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## EC56-1116 Furniture Arrangement

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# FURNITURE ARRANGEMENT



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UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE  
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W. V. LAMBERT, DIRECTOR

# Furniture Arrangement

Magdalene Pfister

Good furniture arrangement is important whether the home is large or small, the furniture old or new. Costly furnishings cannot make a room livable if they are not conveniently arranged.

A well arranged room is beautiful and serves its purpose better than an unplanned room. A new furniture arrangement may add more comfort without expensive remodeling.

## Arrange For Comfort And Convenience

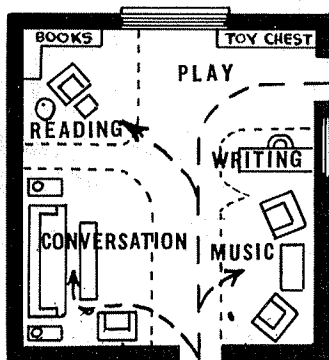
More enjoyable and satisfactory home life comes when the furniture is arranged for comfort and convenience. In order to achieve this aim, the following considerations are helpful.

### Consider Family Needs

Every family is different with individual interests, work habits and hobbies. For this reason, good room arrangement is a family job.

Family living patterns should be analyzed. Think of the persons in the home and the way in which they live. List the activities that need to be provided for, the furnishings and equipment that these activities require, and the room or area that will accommodate them best. Such an analysis may reveal that there are some furnishings that should be eliminated.

### Group Furniture for Use



All furnishings used for an activity should be grouped together. For reading this would include a comfortable chair, possibly an ottoman or foot stool, a reading lamp and table or magazine rack.

Have places to put things--enough tables for ash trays, places for books, records and magazines. Whenever possible, make a table and lamp serve two or more people. Have end tables, chests, and coffee table within the right distance for easy reach.

Store articles near place of use. Furniture with storage space should be placed as conveniently as possible.

Separate the groups by reasonable space, keeping the noisy groups as far as possible from those planned for quiet activities. Having the television set in another room will help keep the living room free for other activities.

Remember that people are more important than furniture. Arrange it for them to use and enjoy!

### Keep Traffic Lanes Open

Plan furniture arrangement to leave traffic lanes clear. Avoid placing a conversation grouping with a traffic lane cutting through. Paths that lead from one room to another, to the front door, closets, cupboards or to the telephone should be planned so that they are unblocked.

If one part of the room is cut off from the rest by a traffic lane, recognize the fact by placing a furniture group there that can function in isolation, such as a desk group or piano

### Provide Good Lighting

All furniture groups require some form of lighting. Outlets may need to be added in order to locate the light for convenience.

Make the best use of natural light dur-



ing the day. Try to put a chair for reading or a desk near a window rather than in a dark corner.

### Plan for Spaciousness

Arrange for the best use of space. Place major pieces parallel with walls. Having large pieces located so they seldom need to be moved saves time and energy.

Elimination of all but the necessary things, and the proper grouping of them, can make a room look larger. "Have nothing in your house except that which you know to be useful, or to be beautiful" is a good motto.

Keep a portion of the room, usually near the center, open for such purposes as circulation, setting up card table and for enjoyment of uncluttered space.

The addition of a few well-chosen lamps and accessories will take away a bare look, but guard against using so many that it will produce a cluttered appearance.

## **Arrange For Beauty**

Beauty is achieved by interpreting the principles of design: balance, proportion, emphasis, rhythm and harmony.

Balance is gained by distribution of visual weights so it gives rest to the eye. Heavy pieces of furniture and dominant colors and pattern must be so distributed that one section of the room does not appear to outweigh the other.

There are two kinds of balance: Formal or symmetrical balance is achieved by placing objects of equal size and shape equal distance from the center. Informal or occult balance results when objects of unequal size and shape are placed at unequal distance from the center.

It is well to use both types of balance, for each adds interest to the other. Rooms without any formal balance may have a hit-and-miss look, while rooms with all formal balance may appear stiff and unfriendly.

Proportion is selection and relationship of the size of objects to one another and to the room.

To achieve good proportion, choose furnishings that are built on the same scale and fit the room. Generally, big bulky furniture and big patterns belong in large rooms, while small delicate furniture belongs in smaller rooms. Small-scaled furniture can be overpowered with massive objects: a dainty table with curved legs may lose its charm and appear spindly when combined with a large chair.

Faulty room proportion can be improved by the wise use of color and well-planned furniture arrangement. A long room will seem better proportioned if heavy furniture is placed at the ends, or if the furniture extends out into the room, thereby cutting the length.

Emphasis comes when a center of interest has been created.

Often the room itself determines where this focal point can be most logically placed. A picture window, or a group of windows, a fireplace, a broad wall space against which an important piece of furniture can be placed, make a good center of interest and should be treated importantly.

Simplicity is closely related to emphasis. If you have too many things, it is hard to emphasize the one you wish.

Rhythm is always a part of an orderly arrangement, enabling the eye to travel smoothly around the room.

Rhythm comes from repeating shapes, sizes, textures, lines and color.

Harmony or unity results when your entire furniture arrangement and the groups of which it is composed are related to each other, to the room and to the needs it must serve. There is friendliness in objects; they seem to go together, yet there is some variation and contrast. When a room is unified, it is simple and orderly.

Rooms are rectangular in shape, and the furniture should be placed to repeat

this feeling. Big pieces, like a sofa or piano, should be placed parallel with the wall.

### Plan Arrangement on Paper

Planning on paper is worth many times the small effort it takes. It is easier to move cut-outs than push furniture. It is possible to try out a number of different arrangements without strained backs.

By using cut-outs, one can often find a better arrangement than the present one, or if you are moving, you can plan in advance where movers are to place furnishings. If you are building a new home, you can check the blue print to see how furniture will fit.

Measure the length and width of the room and draw a floor plan to scale. Using squared paper and letting one-half inch equal one foot is convenient. Next locate windows, doors and the way they swing, outlets, radiators, jags and any built-in features.

Cut out furniture to the same scale and label. The cutouts in E. C. 56-1117 will be helpful.

Place these cut-outs on the plan, putting the large pieces in place first and working down in size. Move them around until you have a satisfactory arrangement.

Review the arrangement a day or so later and make such changes as are ne-

cessary in terms of your needs and objectives.

## Check Your Room Arrangement

1. Is the furniture grouped for use?
2. Do you have a center of interest?
3. Are large pieces of furniture placed against or at right angles to the longest walls?
4. Are traffic lanes kept open?
5. Have you distributed color and size so as to give a feeling of balance?
6. Does the furniture fit the room--not too much or too large?
7. Is there sufficient lighting for all activities?
8. Is there some space between furniture groupings?
9. Do you have enough places to put such things as books, magazines, and ash trays?
10. Is the room easy to clean?

Try shifting your furniture around to see if you can make the best possible arrangement for your family needs. Change the arrangement whenever your needs change or you think of a better plan.