

At-Home Fitness  
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# home

## A Space for Serenity

Top tips on creating a harmonious  
environment for inner peace

By Rona Berg

Miraval Life in Balance  
Spa in Tucson, Arizona

There is, perhaps, no one in the world more renowned for creating blissfully serene environments than the Irish-born, U.S.-based designer Clodagh ([clodagh.com](http://clodagh.com)), pictured at right. Her elegant, nature-inspired, always-sustainable imprint can be seen on top spas, restaurants and cultural destinations from the Miraval Life in Balance Spa to Six Senses Douro Valley to New York's Landmarc Restaurant and the Museum of Modern Art.

For a place to feel serene and promote wellness, says Clodagh, "It's not just about styling, it is about function and simplicity. It requires addressing all the senses and the spirit as well as incorporating all the elements. Here are her top tips."

### 1 CHOOSE A COLOR

Look at the inner video we all carry around to help you focus on your nostalgia of places and rooms that have brought you joy in the past. A color will often attend this memory: ochre from Umbria, a singing scarlet from Mexico, beach colors from wet sand to shell to ocean or a quiet monochromatic room with lovely textures.

Use these memories as inspiration for selecting the room's palette, as well as materials, including fabrics, wall treatments

and flooring. Through the careful application of colors and materials, you'll create a harmonious home, and that energy will suffuse your mind and body.



### 2 RELY ON FENG SHUI

Believe in Feng Shui, the ancient Chinese art of placement, whereby homes are seen as direct extensions of the people who live in them. If you have a messy house, your life will also be messy. It is harder to think with a mind that is suffocated by clutter.

Set aside times to do a purge. Having a friend there will help, and maybe a good bottle of wine. Nothing gets thrown out, it just goes to a thrift shop or gets donated. Keep what you need and nothing more.

### 3 ENGAGE THE SENSES

Our senses anchor us in the present, and they are important to home design because awareness of our physical senses makes us inhabit our homes more fully. Good design appeals to all five senses—touch, sight, smell, sound and taste—by placing things pleasurable to each throughout the rooms.

Sight occupies more than 70 percent of your brain. Susan Sontag once said that "Sight is a promiscuous sense. The



Left: W Fort Lauderdale guest room;  
Right: East, Miami Hotel, Bay King Bathroom.



PHOTO: CATERINA WILSON

## “Keep what you need and nothing more than what you need.”

avid gaze always wants more.” So honor touch with a soft throw, a cast bronze, a burnished wood table, and smell with a gamut of your favorite fragrances. Load the music you love, and take off your shoes when you get home so that your feet can explore the floor while you keep street grime at the door.

### 4 FRAME YOUR MEMORIES

Photographs in frames scattered among different rooms create a crowded feeling that can disturb the sense of sanctuary. Instead, consolidate your favorites; frame them in matching frames or pin images half an inch apart in a cluster that I call a memory wall. I also love digital frames so that you can browse slowly through your collection of visual memories.

### 5 KEEP YOUR KITCHEN CENTERED

The kitchen is the hearth of the house, especially if you have no fireplace. People gather there. Keep surfaces clear and fresh. A basket of vegetables always looks good. A kitchen is where your taste buds run wild. I collect spices whenever I travel and delve into the nostalgia of taste when I cook.

Use only glass containers for storage in the fridge and take time to prep your

veggies as this makes it easier to cook a healthy dinner when you are tired in the evening. I always have at least six containers of prepared fruit and vegetables and an equal quantity in the freezer. Even if someone pops in for an unexpected meal, you can serenely throw together a stir-fry. Good chocolate in the freezer, a couple of nice bottles of wine on hand, and dinner is served.

### 6 MAKE A MIND/BODY CONNECTION

A bathroom is a workshop where you come face-to-face with your real unvarnished body. Keep an array of essential oils to address any emotional or physical issues, and a large jar of Epsom salts to soak away your aches.

Line up your products in the order of use, and skip the dim sum menu of 50 varieties. Choose a brand you like and stick with it. A citrine is a cleansing crystal so place one on your vanity.

### 7 SIMPLIFY THE BEDROOM

Bedrooms have two main functions and that does not include television.

First, put your bed in the right Feng Shui position. If in doubt, buy *Interior Design with Feng Shui* by Sarah Rossbach. Keep television out of the bedroom or, if

you are challenged by living in a small studio and cannot place it elsewhere, put it in a cabinet with a door that closes so it is not the last thing you see before you go to sleep and the first thing you see when you wake up.

Invest in a good organic mattress, great pillows (both soft and hard) and organic sheets. If you read in bed, place good reading lights on either side on bedside tables. You may spend at least a quarter of your 24 hours there, so be good to yourself.

### 8 TRANSFORM THE VESTIBULE

Treat yourself as a guest in your own home. A welcome in your vestibule is like a hug.

Try a mirror, fresh flowers or a plant and a basket for mail or keys on a small console or a vast one. Leave your favorite fragrant candle there, as it will scent the air even if not lit. I love the grounding perfume of sandalwood.

### 9 MAKE DINING SIMPLE

Have large platters or bowls—mine are in wood and ceramic—so that you can eat on the patio or at the table without fuss or muss.