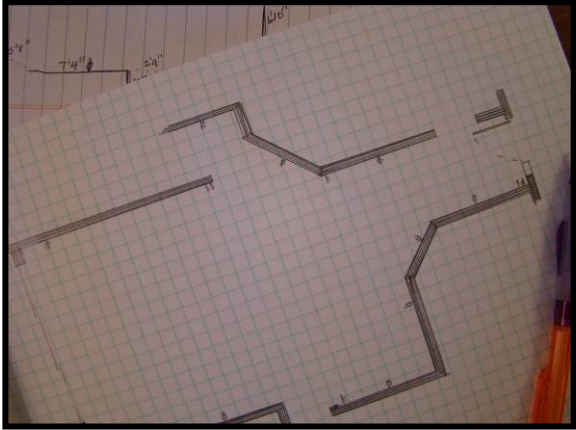


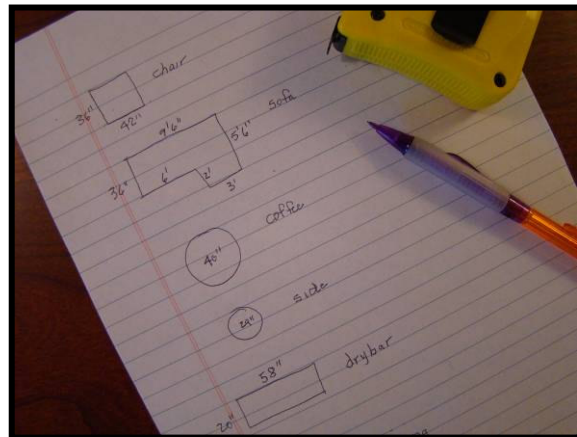
# Decorating 101E - Furniture Arranging



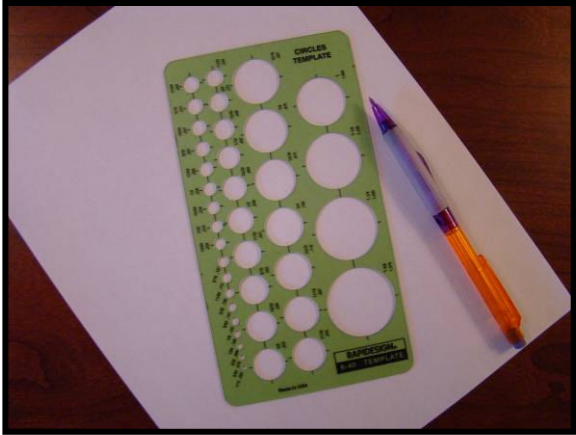
If you have been following along in our Decorating 101 series you know that we've just finished drawing up a floor plan of the room. And now it's time to actually put the furniture you have and the furniture you are interested in having onto the floor plan. To do this we need to do a couple things, measure the existing furniture to create paper cutouts of

everything and then determine traffic flow and a focal point. Let's start out creating our paper furniture.

All we need to measure is the footprint of each piece in the room. In other words, how much space and in what shape does the piece of furniture cover of the floor? A loveseat, for instance, has a rectangular footprint. It may measure 5 feet, 6 inches wide by 3 feet deep. Mark those dimensions on a piece of paper and continue



around the room measuring all the furniture pieces you have. In the living room we've been working on, there is a sofa with a chaise end that is basically a rectangle with a square attached to it. With a piece like this it's best to sketch out the footprint on your notepad and add the dimensions to it so it's clear when it's time to draw it and cut it out.

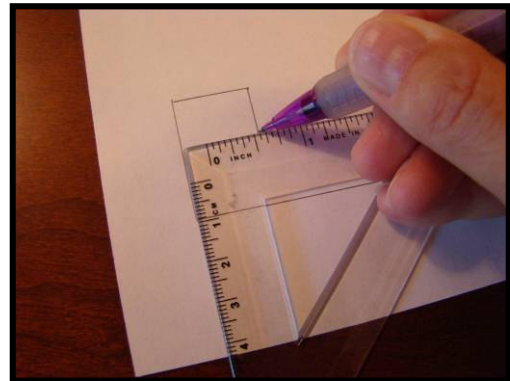
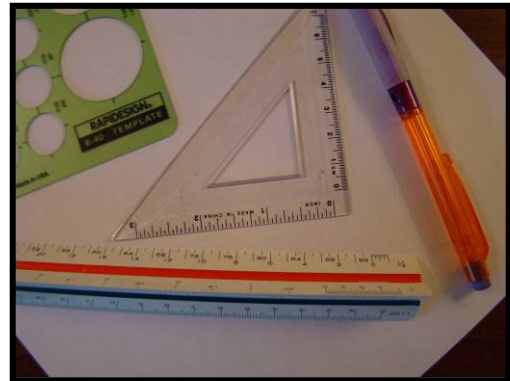


