

# Dorms, done right

DESIGN & FUNCTION

## Moving away is a big change — add personality to your room

**Andrea Janus**  
For Metro

Starting university and moving away from home is one of life's great milestones, but moving into a dormitory can be a little scary.

One way to ease the transition is to give what is likely a pretty bland space a healthy dose of your own style and personality to make it feel less institutional and more like home.

Because your dorm room is the space you will live, sleep and work in while you're at school, you need to consider both style and function, said Dvira Ovadia, principal designer at Dvira Interiors.

Start by picking a theme, which could be a favourite colour, a pattern or some other motif that represents your personality or a favourite team or hobby, or something that is reminiscent of home.

You may not be able to paint a wall, but it's easy to bring the theme together with linens, particularly with bed-



ding. You can find a bed-in-a-bag at most big-box and discount retailers, typically for less than \$100.

"You'll get the duvet cover, the pillows, the decorative shams, and you're not paying a big-ticket price and you're getting everything co-ordinating and matching," she said.

"The last thing you want is to have it all mis-matched because then it feels like you are out of place. You want it to feel like home."

The walls can also help you bring in a theme. If you can't (or don't want to) paint, consider stick-on wall or window decals in a favourite pattern, shape, colour, or a team or band logo.

For a particularly useful and multi-purpose wall covering, consider tacking a series of corkboards to the wall, arranged in your own design to suit your own needs.

"It's a great opportunity for them to hang pictures of their family, pictures of home, and any memos from school or anything going forward with the year that they will need," Ovadia said.

A dorm room also becomes a popular hangout spot, but in a limited space seating will come at a premium. Bean-bag chairs are still easy to find, relatively inexpensive, and are comfortable for reading, lounging or listening to music.

"They aren't a hard and fixed piece of furniture, so it's something that can be tossed around the room in any corner," Ovadia noted.

Finally, don't forget about security. When living in a shared space with hundreds of strangers, you should have the option of locking away your laptop, iPhone or tablet.

Pick up a lock at Home Depot or a hardware store and drill it into a bedside table or trunk.



### + DOUBLE DUTY

When space is at a premium, functional items that do double duty are key. Here are a few that dorm-dwellers should consider.

**Shoe organizer:** This can hang on a closet or wardrobe door and the pouches don't have to hold shoes. Use this as a jewelry organizer, or a place to hold snacks.

**Storage bench:** Store anything from books to linens to laundry inside, while having extra seating for friends.

**Tall wardrobe or bookcase:** Fill these with baskets or boxes that can store pretty much everything a student brings to a dorm, from toiletries and tech gadgets to books, clothes and shoes.



Clockwise, from top right: Kikkerland Design gooseneck tablet holder, \$22, Kikkerland.com; Joby 11 storage bench, \$142, Rona.ca; Bean bag chair, \$39.97, Walmart.ca; Aneboda wardrobe in white, \$99, Ikea.ca; Bushel stackable utility/laundry basket, \$12.98, Staples; Quartet cork tiles, 12" by 12", \$12.99/4-pack, Staples; Seven-piece bed-in-a-bag, \$39.88, Walmart.ca; Rustoleum chalkboard paint, \$26.99, Rona.ca.

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