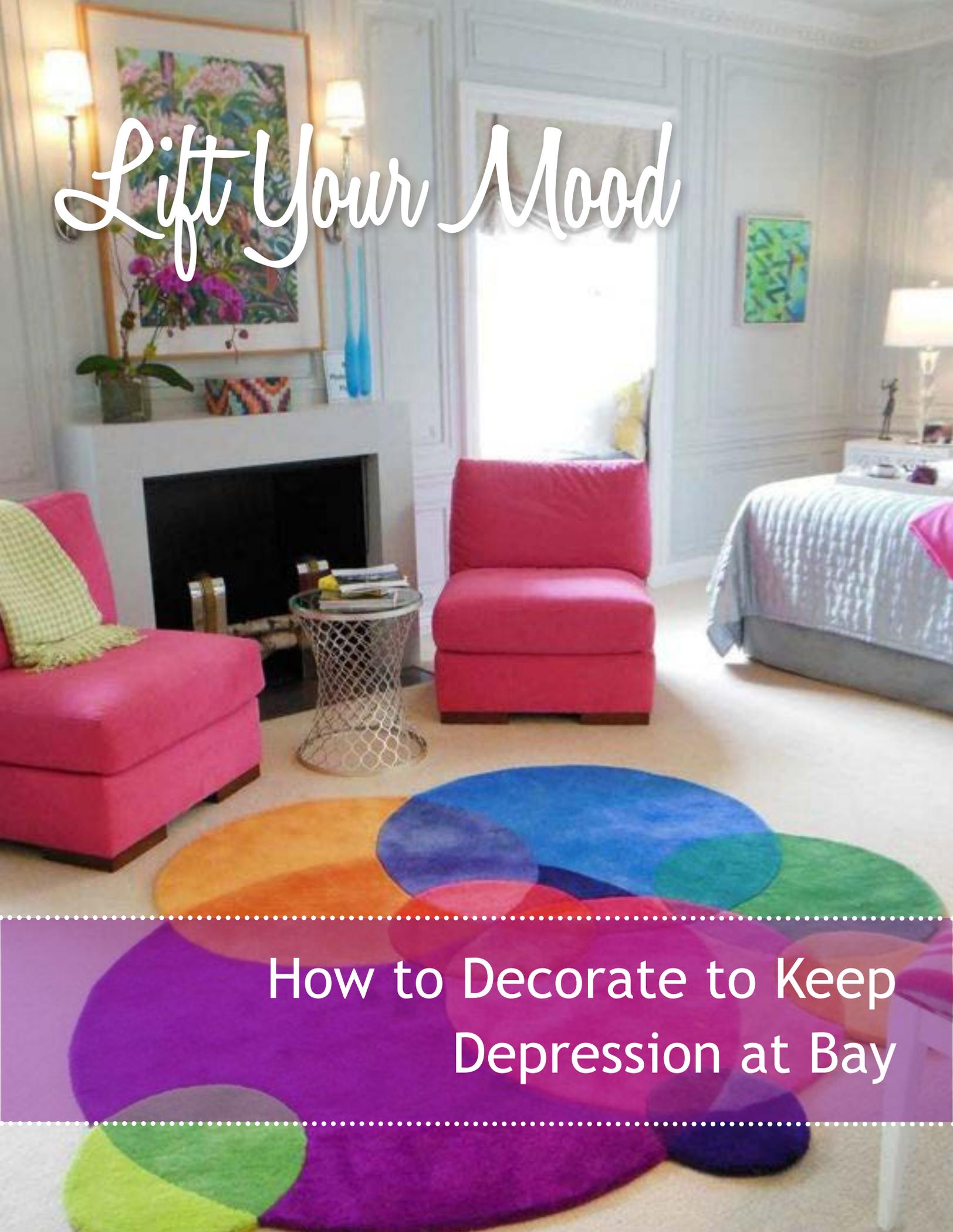


Lift Your Mood



How to Decorate to Keep
Depression at Bay

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Intro

If you suffer from depression, whether it be major depressive disorder or seasonal affect disorder, you may want to consider changing up your decor in the rooms you spend a lot of time in (bedroom, family room, kitchen) to help lift your mood, or enlist a friend or family member to help.



Styling a space that is comforting to you and lifts your mood involves a variety of factors, including color, textures, light, shapes, patterns, and space.

Mood

If your depression depletes you of energy, you may want to incorporate orange or pink into your decor. Choose pieces that create a sense of movement: round pillows, rug with crystalline patterns, rippled glass.



If you tend to be nervous and anxious, design your space with plenty of blues, greens, or soft purples, curved or floral shapes, and hints of nature.

