

HOMES & GARDENS®

The Library: How to Get Your Living Room Layout Right – Interior Designers' Golden Rules for Planning the Perfect Space

*Before choosing fabrics or finishes, master the fundamentals
of your living room layout with our ultimate guide*

By Charlotte Olby – Published: November 8th, 2025



Plan for Flow & Movement

'Aim for at least 36 inches of clearance in main walkways so two people can pass comfortably, and 18 to 24 inches between furniture pieces for an easy flow that still feels intimate,' they advise. 'In living areas, coffee tables should sit about 18 inches from the sofa, close enough to reach your drink but far enough to stretch your legs.' It turns out that the 18-inch rule is in many a designer's black book. 'I always allow around 18 inches between the coffee table and sofa... close enough to reach a drink, but generous enough for circulation,' agrees Gray Walker.

Get Yourself a Roll of Tape

An interior designer's secret weapon is actually a roll of tape. Yes really. 'I always start by taping out furniture dimensions on the floor for myself and for my clients,' says Gray Walker. 'It is the easiest way to visualize scale and egress in the space before making a single purchase.'