

## how to... maximise every corner of your home

Ten experts reveal easy ways for increasing a sense of space and order



### 1 amp up

Structural aspects of your property offer a chance to create extra storage. For example, use chimney recesses for a wine rack or bookshelf, increase the boxing around stairs to provide a more practical depth for shelving and always make the most of an under stairs space for bulky items like bikes.

**Clare Gaskin, interior designer, Clare Gaskin Interiors**

### 2 build and store

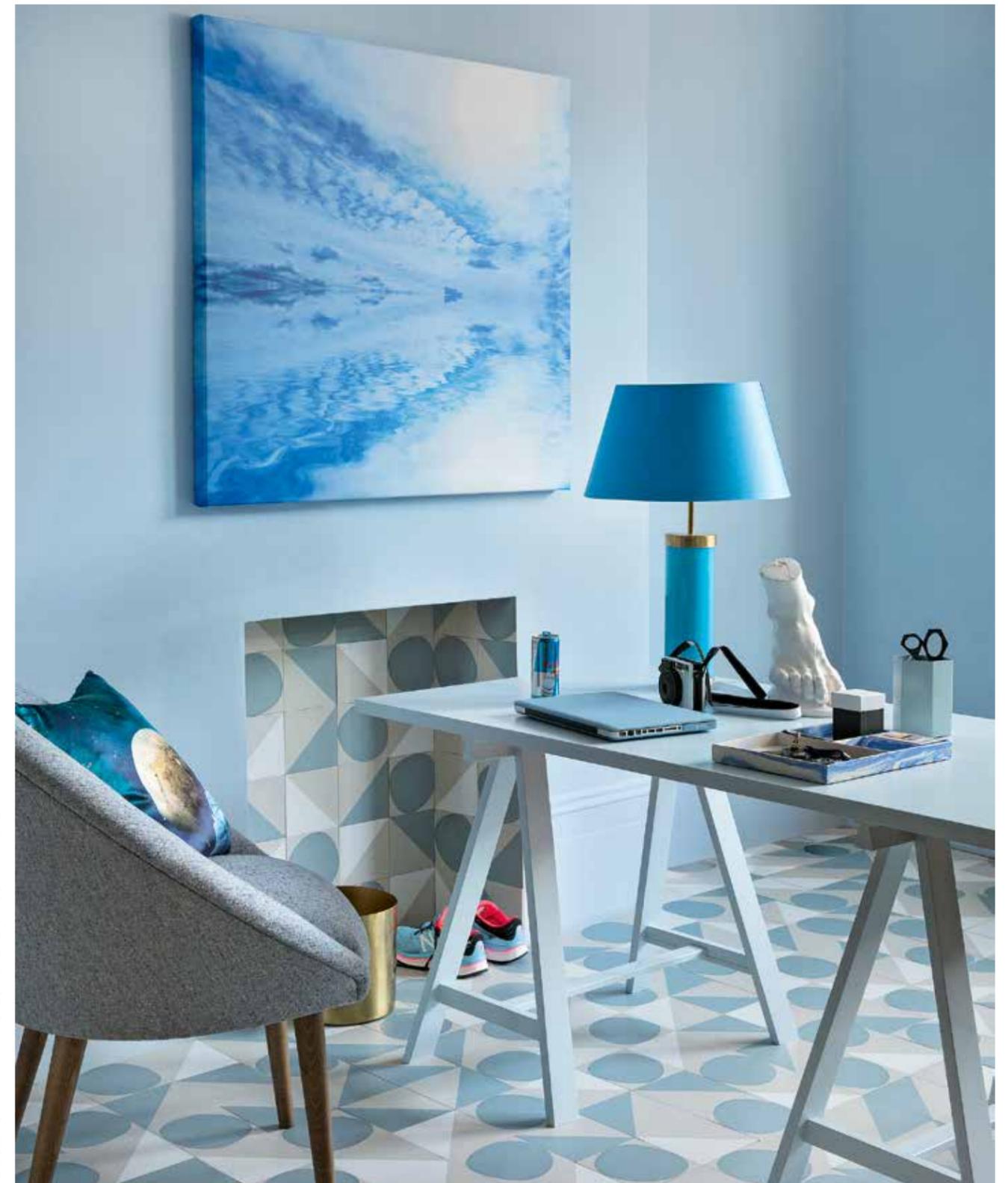
Hire a carpenter to construct built-in storage in kitchens and bathrooms. It doesn't have to be expensive – MDF is a wonderful versatile material that can be painted any colour. Also, install a shelf that runs the length of your room but position it above the door frame just below the ceiling. It'll be so high that it won't be a focal point and if you paint it the same colour as your wall it won't stand out. This works particularly well in kitchens where you can also hang pans from the bottom of the shelf. By doing this you can store books and other objects above your head, which will feel tucked away.