Colors

We all know that certain colors can affect our mood and influence our behavior...McDonalds has used bright red and yellow since the dawn of their existence to lure people in for a quick bite. Why? Because red and yellow are considered to be energizing colors, and bright red can stimulate the appetite.

Soft blues and lavenders on the other hand are typically associated with feeling peaceful and relaxed; these colors are often used in bedrooms and bathrooms to create a sense of calm.



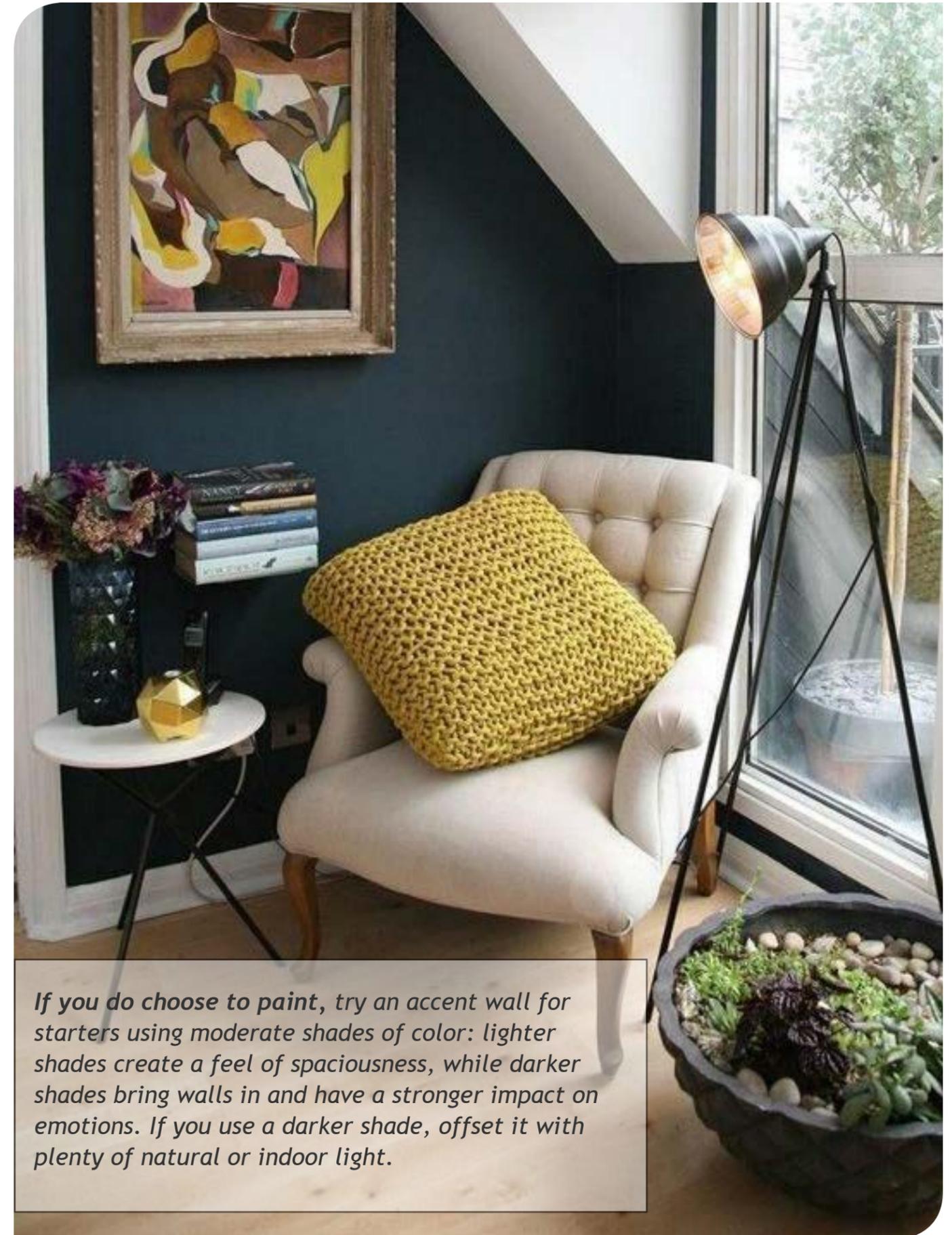
Opt out of painting and go with neutrals (beiges, tans, grays, whites) in the largest elements in the space...walls, furniture, rugs...and then add pops of color through pictures, vases, pillows, a piece of furniture.

Add color carefully and sparingly

Warm colors...reds, oranges, yellows...are warm and inviting...but in darker shades, they can overstimulate the senses. Too much yellow can trigger feelings of anger and frustration.



