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# Open Concept Living

**Text**

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**Photography**  
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*Design Tip*

A tiled  
floor-to-ceiling  
fireplace is a cost  
effective alternative.





**As a designer it is often** exciting for us to have a space that really requires some TLC.

When I first laid eyes on this Mid-town Toronto Home, I was elated with how unattractive it was. This merely meant that my vision for its re-birth would be that much more impactful. My goal for the main floor was to create a space that would provide a functional and attractive space from the front of the house all the way to the back where the kitchen was situated.

This particular home was a mere twenty feet wide with a typical urban floor plan that was begging to be 'opened up'. We did this by knocking down the main wall between the dining/living spaces as well as the hallway and kitchen area. To save costs in a renovation, it is critical to avoid the need to remove load-bearing walls which need additional reinforcement with an LVL beam.

Though 'open concept' is a desirable floor plan for many homeowners, all your sightlines (what you see from each angle) must be considered in correspondence with the finishes. It is important that areas within the space share similar finishes, textures and colours. This is the key to having a successful open concept living space. Accent colours in pillows, art and accessories are what you can use to add interest within the spaces.

To save money, the installation of a fireplace mantle was replaced with a floor to ceiling wall treatment of grayish blue twelve by twenty four slate, an inexpensive tile choice which gives height to the fireplace area and creates an attractive focal point in the living room. We added pot lights on dimmers to give the space quality and efficient lighting.

The dining area easily fits a table which can sit eight to ten people, a fabulous feature in a small space. This was accomplished by opening the wall between the dining and living area from less than four feet to about seven feet. A simple chandelier which is wired on a separate switch gives one the ability to 'turn on' only the dining room light for those special dinner party occasions. Clean-lined furniture keeps the scene calm and free of frivolous elements while in both spaces, deep charcoal linen drapes mounted close to the ceiling to give the illusion of height.



## DESIGN TIPS

**PAINT** a maximum of three colours, all in the same family in order to create flow and an illusion of more space.

**POT LIGHTS** can be expensive, so keep in mind you only need four to six lights per two hundred square feet. Install LED to give yourself a clearer light that will not need replacing for many years; spend once and do it right.

**INVEST IN DIMMERS**, as they will give you control over the ambiance with the ability to 'turn off' or 'turn down' areas not being used.

**HANG WINDOW TREATMENTS** as close to the ceiling as possible to give the illusion of a higher ceiling.

**USE REFLECTIVE ACCESSORIES** or add a punch of colour for additional drama in the space.



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Kitchens are a valuable investment in a home. We opened up the kitchen to the front of the house by knocking part of the wall down and creating a cabinet which spills over into the dining room. We used a deep grey which gave a 'furniture' look to the unit which houses the microwave, pantry and additional drawer storage.

Since this was a 'budget friendly' renovation, I had to splurge and save very carefully and judiciously. A black quartz counter with a simple straight edge is timeless, while three by six white gloss porcelain tiles are a cost effective solution for the backsplash.

To save a few dollars, the design included open shelving which kept the small space from feeling cramped. I shopped in the Clearance centre and bought fantastic floor model appliances which will make the Homeowners enjoy this kitchen immensely. Shopping for plumbing fixtures at *Lowe's* provided me with quality name brand products at a very reasonable price.

This renovation is a clear illustration of how a few simple changes can transform a tired and cramped small house into a welcoming and modern urban living space.



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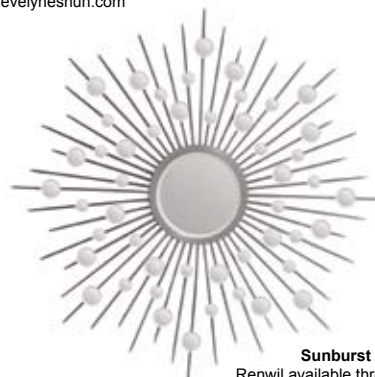
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