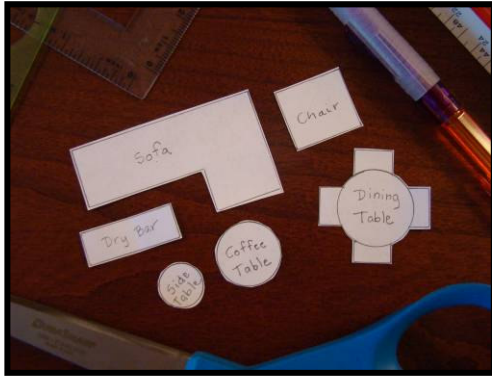
A circular table is measured across the diameter. Our coffee table is 40" in diameter. Because I am a professional interior designer, and went to school to learn to be one, I have all the fun tools! I use a circle template that I've had since college to help me cheat and make a great circle in seconds! On the circle template, a circle that is marked at

$\frac{1}{4}$ " diameter is a 12" circle on your floor plan. I use my  $\frac{1}{4}$ " scale to measure the template when working with a number like 40". We all know a 36" coffee table would be a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " circle on the template, a 42" coffee table would be a  $\frac{7}{8}$ " circle on the template. But 40"...it's somewhere in between!! When everything in your room is measured, it's time to go back to the drawing board!

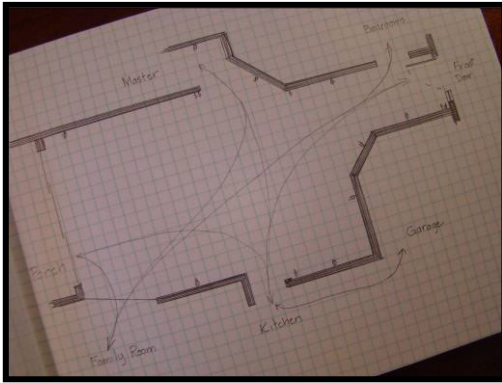
The next step is to draw the furniture pieces to the same scale as the floor plan. You can do this using graph paper where  $\frac{1}{4}$ " on the graph or one square equals one foot. I prefer to draw my furniture pieces on white paper so I can more easily distinguish the furniture pieces from the graph paper floor plan. To do this you will need either templates that have basic furniture shapes or you'll need to draw your furniture using a triangle, scale and a pencil.

The triangle ensures that your corners are square and the scale has a side marked for  $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Create the furniture which ever way is easiest for you.





Once you have all your furniture pieces cut out, it's time to consider the traffic patterns in the room.



So draw very light pencil lines on your plan to indicate how you move through the room. In our example living room, people come in the front door and can go to the bedrooms, the master bedroom, the kitchen or the family room.

Or, if you are entering the house through the garage which is off the kitchen, you may go from the kitchen to the front door, bedrooms or master and maybe to the sliding glass doors. So as we add all of these traffic patterns, we start to see that certain areas of the room are busier than others and you get a sense of where the larger conversation area might fit best and where the dining table might work and how there can be pieces along certain walls that don't stick out too far and jut into the traffic pattern.

**I**t isn't necessary to completely stay out of the traffic patterns. And in a room like this busy one, it would be impossible. You just have to consider how the placement of a piece of furniture will affect the traffic. If it's a minor traffic pattern, don't worry about it.

**A**s to what direction to aim your furniture, it's best to locate at least one focal point. In other words, what is the one or two things you want people to direct their attention to when they enter your room? Usually it's a great view out the windows or a beautiful fireplace. For you maybe it's the entertainment center or a favorite piece of artwork. You may have to make

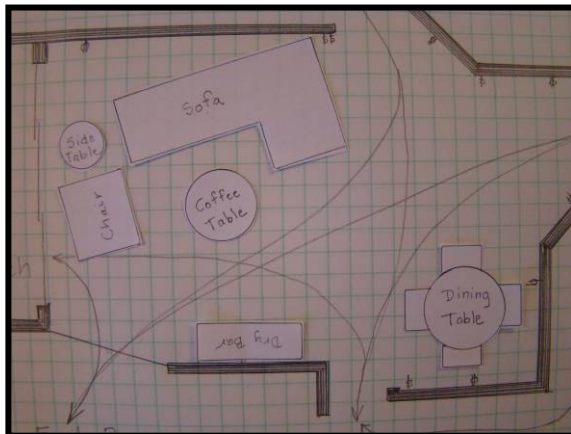
one up if you don't have one because a focal point gives your room direction and some definition.

In our room, the view out to the patio and pool is probably the most important focal point in the room.

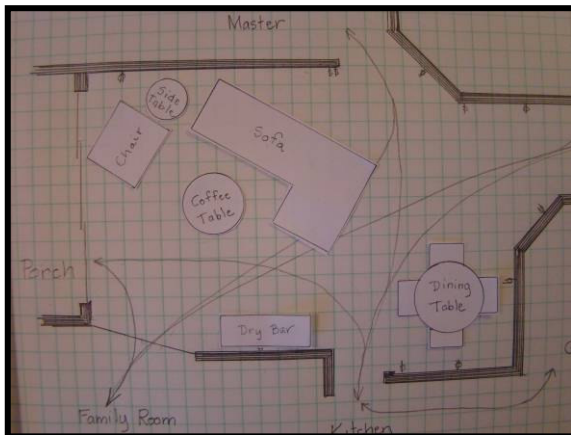
At this point the furniture is flat against the walls and directed more towards the dry bar instead of taking advantage of the view outside. So, starting with the main furniture pieces, the sofa and oversized chair, I'm going to play



with how I could direct them more toward the focal point without completely ignoring the front door and the other functions and traffic in this room. You can do the same with your main pieces. In a bedroom it would be the bed, in a dining room, the dining table, in an office probably the desk.