**Lucy Gough, interior stylist and designer, Lucy Gough Stylist**

### 3 floor thought

Choosing the right type of flooring, in terms of the pattern it creates, can go a long way to making a space appear larger. I like to use wood on a diagonal – the room will seem bigger than it is. When it comes to tiling, I always prefer tiles where you don't obviously see where one tile starts or stops, making the entire floor appear seamless. Mosaics, large marble slabs or quirky geometric shapes can all be used to achieve this – especially when using bright colours like a powder blue. Whatever you do, try to avoid standard 60x60cm tiles as they visually divide the room into squares, accentuating that not too many of them fit.

**Irene Gunter, interior designer and founder, Gunter & Co Interiors**



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Nothing says practical and smart living better than a window seat

#### 4 on the bench

There is more to window seats than being a space to enjoy a view – though the benefits of that should definitely not be overlooked. Think of them less a place in which to gaze out from, more a multipurpose space saver that can double as storage, too. Cover with a purpose-made cushion in a durable material like leather that won't fade in the sunlight, hiding the cupboard doors underneath. Speaking of light, if you have low ceiling heights don't opt for pendants that can bring lots of vertical lines in to view. Focus on wall lights, table lights and floor lamps to light upwards, bringing the focus onto smaller scale objects while illuminating larger and more uninterrupted surfaces.

**Ciarán O'Brien, architect and co-founder, Red Deer**

#### 5 seating plan

When creating an intimate dining area in a tight space, look at a built-in banquette or bench seating combined with an extendable table or a pair of tables pulled together. Individual chairs can then be added or taken away, according to the number of guests, providing a simple way to embrace both casual and formal entertaining in one. It's also important to consider the spaces between main rooms in smaller homes. Lobbies, landings and corridors can be designed to become something special, enhancing the journey as you move from one place to another.

**Henry Prideaux, interior designer, Henry Prideaux Interior Design**

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#### 6 be exuberant

Small spaces need to feel generous, if possible. This will need to be tailored to your home, but ideas include vibrant wallpaper in a bathroom or box rooms with luxurious floor-to-ceiling curtains, or an oversized sofa in a compact living room. Do at least one thing with gusto to make a space feel less mean.

**Tom Bartlett, architect and director, Waldo Works**



## 7 showstopper

Don't be afraid to emphasise smaller spaces like home offices with dark colours. Adding drama can help in creating a transition between zones within the home. Embrace every nook and cranny, but always be clear on how you will use the space. Also drop all the musts and tailor your home to suit your lifestyle as best as possible.

**Nicola Harding, interior designer, Nicola Harding & Co**

## 8 circulate

Go up! Go out! Check your local planning policy as many properties can extend upwards or outwards under permitted development without applying for full planning permission. Also, activate circulation space. Staircases and landings can become useful and active areas. Opening up a staircase can bring light into the centre of your home and create a useful pocket for additional storage or desk space.

**Renée Searle, director, Threefold Architects**

## 9 clever thinking

Dual-purpose furniture is key. In small single bedrooms we often design beds that can function as daybeds when they're not being slept in. In a child's bedroom we designed recently there wasn't even space for a bedside table, so we included an alcove and bookshelves behind the headboard to ensure that favourite bedtime storybooks were close at hand.

**Sarah Peake, creative director, Studio Peake**

## 10 pattern hit

Make bold wallpaper your friend. Smaller spaces are often the perfect places to make the boldest design choices, plus you will need far less wallpaper to cover a small downstairs loo or guest bedroom than a whole sitting room, so you can afford to spend more on something really fantastic.

**Kate Guinness, interior designer, Kate Guinness Design**