

Ask THE DESIGNER



A tan textured sisal rug blends with the natural flooring, allowing the colored fabrics and the accessories to take center stage in this room.

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Where do I start with a brand new room?

Q • *We have recently moved into a new home and I need help with my family room as far as colors, patterns & fabrics. I have a camel colored chenille sofa that is new and 3 - 4 chairs that need to be recovered. The floors are wood. I need drapery, new furniture fabrics and a rug. Where do I start? How do I select fabrics, so they work together without looking busy? Every time I look at fabrics, I just become more confused. Help!*

A • Starting a new room from scratch, while seemingly a wonderful adventure, can be a very daunting task. You need to have a plan so you can

avoid costly mistakes. While every room and every home is different, there are guidelines you can employ to make the decision process more efficient and manageable.

Through years of experience I have found it best to work from the ground up. It is easier to find fabrics that coordinate with a rug than a rug to coordinate with a specific group of fabrics. For your rug choice start by asking yourself if you want to add color, pattern and style to the room or do you merely want a rug to blend into the floor. If you merely want it to blend, look for a rug that has the same color tones as the wood floor. It can still add appeal by having an interesting texture. If, however, you want the rug to become a focal point, then pick a rug whose colors you love. Next look at the pattern; the rug pattern can set the tone of

the room: symmetrical, formal and plush or asymmetrical, casual with a bold texture.

Once the flooring decision is made, you need to think about your fabrics. It is easier to select fabrics because your rug now has colors which will serve to help you select the fabric colors. Most rooms can handle anywhere from 3 to 6 different fabrics. The key is to have a variety of sizes and scales and to repeat some of the fabrics in more than one place. An easier way to get it right is to start with small, medium and large scale patterned fabrics, each containing multiple coordinating colors. As a rule of thumb, a large scale has a pattern or design that is 10" or larger; a medium scale fabric has a design of 5 - 10"; and a small scale is 1 - 5" in size. Then select one to three solid fabrics as needed. Many solids have patterns