

## ASK THE DESIGNER: Repurposing

Repurposing your formal dining or living room

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?We hardly use our dining room for formal entertaining and I feel like the space is just sitting empty. Do you have any suggestions on how to repurpose the room??

Many people entertain more casually and don't have the use for formal dining and living rooms anymore. Some sit empty and others collect dust on the existing formal furniture.

?I always, always tell my clients to design your home based on your lifestyle. The more thought and planning you put into the layout and space, the more benefit you'll reap. Now that you've decided to repurpose your formal dining room (or living room) you should start this important planning stage. What do you wish you had more room for in the house? Do you find yourself complaining about the layout of a certain room? What is it that you don't like about it? Are you using the kitchen island as a food prep zone/office/craft station/place to hang out with your family? Do any of those activities require their own area? Would you be happier if there was a delegated area for this? Below are some creative ways to redefine your spaces:

With school and work back on and in full swing, many of us struggle to find the time to relax. Why not create a reading room? Add some bookshelves and a comfy chaise to curl up on. If you're looking for another way to relax, design a meditation or yoga room in your home. Creating a space specifically to slow down and unwind will do wonders for renewing your mind and body after (or at the start of) a long day. If yoga isn't your thing, build an exercise room or dance studio. You can use this space to stay fit and healthy.

A play room is another fun idea for your space. Some people don't love having the kids in the basement while they are upstairs. Adding some storage and a bright, funky rug is a simple and affordable way to breathe some new life into the room. Accessorize with colourful lamps and make your kids feel like mini Picassos by hanging some of their favourite projects on the wall as art. While the room is kid friendly, it doesn't have to be a kids-only room. Make it an all around games room! Add a games table and some floor cushions, gather around and have a board game night as a family.

Playrooms aren't just for children anymore. One of my team members is working on converting a dining room to a man cave for a bachelor who just bought his first home. They replaced the dining table with a foosball table and a traditional sideboard with a bar. To keep the space from looking like a frat house they added an area rug and some beautiful lighting. Framed records and dartboards make for interesting and functional wall art and are great conversation starters. Another route to consider is a lounge. Add some leather club chairs and some martini tables to make your home feel like a VIP club where everyone knows your name and no membership is required.

Some people really love their formal dining room but just hate the thought of it sitting empty most of the time. If you're not quite ready to fully commit to a fresh room makeover, leave the dining table and remove all but 1-2 chairs. Voila! You now have an office. Store your papers in the buffet or sideboard. If you don't like the idea of seeing the office clutter then consider installing some French doors. When you have company, add the chairs back in and you have a fully functioning dining room again.

Whatever new purpose you find for your dining or living room, make sure that you take some time to really think about what you want, what you need and what will make the most sense for you and your family. A solid plan is the secret to designing a smart space that you will love to come home to.

Feel free to send me your comments or questions to [askjean@nichedecor.ca](mailto:askjean@nichedecor.ca)