

OCCASIONAL FURNITURE BUYING GUIDE

With the right combination of style and function, occasional furniture can be the key to completing your room. Occasional furniture is not optional furniture; it's an important component to making your home livable. Here are several factors to consider when selecting the perfect pieces for you.



Scale - Scale is always important when selecting furniture. Not only should you measure the room before you start looking for occasional furniture, but you should note the dimensions of the primary furnishings in the room. (Use our online room planner to get an idea of the scale of the room and the pieces in it before you set out.) Here are a couple rules of thumb to consider when selecting occasional furniture:

- An end table should not be taller than the arm of the sofa or chair it sits beside. The table top should be within eight inches of the top of the arm so that items on the table are easily reached.
- There should be a minimum of 18 inches between a sofa and a cocktail table. The table will be within reach while allowing easy access to seating.

Construction - Standards of quality construction apply to the selection of occasional furniture too. Features to look for include dovetail joints, corner blocks, levelers, dust panels, back panels, and sturdy drawer glides. (Please see our [Wood furniture buying guide](#) and our [Dining room furniture buying guide](#) for more buying ideas.)

Planning Your Room - Think of how you use the room before you go shopping. If you inventory your greatest needs, you should be able to make the most of your purchase. It's helpful to take along a copy of your floor plan.



Entertaining - Do you sometimes need extra seating? You might look for a

multifunction ottoman that can be used as a cocktail table when a tray is placed on top, as extra seating for party guests, or to put your feet up on while relaxing. Another option is a cocktail table that comes with ottomans that tuck underneath when they are not needed.

Watching TV - If you watch TV in the room, there are certainly some miscellaneous items that accompany it: DVDs, remotes, video games and TV guides. You might want to look for occasional pieces with drawers or cabinets to stow away these accessories to keep your room from looking cluttered.

Child's Play - Do your kids play in the room? Consider occasional furniture that incorporates storage for the quick clean-up of toys and games. If your children are very small, you may want to avoid tables with sharp corners.

Working on Your Laptop - Any room in the home can serve as the home office, thanks to our indispensable laptops. Some manufacturers accommodate the migration of computers into the living room with occasional furniture built for office functions. Lift-top cocktail tables take the laptop off your lap to make typing more efficient. End tables can double as easily-accessed printer storage. Sofa table desks are equipped with keyboard drawers, laptop storage, and even electrical outlets.

Reclining - Reclining or motion furniture often puts restrictions on your occasional furniture. Cocktail tables on casters are a great solution for changing the distance between the sofa and table as the foot rest is extended or retracted.

Eating - For many families, the living room serves as a dining room from time to time. Your choice of occasional furniture can minimize the inevitable spills. Some cocktail tables are designed with tops that can be adjusted to dining table level. Nesting tables are a great option for an extra place to put your plate. Some manufacturers make end tables that double as storage for tray tables.