

## Insight

# DECORATING IN A MID-CENTURY STYLE

*Here's our advice for creating a retro look, like the Towners have done in their Sixties home*

**W**ith their classic looks and pared-back style, mid-century designs are enduringly popular. Spanning the decades between the Thirties and the Seventies, these shapes were inspired by earlier design movements, including the Bauhaus school in Germany. Materials such as moulded plastics allowed designers to explore new textures, colours and forms.

### Key features

Mid-century style is characterised by clean straight lines and flowing organic curves. Simplicity in design and styling is key, along with a lack of ornamentation, plus a limited colour palette. Although mid-century style was driven by advances in technology, it was also inspired by the natural world, and wood is the most widely used material for furniture.

Architecturally, structural features include wood-panelled walls, vaulted ceilings with exposed beams and chimney breasts built from exposed

brick or stone. Walls are often painted white, enhancing the open, airy feel and allowing furniture to take centre stage.

### Purist or eclectic?

Decide whether to take an authentic approach or go for a more relaxed look. Either way, wood furniture is a good starting point. Original mid-century pieces can be expensive, but you can find items inspired by the era whatever your budget. A sideboard or dining table and chairs will set the tone for your scheme.

In the kitchen, opt for streamlined cabinets. White handle-less units work well with mid-century schemes, as do plain wood cabinets with stainless-steel fittings. Mid-century lighting often has a sculptural quality; an Anglepoise floor lamp or Poulsen pendant light will always evoke an authentic feel. Rugs and soft furnishings are often brightly patterned, with vibrant geometric or flowing prints. An iconic piece of art or a mirror, such as the classic sunburst design, will provide the finishing touch.



### PROFESSIONAL ADVICE



'Keep the basic principles of mid-century style in mind at all times when creating your scheme: think simple clean lines, classic curved corners, splayed legs and natural

materials. For a statement piece, choose a classic such as an Ercol upholstered easy chair.

**When sourcing vintage pieces, view them in person if possible. Check for woodworm, splitting, surface and varnish finish and colour. In chairs, check for splits in pieces of wood, spindles, joints and stretchers to make sure they are secure. Higher-priced handcrafted pieces are generally better made and will hold their value.**

Choose wall colours that complement the finish of your wooden furniture. Dark walls usually go better with dark-toned wooden furniture, and light walls work best with paler wood finishes. For soft furnishing and textiles, opt for colour-blocking in different shades of your chosen colours. For a more relaxed look, be bold and mix several patterns.

**Art with simple lines, such as original mid-century prints displayed in plain oak frames, will complement your interior. Monochrome architectural prints or landscape photographs also work well. For a moodier look, try original Dutch floral artworks and decorate with plants to prevent interiors from looking too austere.'**

MICHELLE BLYTH, RYDER & HOPE

### ADDRESS BOOK

#### ■ Ryder & Hope,

01297 443304, [ryderandhope.com](http://ryderandhope.com)

Retail and online store selling traditional, iconic pieces chosen for their design, heritage and usefulness

#### ■ Imperfect Interiors,

07403 932757, [imperfectinteriors.co.uk](http://imperfectinteriors.co.uk)

Interior design consultancy specialising in mid-century and vintage style



Brighten up a plain white kitchen with a graphic print



Simple wooden furniture is a timeless choice



Create impact with a bookshelf feature wall



**EXPERT EYE** *'To prevent your decorating schemes looking overly "designed" or as though they have been caught in a time warp, consider mixing older pieces, such as a vintage armchair, with more contemporary finds'*

BETH DADSWELL, IMPERFECT INTERIORS