



ZALEWSKA HOME · FREE GUIDE

The Lived-In Living Room *in 7 days*

One step a day. No new sofa, no renovation, no weekend lost.

by Camila Zalewska · zalewskahome.com

How this *guide* works

A living room that works doesn't come from one heroic Saturday. It comes from 7 small decisions, one a day, each one removing a specific source of noise.



It works in an apartment with one sofa, a family room full of toys, an open plan where the living room is also the dining room and the office. **It doesn't depend on square footage. It depends on sequence.**

The 7-day rule

- One zone a day. Don't skip ahead, don't double up
- 30 to 60 minutes a day. This is not a project
- A before and after photo of every zone. You will want the proof
- A donate bag open at all times. Unused for 6 months, it goes

What you'll need

- 1 large bag for donations
- 1 trash bag
- 1 damp cloth and 1 dry one
- 1 small box for "undecided" (you decide later)
- Optional: the pick of the day, linked on each page

THE INVISIBLE RULE

Every day, before you organize, edit. Most living rooms aren't messy. They're full. You don't need more space. You need fewer things.



DAY 01 OF 07

The audit and *the first clear-out*

40 minutes

See the room the way a guest sees it

Today's checklist

- ☐ Photograph the room from 4 angles, including from the front door
- ☐ Sit in every seat for a minute and notice what you look at
- ☐ Write down the 3 things that bother you most in the evening
- ☐ Return everything that belongs to another room: mugs, shoes, mail, toys
- ☐ Pick 5 decor pieces you no longer love for the donate bag
- ☐ Count the pillows and throws. Keep the ones that actually get used

STYLIST'S NOTE

A living room only has to do two things well: sitting and talking. Anything in the way of those two can go.

Nothing to buy today. Editing is free.



DAY 02 OF 07

Layout *and flow*

45 minutes

Arrange the furniture for conversation, not for the walls

Today's checklist

- ☐ Pull the sofa a few inches off the wall, even in a small room
- ☐ Turn seats toward each other, not all toward the TV
- ☐ Leave about 18 inches between the sofa and the coffee table
- ☐ Keep walkways at least 30 inches wide
- ☐ Make sure every seat can reach a surface for a drink
- ☐ Move one piece out of the room for a week and see if you miss it

STYLIST'S NOTE

Furniture lined up against every wall is the most common layout mistake, and the fix costs nothing.

TODAY'S PICK

A side table for every seat

The small piece that makes every chair usable and keeps drinks off the floor.

9 living room layout mistakes and the free fixes →



DAY 03 OF 07

Surfaces: *coffee table and console*

30 minutes

Clear the surfaces that collect everything

Today's checklist

- ☐ Clear the coffee table, side tables and console completely
- ☐ Wipe everything down
- ☐ Give remotes, coasters and chargers one lidded box
- ☐ Style the coffee table with a tray, a short stack of books and one living thing
- ☐ Leave at least half of every surface empty
- ☐ Put a bowl by the front door for keys and mail, so they stop landing here

STYLIST'S NOTE

*A tray turns five small objects into one.
That's why it's the first thing a stylist reaches for.*

TODAY'S PICKS

A wooden tray + a lidded box for remotes

One gathers what's on display, the other hides what isn't.

Coffee table styling: 5 easy formulas





DAY 04 OF 07

The *bookshelf*

50 minutes

Turn the shelf from storage into the best thing in the room

Today's checklist

- ☐ Empty the shelf completely
- ☐ Edit the books: keep the ones you'd reread or lend
- ☐ Mix vertical rows with horizontal stacks
- ☐ Group objects in threes of different heights
- ☐ Add one plant and one framed print or photo
- ☐ Leave about a third of each shelf empty
- ☐ Hide what you need but don't want to see in lidded baskets on the bottom shelf

STYLIST'S NOTE

Empty space is part of the styling. A full shelf reads as storage, a shelf with air reads as a choice.

TODAY'S PICKS

Lidded baskets + simple bookends

Baskets take the clutter, bookends let you stop a row halfway and leave room to breathe.

Bookshelf styling: why the rule of three works →



DAY 05 OF 07

Textiles: *rug, throws, pillows*

40 minutes

Make the room soft without making it busy

Today's checklist

- ☐ Check the rug: the front legs of every seat should sit on it
- ☐ If the rug floats in the middle, measure the size you actually need
- ☐ Keep 3 to 5 pillows on the sofa, in two or three colors
- ☐ Wash or replace flat pillow inserts
- ☐ Fold throws and keep them in one basket
- ☐ Hang curtains high and wide, close to the ceiling

STYLIST'S NOTE

A rug that's too small is the most common reason a living room feels unfinished. Bigger almost always looks better.

