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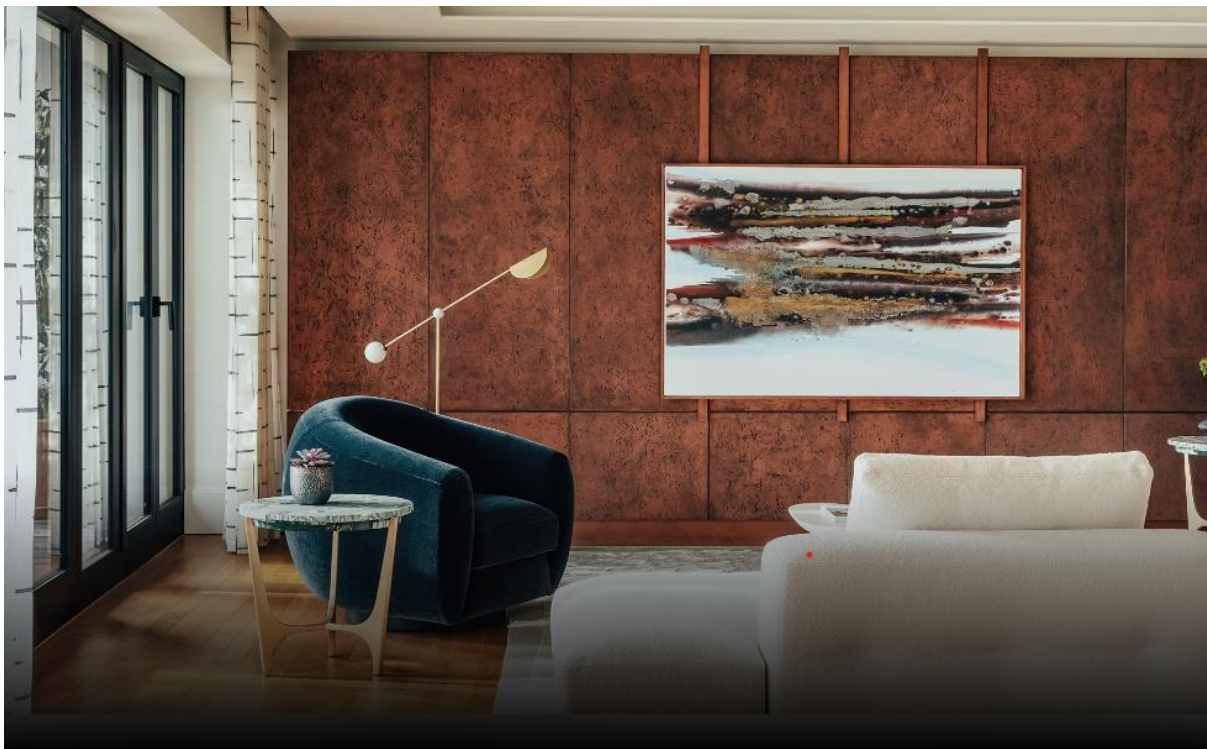
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DESIGNER'S CORNER

How to Pick the Perfect Reading Chair

Comfort is key, but style and durability are also important

BY AMEENA WALKER | ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON MARCH 13, 2024 | [MANSION GLOBAL](#)



Think Goldilocks when choosing a reading chair: too lounge-y and you'll fall asleep; too rigid and you'll start to ache, said designer Ed O'Donnell.
TARAN WILKHU

There's nothing like cozying up in a comfy chair with a book that you can get lost in for hours.

For avid readers, a reading chair is an essential and knowing how to pick the perfect one for you and your space is key. It goes without saying that the perfect reading chair has to be extremely comfortable, but it's also important to consider weight, size, color, style and durability, design pros said.

"A great reading chair, much like a beloved book, is familiar, comfortable, easy to settle into," said Ed O'Donnell, co-founder of London-based interior design firm Angel O'Donnell. "In terms of comfort, it's the Goldilocks effect: Too lounge-y and you'll fall asleep. Too rigid and you'll start to ache. So you need somewhere between cushioned and supportive."



A reading chair is set in the window in a room designed by London-based interior design firm Angel O'Donnell.