Cool colors...blues, greens, and purples...are calming and peaceful, but in darker shades, may cause feelings of sadness and isolation.



If you do choose to paint, try an accent wall for starters using moderate shades of color: lighter shades create a feel of spaciousness, while darker shades bring walls in and have a stronger impact on emotions. If you use a darker shade, offset it with plenty of natural or indoor light.

Textures

The way your furniture and accessories look and feel can either provide comfort or create a feeling of isolation. A fluffy pillow or nubby throw can conjure the sensation of that cuddly teddy bear that you hugged for comfort as a child.



The rougher the texture, the more welcoming it will seem: pinecones, quilts, fluffy pillows, nubby throws, rough woods, burlap all convey a message of comfort and warmth.

Smooth textures on the other hand, such as blown glass, silver lamps, and ceramic vases can be elegant but tend to create a formal, aloof feeling.



Lighting

The right type of lighting is crucial to creating a warm, comforting atmosphere. While low wattage and colored bulbs may create an intimate ambiance, bright, clear bulbs (such as a daylight LED) softened by a parchment, gold-toned, or neutral lampshade will be more effective in battling depression.



If you live in an area where sunlight is limited, place halogen lights, which mimic eastern morning daylight, behind a translucent screen to simulate daylight. Or use a light therapy box or dawn simulator.

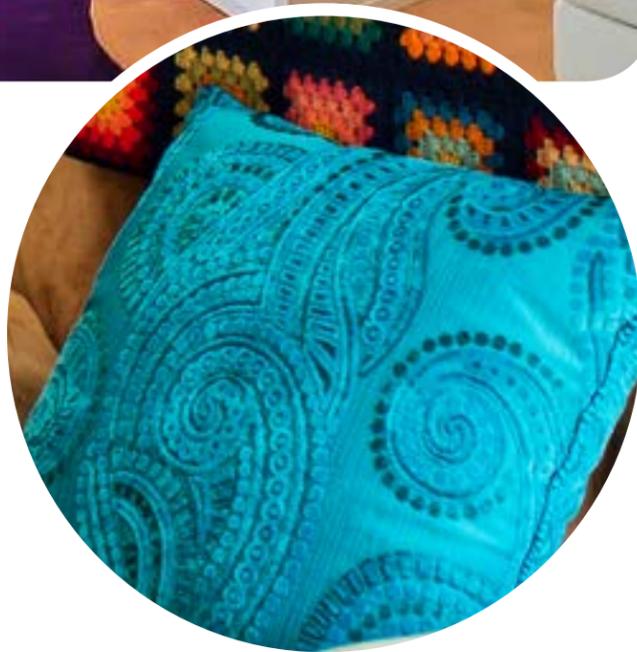
Natural daylight is the best source for easing the effects of depression, providing between 5,000 to 20,000 Lux, depending on whether it's cloudy or sunny. Keep windows uncovered or use sheer curtains to allow in as much daylight as possible.