TODAY'S PICKS

A properly sized rug + a basket for throws

The rug pulls the furniture together, the basket keeps the softness tidy.

The right rug size for every room →



DAY 06 OF 07

Lighting: *the three-light rule*

30 minutes

Make the room feel as good at 9 pm as it looks at noon

Today's checklist

- ☐ Turn the overhead light off and look at the room with lamps only
- ☐ Count your light sources. You want at least three, at different heights
- ☐ Put a lamp beside the sofa and one by the reading chair
- ☐ Add a third light across the room: a floor lamp, a picture light, a lamp on the console
- ☐ Swap every bulb to warm white, 2700K
- ☐ Save the overhead light for cleaning

STYLIST'S NOTE

Overhead light flattens a room. Three lamps at different heights give it depth.

TODAY'S PICKS

Warm 2700K bulbs + one floor lamp

Change the bulbs first. Then decide if the room still needs another lamp.

Warm lighting 101: the three-light rule





DAY 07 OF 07 · LAST DAY

Finishing *and the 10-minute reset*

45 minutes

Close the transformation and set the routine that keeps it

Today's checklist

- ☐ Add one large living thing: a plant that can hold a corner
- ☐ Hang or lean one piece of art at eye level
- ☐ Add a lidded basket for blankets and toys
- ☐ Photograph the finished room from the same 4 angles as Day 1
- ☐ Put the photos side by side
- ☐ Write down your evening reset (see the box)
- ☐ Invite someone over. The room is ready

UPKEEP · 10 MIN A NIGHT

Every night, 10 min: clear the coffee table, fluff the pillows, fold the throws, return what belongs elsewhere. Sundays: vacuum and wipe the surfaces. Every season: repeat Day 4.

TODAY'S PICKS

One piece of art + a lidded basket

Art gives the eye somewhere to land, the basket gives the clutter somewhere to go.

Gallery wall ideas that don't look like a mood board →

You finished *all 7 days*

Put the Day 1 and Day 7 photos side by side. The difference wasn't about buying. It was about deciding.

The 10 pieces that show up in the plan

Chosen to work together: warm wood, linen, soft clay, matte black.

- 01 A side table for every seat
- 02 Wooden tray for the coffee table
- 03 Lidded box for remotes and chargers
- 04 Lidded baskets for the bottom shelf
- 05 Simple bookends
- 06 A properly sized rug
- 07 Fresh pillow inserts
- 08 Basket for throws
- 09 Warm 2700K bulbs
- 10 Floor lamp for the reading corner

See the living room guides, with photos and picks

zalewskahome.com/category/living-room

The next guides *from Zalewska Home*

The same 7-day method works in any room. Newsletter readers get the next guide by email.

The Organized Kitchen in 7 Days

The Calm Bedroom in 7 Days

The Working Home Office in 7 Days

The Easy Bathroom in 7 Days



Zalewska Home

warm, collected home inspiration

zalewskahome.com · pinterest.com/zalewskahome

PRINT IT AND KEEP IT WHERE YOU'LL SEE IT

The 7-day *checklist*

The short version to follow day by day. No notes, no distractions. Check each box as you go.

Day 01 The audit

~40 min

- ☐ Photograph the room from 4 angles
- ☐ Sit in every seat
- ☐ Return what belongs to other rooms
- ☐ Pick 5 pieces to donate

Day 02 Layout

~45 min

- ☐ Pull the sofa off the wall
- ☐ Turn seats toward each other
- ☐ 18 inches to the coffee table
- ☐ Keep 30-inch walkways

Day 03 Surfaces

~30 min

- ☐ Clear and wipe every surface
- ☐ One box for remotes and chargers
- ☐ Tray, books, one living thing
- ☐ Leave half of each surface empty

Day 04 Bookshelf

~50 min

- ☐ Empty the shelf
- ☐ Edit the books
- ☐ Group objects in threes
- ☐ Leave a third of each shelf empty

continued on the next page →

CONTINUED · DAYS 5 TO 7

The 7-day *checklist*

The home stretch: textiles, light, and the finish.

Day 05 Textiles

~40 min

- ☐ Front legs on the rug
- ☐ 3 to 5 pillows
- ☐ Throws in one basket
- ☐ Curtains high and wide

Day 06 Lighting

~30 min

- ☐ Look at the room with lamps only
- ☐ Aim for three light sources
- ☐ Switch every bulb to 2700K
- ☐ Overhead light only for cleaning

Day 07 Finishing

~45 min

- ☐ Add one large plant
- ☐ Hang one piece of art
- ☐ Take the after photos
- ☐ Compare with Day 1
- ☐ Write down the evening reset

*"A lived-in living room isn't about owning less.
It's about every seat being one you want to sit in."*