Taran Wilkhu

You'll also want to take the placement of your reading chair into consideration because what good is a reading nook that lacks things like proper lighting or ambience. So if you're in the market for a reading chair, be mindful of these interior design tips when picking your perfect piece.

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Plan Your Layout First

"It's very important to plan the room's layout before you begin picking furnishings and materials. You want to ensure that the pieces you pick accentuate the other elements of the room. For example, we like to place reading chairs wherever the client will have the best view, which can depend on where the home is located. Often, a corner is a great place for a reading chair because there's likely a view of the outside, but also the rest of the room.

"Accent chairs generally have an antique or standout design. This is something you want to be an accent for a reason, not necessarily something that takes over the room. There is, however, the idea of a standout furnishing that serves as a room's centerpiece. In that case, you want the rest of the room's furnishings and decor to be complementary to that single piece.

“Practicality is always top of mind. It’s all about making the room a desirable, yet functional place for the client.”

—Nicola Fontanella, founder and creative director of Argent Design, based in London and Miami

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Assess Your Needs

“Selecting the perfect reading chair is a personal choice and should be tailored to the specific needs and preferences of the people who will be using it. There are so many options available and it’s important to choose something that complements the overall aesthetics of the space while also providing comfort and functionality.

“For families with children and/or pets, I recommend choosing performance fabrics. One option that I often recommend is Crypton Performance fabric, which is known for its durability and extensive range of colors, patterns and textures. Additionally, they do not use harsh chemicals, heavy metals or toxins in their fabric treatments, making it a safe and eco-friendly choice.

“If child and pet-proofing isn’t something you need to consider for choice of upholstery fabric, you may have more options to choose from. Some popular upholstery fabrics include luxurious mohair or silk velvet, linen for a relaxed feel or an of-the-moment wool boucle. A chair in a supple top-grain aniline-dyed leather can make a statement and contrast with softer fabrics and finishes in the space.

“The design of the chair should prioritize ergonomics, ensuring that the arms and backrest are at the correct height, appropriate chair depth, and lumbar support is provided to promote good posture during extended reading or scrolling sessions. If space allows, a complementary or contrasting ottoman is also a nice addition to further enhance the reading chair’s functionality and comfort.”



The design of the chair should prioritize ergonomics, ensuring that the arms and backrest are at the correct height.

Kasia Perkov Design

—**Kasia Perkov, founder and principal of Kasia Perkov Design in New York City**

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Select the Right-Sized Chair

“Rarely does a chair need to be of exceptional size to provide great comfort. This is true even if a person is [over 6 feet]. In this instance, you may want it a bit deeper with a bit of a taller back than average, but it does not need to be 42-inches deep and impossible to squeeze into your floor plan. The important thing is how the chair is constructed, how it cradles you, how it keeps you warm and cool, and what sort of arm support it offers to help you keep a book propped up in front of your eyes without losing feeling in your arms.

“Make it comfortable but don’t make it bigger than it needs to be (unless your room is huge). And remember: a chair does not have to be ugly to be comfortable. You do not need a La-Z-boy with a cupholder when a very nice club chair ottoman and drinks table will do the same with class. If it must recline, all those mechanisms can be concealed in something nice.”

—**Peter Spalding, interior designer, co-founder and chief creative officer of Daniel House Club in Portland**

Leave Room for Accessories

“Determine your personal vibe and pair it with comfort. If you lean into a modern style, try a bold, geometric chair. If you are more traditional, floral but vibrant patterns can add personality to a reading chair, while stripes create a classic look. My favorite is velvet, leather or linen; they are comfortable, durable and elevated options that never go out of style.

“A good rule of thumb is to leave at least 2 feet of space around the front of the chair. When placed in a corner, it creates a cozy nook surrounded by walls. Pair it with a side table or ottoman for added comfort and accessorize with a throw blanket and pillows. Consider placing the chair in a comfortable spot with good lighting and don’t forget a reading light to ensure you’ll stay and read for a while.”



Consider placing the chair in a comfortable spot with good lighting, like this one in a room by Kristen Elizabeth Design.

Kristen Elizabeth Design

—Kristen Fiore, owner and principal designer of Kristen Elizabeth Design in Sacramento, California