employing this technique. I have also painted the more formal furniture so that it appears more casual as typically open concept floor plans are a bit more casual than formal spaces. I have also lacquered very traditional furniture which is painting it in a high gloss finish.

I once painted every formal furniture piece high gloss white and the effect was magical. And it helped to blur the lines of formal and informal. And it was a way that we could incorporate the furnishings that the client already owned into their new style of living.

Rugs in an open concept floor plan can be problematic and confusing. Should they be the same? Should they be different? How do I determine the size? The answers can of course vary, however in general you'll want to use this as a guideline. Make sure that all of the rugs are married to one another but that they also are individual. In other words, the rugs need to have a relationship and they need to interact well with one another.

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Keep your rugs similar in their feel, however if there are more formal spaces within the open concept plan then you can use dressier rugs in the more formal spaces. However, they should still be in the same color family. There should always be a bit of a common denominator and the rugs should coordinate together nicely. As for size, you'll treat each space individually and select an appropriately sized rug for the individual space even though you will visually see the rug from many angles throughout the open concept plan.

A general good rule of thumb is that at least the front legs of any of the upholstery pieces of furniture within the space should be able to rest on the rug.

And of course, no topic is questioned more in an open concept plan than window treatments. Many wonder should my window treatments be the same and the same style on every window in the space? Should I use the same fabric? Should I use the exact same style throughout? The answer to this question is akin to many answers to design questions. Well, here we go again, it all depends. It depends on where the windows are located and what the points of separation within the overall space are like.

If you have some division you can vary a bit. But if your rooms are really connected and open to one another then you do need to use the same fabric and style at each of the windows. The exception to this is when I have several windows that are running through the space especially if all of the windows are the same type of windows. But if a window has a different shape and a different set of circumstances within the space then you can vary both the style and the fabric to achieve a cohesive result.

But you can also use the same fabric and vary the style of the treatment. This often occurs in windows, for example, in the breakfast nook, often there is a logical reason within the space to vary the style and/or fabric in the various areas. Things like banquettes, shapes of the windows and quite

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simply that often people don't want a whole lot of fabric around their eating areas especially if the space is small.

Often formal dining rooms in an open concept space has a little separation and it is often in the form of columns. It is perfectly suitable to vary your treatment here. A general good rule of thumb is to keep the window treatments consistent if the windows are all on the same wall and if they are exactly alike within the space and there is little to no separation.

If the windows are different but are still visible to one another, but it is clearly a part of another space then you can vary the treatments as long as the style of the treatments and the fabric coordinates well with the remainder of the other treatments.

And finally, a question that I often hear is, I am moving from cozy and intimate to this open floor plan. And I'm starting to feel a little bit lost in here and I'm not sure how I can warm things up a bit to feel more intimate. I miss my cozy but love the functionality of my open concept plan. What can I do? My answer to this is, well, quite simply you need to nest. It's a little harder with an open concept plan, however it is possible.

First you need to think of ways to warm your space up a bit. This is generally accomplished by pillows, throws, books, warmer tones in your décor. Make sure to include drapery in your décor and not just blinds, shutters or topper treatments. You need to create some coziness and these items go a long, long way. Consider using stacks of books and maybe even develop a style that has a bit of a more is more reflection, of course that is if your design DNA will accept it.

If you need more information on your own design DNA, well, then head over to episodes one, two and three to discover yours. In these circumstances think about what feels like home to you. Things such as picture frames, chandeliers, warm lamplight and plenty of them. And

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collage walls of art that you love are all ideas on how to cozy it up. And most importantly, bring those ceilings, which is what I like to call the fifth wall, into play. Bring them down and make them a part of the space. I assure you treating the fifth wall is like adding instant coziness.

So, what can we take away from today's lesson? Open floor plans can be magical but they also can be daunting. By breaking down the obstacles in an open concept floor plan you are now equipped to embrace all of the positive reasons that the open concept floor plan appealed to you for in the first place. I say don't throw in the towel but instead use these tips and tricks to incorporate style, function and beauty into your rooms in a perfect but doable way.

Okay, we are at the end of episode 16 and I want to take a minute to encourage you to sign up for our Design Diva Deep Dive Party. You'll be so happy to get to know other members in our Insiders Club. But you'll also get a live dose of me helping you solve your own very design dilemmas. Sign up over at [kimberlygriggdesigns.com](http://kimberlygriggdesigns.com). So, it's getting ready to be a bye for now. But first I like to say, don't wait, today is a great day to decorate. Kisses, kisses and lots of hugs and I'll see you next week for another episode. Bye for now.

Thanks for listening to *Decorate Like a Design Boss*, if you want more info on how to decorate your space like a pro visit [kimberlygriggdesigns.com](http://kimberlygriggdesigns.com). See you next week.