Shapes

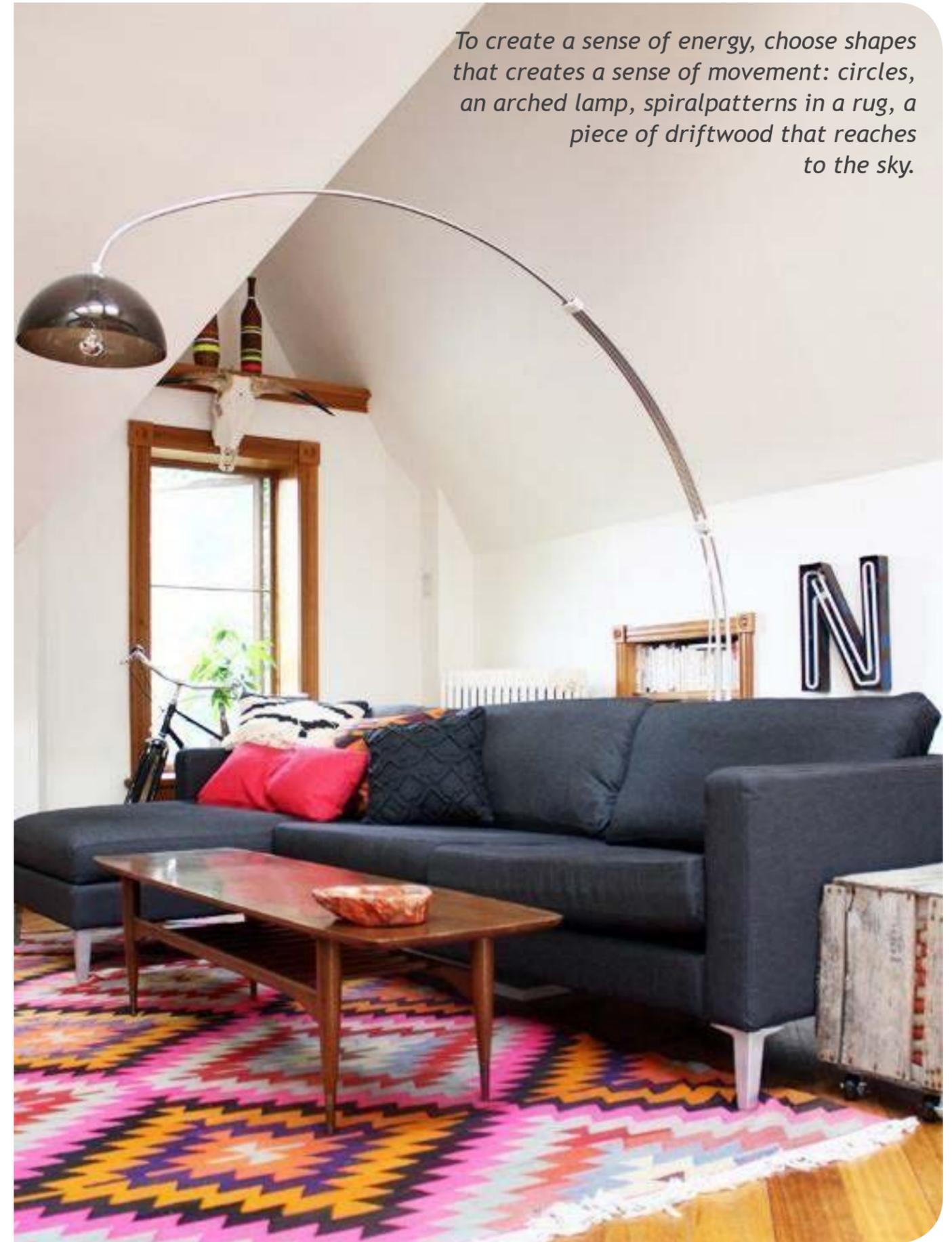
Angular shapes and rigid lines, often prevalent in contemporary design, can sometimes feel off-putting. Soften harsh edges in your contemporary space using circles: round pillows and lamps, circular rugs, and bubble chairs.



For more traditional or rustic decor, soften hard furniture edges by adding curved or floral shapes or patterns: a paisley patterned pillow, a curved lamp or vase, a floral rug.



To create a sense of energy, choose shapes that creates a sense of movement: circles, an arched lamp, spiral patterns in a rug, a piece of driftwood that reaches to the sky.



Nature

Bring the freshness and peace of the outdoors into your space to help dispel a low mood. Displaying hints of nature...shells, pine cones, pieces of wood...even twigs with a piece of ribbon tied around them...is a simple way to lift your spirits and remind you of calm, enjoyable days spent outside.



Green plants are always a great choice as they provide a little extra oxygen and the feeling of have something living close by.



Birds in any form bring a small measure of cheer to any decor. As we focus on these tiny, delightful beings flitting about, our spirits are lifted.



De-cluttering

De-cluttering is an excellent way to lift your mood and relieve the burden of feeling overwhelmed by too much stuff. If a room is too busy, your eye will jump around needlessly, creating a feeling of chaos and lack of control. And always feeling like you have to “neaten up” or being constantly frustrated when you can’t find things you need can increase stress.

Try removing just three items that don't bring you some measure of joy...a picture on the wall, a piece of furniture, or even something as small as a candleholder. Doing this will help you feel you've accomplished something and instantly create a more spacious look.

Keep doing this until the room feels less cluttered and more peaceful.