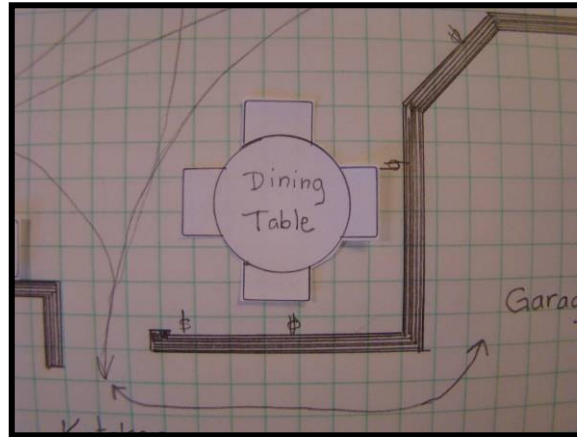
A slight angle towards the dining room at least opens up the view to the rest of the room. No, it doesn't help the site line to the outdoors, but it does create a more interesting space and opens the seating area up to the front door giving a more welcoming first impression.



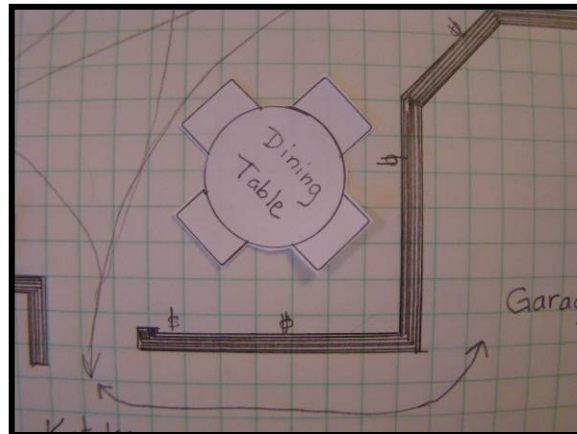
On the other hand, angling the sofa more towards the patio and the view does somewhat cut you off when entering through the front door. Since there isn't a TV in this room, it is used mainly for entertaining and conversation perhaps the more welcoming arrangement makes more sense for this room.

As you are moving pieces around and adding new, keep in mind that it would be nice to balance high and low pieces as well as heavy and light pieces around the room.

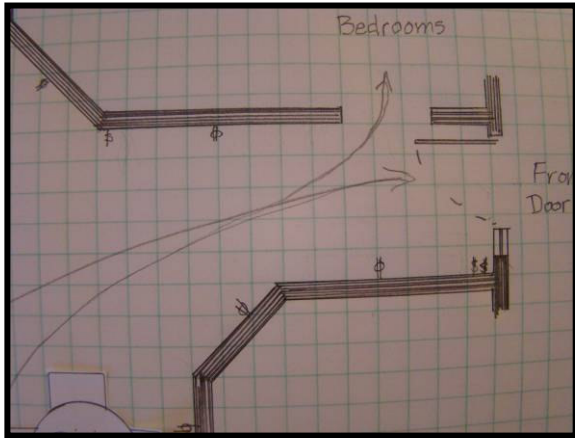
So, let's consider those pieces yet to come. Where might they go, like the extra storage piece we're considering for the dining area of our room that will hold table linens as well as games and puzzles. Something as simple as changing the position of the dining chairs can mean not having room for another piece....



....or squeezing out just enough space to put something narrow along the lower wall. Narrow is good too because many narrow pieces are similar to bookcases. This might help us put something tall along this wall helping to balance all the low furnishings and the tall ceilings.



So make sure to consider what height or weight might be best for a new piece to help balance what is already in place? In our case, something tall is really needed since most of the current furniture pieces are chest level and lower.



Although this entry may be a busy thoroughfare, notice where the traffic pattern lies...right in the middle. There is plenty of room for a bench or hall table on the lower or upper wall in the plan.

**B**y going through this exercise we have discovered that this room needs a tall cabinet in the dining area and a bench or narrow cabinet in the entry. So, we'll jot those items down, start shopping around and determine a budget for those pieces.

In the meantime, and before purchasing something new, place your furniture in the arrangement you have designed. Live with it for a while to make sure it is working for you. If there is tweaking to be done, do it and again live with it to be sure you have the perfect arrangement. If the new pieces you are considering will still work, the search is still on. If not, you may have just saved yourself some money, or you may have to consider other solutions to the problems they were fixing!

**W**hile you are searching for just the right pieces, the next step in working through the function of the room is lighting. Stay tuned for more information on that topic while you're working on the best furniture arrangement for you!!

**S**hari

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