



How To Incorporate Patterns And Textures Into Your Space

A strategic approach to patterns and textures brings depth and intrigue to any space, one designer says.

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Pattern and texture are subtle-yet-deliberate design elements that can take a space to the next level by breaking up convention and providing energy. To help you achieve the eye-catching depth you desire in your home, [ESTATENVY](#) caught up with Paul Schulman, custom furniture maker, designer and owner of [Paul Schulman Design](#), to learn how to approach pattern and texture with the proper attentiveness and consideration required to elevate the attractiveness of your home without going overboard.

Considering color is imperative when incorporating a pattern or texture into a space. “As much as you can play with these characteristics, you have to make sure a color makes sense in a space,” Schulman said. Failing to take color into account can make a room “discordant,” according to Schulman, who stressed the importance of keeping a relationship between items

in a space. “Matching everything 100 percent isn’t the answer, but some continuity must exist,” he said.

“Seeking out patterns with colors being used elsewhere in a room allows the patterned piece, whether it be a rug, throw pillow, or accent chair, to act as a bridge that brings unrelated things together to feel related,” Schulman noted.

Texture can be used in a similar way, especially in more modern spaces. “Texture’s main function is not to pull things in, but make them more interesting,” Schulman said, adding, “A textured pillow brings just the necessary amount of depth so everything doesn't feel the same way.” He noted a stark, contemporary all-white layout only works when interesting textures are incorporated and play off one another in a compelling way.

Making the point that something being devoid of pattern still is, in fact, a pattern, Schulman recommended layering to expand the scope of a room’s design by mixing solids, textures and patterns. “You can include some of all of these things as long as there is a calculated measure of how much of each,” he noted, mentioning chairs, upholstery, tables and wall color as good places for variance among these things.

Keeping this in mind helps design novices avoid the use of too many patterns in a single space. “The more patterns you try to incorporate, the bigger the design challenge you have,” Schulman said. “A good rule of thumb when mixing patterns is that you want scales to be different.” Scale means the size of the repeating aspect of a given pattern.

“A bunch of different patterns all scaled the same doesn’t look good, but when scaled smaller or larger, it can be interesting,” Schulman said. Ultimately, his recommendation is to avoid incorporating multiple patterns into a space, noting, “a couple complemented with a solid works better than three to four patterns, which is really hard to get right.”

When tackling the challenge of incorporating patterns and textures into your space, Schulman suggested thinking about clothes and music as metaphors for design principles. “Music is most intriguing when there is difference and depth. Matching and identical detail makes a song (and a room) fall flat,” he noted.

“Every morning when you get dressed,” he continued, “You’re thinking about pairing pieces together more than you may think.” He used the example of wearing a white shirt and making the decision to put on a pair of shoes with white on them. “That’s exactly what you're trying to do with textures and pattern,” Schulman said. “Find some continuity, and now you’ve got a launch point for the unpredictable.”