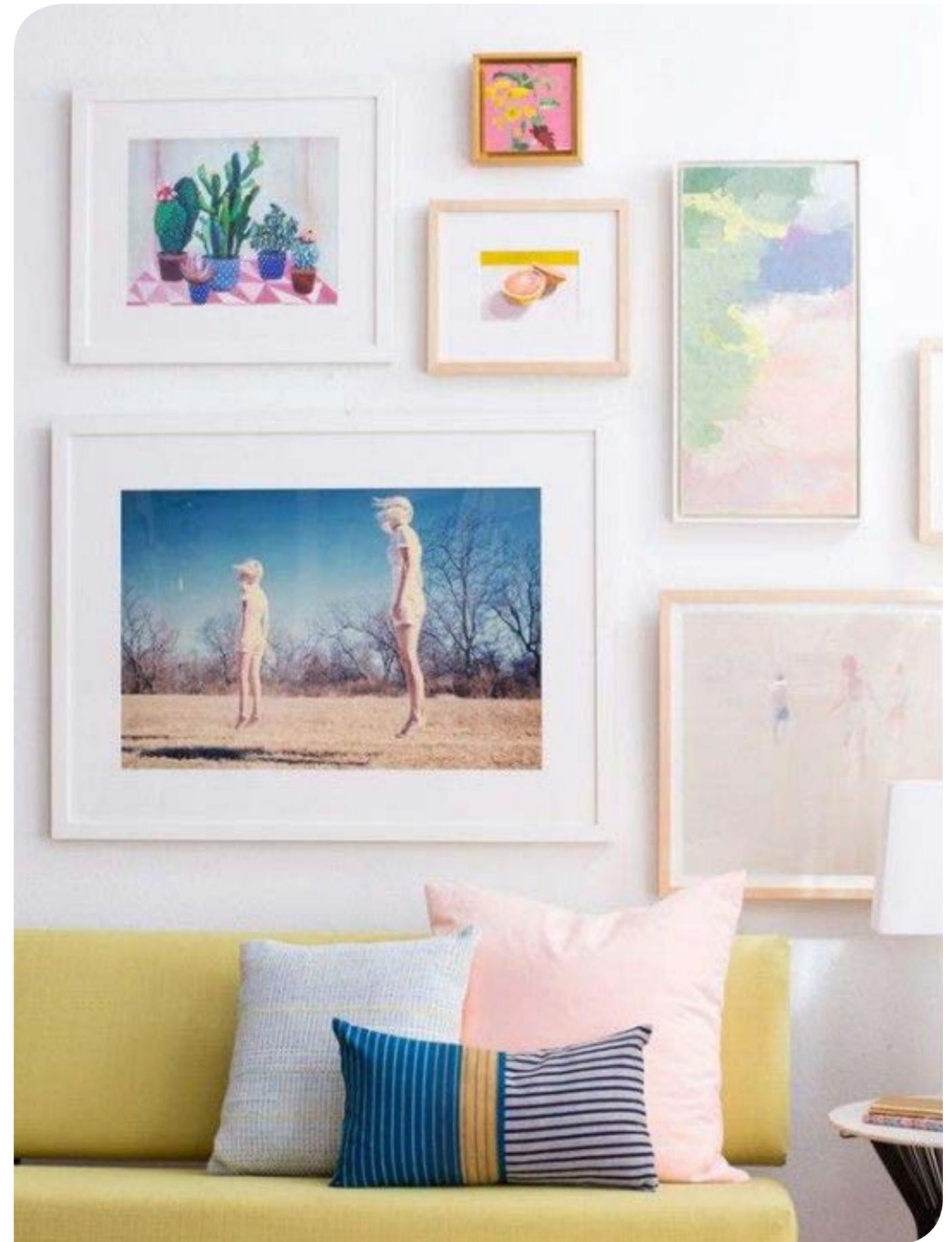
If on the other hand, your place feels too large or stark, trying adding layers: a throw rug on hardwood or carpet, a mix of colorful pillows or a soft throw on the bed can go a long way toward creating a sense of warmth and coziness. Painting one wall a brighter shade than the others will make a large room feel more intimate.



It's All About You



Above all else, make sure that ***you are included*** in the equation of your decor. Your unique personality and style should resonate in your space... seeing the positive aspects of who you are reflected back to you from your surroundings will boost your self-esteem and affirm your value. It could be photographs of a loved one, a gallery of your art or art you love, a treasured gift from a friend, your favorite colors, your prized collection of mugs, anything you've made...all speak of you personally and reinforce the ***important person you are***.



Credits

Page 1: Sonya Winner. Page 3: The Life Creative. Page 4: Better Homes and Gardens; Loczi Design. Page 5: Skona Hem. Page 6: Style at Home. Page 7: Apartment Therapy. Page 8: Villa Paprika; Wax Poetic. Page 9: Pier One Imports; Christine Williams; Page 10: Sonya Winner; Christine Williams. Page 11: Apartment Therapy. Page 12: Vintage Revivals; The Idea Room. Page 13: Shutterfly. Page 14: Urban Outfitters. Page 15: Zillow Digs. The Home Depot. Page 16: Okologi. Page 17: Style by Emily Henderson.

References and Resources

Room Color and How It Affects Your Mood
Color Psychology: How to Make Your Home Feel Good
Five Small Decor Changes That Will Boost Your Mood
Put Down the Paintbrush
5 Ways to Jump-start a Whole-House Decluttering Effort
Light Therapies for Depression