

private places

CREATING A PEACEFUL SPACE
OF YOUR OWN AT HOME



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54 **TRANQUIL BEDROOMS**

large pair of freestanding wardrobes on the opposite wall. In an ideal world, storage should be in an entirely separate room. Although we don't all have huge homes with lots of room to spare, there may be possibilities that you could consider. If there is a tiny spare bedroom next door to your bedroom that is rarely used, you could add an interconnecting door and plenty of wardrobes to transform it into a dressing room. Alternatively, if an adjacent bedroom can't be spared in its entirety, steal a portion of it, adding a new plasterboard dividing wall to section off the new room and create a compact walk-in wardrobe.

If there's no choice but to have wardrobes in the bedroom, there are plenty of ways to create elegant, 'invisible' storage. Floor-to-ceiling flush doors, in painted MDF or fabric-covered to match walls, are the most subtle option. Alternatively, mirrored doors or sand-blasted glass fronts can make a room seem bigger and look streamlined, though remember that the wardrobe contents must be kept scrupulously tidy behind translucent glass doors to avoid show-through. If bedroom walls are to be panelled, either with timber veneers or painted MDF, wardrobe doors can be matched so that there is a seamless link between the two.



OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT A roll-top bath is comfortable, but if your look is chic modern, rather than period, conceal the traditional legs within an MDF box or replace them with a concrete block, as here.

OPPOSITE PAGE, RIGHT We can't all enjoy an inspiring picture-window view like this one from the bath, but try to allow for some natural daylight, perhaps by placing the bath beneath a skylight.

LEFT Provide additional privacy by surrounding the bath with floor-to-ceiling curtains. For a pretty option, layer a white waterproof curtain with linen, cotton or lace drapes on the outside.

BELOW For the ultimate serene bathing experience, choose a simple, yet beautiful tub, with minimalist taps, and tuck it into a quiet corner. Towels, lotions and accessories can be wheeled in, when necessary, on a trolley.



86 SECLUDED SPOTS

An easy structural way to delineate space is to play with horizontal levels. The ceilings in industrial conversions can be unnaturally high, making noise echo and the space seem unfriendly. So to give character to a large room, as well as to mark out a more intimate section, consider dropping the ceiling in one place, perhaps over a dining table or in the TV zone. Think, too, of altering floor levels. The act of stepping up, or down, into a separate area is the open-plan equivalent of opening a door. If you are contemplating radical building work, consider creating a sunken 'conversation pit' that can be filled with cushions.

The arrangement of furniture is a simple way of creating a vital division between public areas that visitors may use and private, quiet spots. In a typical open-plan living space with no physical walls – boasting a kitchen, an island unit, table and chairs, plus a sitting area – visitors will, unsurprisingly, feel free to congregate anywhere. But a tall bookcase, freestanding screen or sofas placed back to





track mechanism you can afford, fitting tracks to ceiling and floor. Sliding panels chosen to create privacy should be opaque and there are many decorative options. As well as solid wood and glass, consider MDF coated with wood veneer, leather, horsehair, wallpaper or paint. Heavy-duty canvas stretched across a steel frame is inexpensive and versatile, and the canvas may be painted.

In spaces where you want to create a visual division, but where noise control and privacy are less of an issue, try a more informal style of partition. Blind companies will make to measure sliding wall screens in a variety of fabrics, from opaque to translucent, including such exciting options as coloured PVC. If you are wanting a softer, more romantic look, try suspending fabric panels at random intervals from the ceiling, or hang them from a narrow steel suspension wire fixed to the ceiling. In a funky apartment, a cascade of beaded strands or a chain-link curtain will create a similarly effective division.



Within an open-plan space, it is always bedrooms and bathrooms that require the most careful planning. Committed loft-dwellers may argue that it's OK to have even the bath on view and that to partition it off spoils the ethos of open-plan living, but most of us will prefer to have a private bathroom, however tiny, tucked in one corner and behind solid walls. As for sleeping, there's nothing cosy (or private) about a bed that is in full view of the main living space. Unless you are scrupulously tidy, visitors won't want to see your bedroom mess. And anyway, it's far nicer, and less draughty, to fall asleep within an enclosed area.

But although it's necessary to separate off bedrooms and bathrooms, blocking off a conventional room, with solid walls and a door, can look clumsy within an airy, flexible, open-plan space. So be imaginative. A glass-walled bedroom lets in plenty of light by day and adds an intriguing private/public dimension. A wall of structural glass should be constructed using laminated glass, if it is contained within a frame, or toughened glass,



which is five times stronger than ordinary clear glass. To provide screening from within the bedroom, think about floor-to-ceiling sheer curtains, Venetian blinds or roller blinds in a bright colour. Alternatively, consider acid-etched glass in squares or stripes, which will allow tantalizing glimpses in and out.

For an opaque bedroom or bathroom 'box', consider MDF, plywood (left natural or painted) or wood veneers. To ensure a cohesive look throughout the entire living area, it's a good idea to echo the chosen material in another part of the space, too, as a section of wall panelling, perhaps, or on cupboard fascias. Don't forget ventilation. It goes without saying that the 'room' should be positioned so it has a window, to let in light and air. But also consider vertical or horizontal 'slits' in the bedroom walls, building walls that stop just short of the ceiling, or puncturing them with circular holes. For a fun touch, add coloured lighting within the bedroom: at night the 'box' will glow enticingly.



OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT AND RIGHT This city apartment uses a variety of devices to partition off different zones within the open-plan space. Totally enclosed, the intimate 'box' bedroom offers complete privacy for its owner. Painted white inside and out, its exterior blends easily with the structural columns, while the inside feels cool and calm. Waist-height slits allow for ventilation, and at night – when the room is illuminated – the openings cast dramatic patterns into the living space beyond.

ABOVE LEFT Neatly sandwiched next to the bedroom, the galley kitchen is separated from the main living area using colour, rather than physical divisions. The bright green walls clearly define it as an activity zone.

ABOVE RIGHT To enhance the impact of the vertical partitions, the owner has played with horizontal levels, too. From the main living area, it's a step up to go to bed, and – with low ceilings already in place – the 'box' feels even more intimate.