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## HOW TO BUY AND STYLE A COUCH ACCORDING TO DESIGNERS

WRITTEN BY: [IBT GIRLS](#)

From the enormous cost of purchasing a sofa, to figuring out the perfect place to put it, this piece of furniture can cause unnecessary stress (queue Ross yelling “Pivot!” in “The one with the cop”). There are quite a few things to consider, such as the layout of your home, your personal aesthetic and budget, and of course, comfort. So, we asked a few designers to lend their hand... er talents, and share a few tips on how to buy and style a couch. Cue [Courtney Thomas](#), [Christie Leu](#), and [Uma Stewart](#). All of these ladies are sharing their expert tips for picking a sofa that is just right for every person and every stage in their home life, here below.

### Before You Buy



Design by [Christie Leu Interiors](#), Photos by [Stacy Zarin Goldberg](#)

Christie Leu says, "The first thing you must consider is the number of people you need to accommodate and the activities (TV, games, book club) you plan to do there. Once those two major considerations are established, you can go on to decide the styles your room can accommodate. There are so many considerations when selecting a sofa. I highly recommend enlisting the help of a designer who knows your needs and is familiar with many brands of sofas, since it is not a frequent purchase."



Design by [Christie Leu Interiors](#), Photos by [Stacy Zarin Goldberg](#)

Courtney Thomas advises, "Look for fit, versatility, and comfort."



*Design by [Courtney Thomas Design](#), Photo by [Jill Weller Photography](#)*

**Fit:** Does it fit? Not just through the door (though that is important), but your lifestyle? Select something to suit the way it will get used. If it's a couch for lounging, a deep chaise sofa may be the way to go. For formal seating? Perhaps a French country settee.

**Versatility:** Is this sofa in it for the long haul? Will it need to transition through all your lifestyle changes? I suggest a sofa with clean lines. They're more likely to make the "to keep or toss" cut as your design style preference change.

**Comfort:** If possible, sit on the sofa first. This gets harder as retailers downsize their showrooms and don't carry all their lines on the floor, but if it's an option, take it. You'll be spending some time on this important piece of furniture. Make sure you love being on it, snuggled up in it or lounging across it. Consider depth, too. If you're tall or have tall family members, look at deeper sofas. Shorter? Consider a more shallow one. It'll be easier to get in and out of it."

For someone's first investment, Courtney recommends "A well-built 7' sofa is a good bet. It's one of the most versatile sizes for different spaces and if it's well-built (hard and solid woods, joints integrated into frame components, hand-tied coil springs, high-density foam with down wrap cushions), it can be re-shaped and re-covered as trends change and fabrics wear out."

### Where To Place



*Design by [Christie Leu Interiors](#), Photos by [Stacy Zarin Goldberg](#)*

Christie offers a few things to consider when placing the sofa in the room and pairing it with furniture:

“The position of the sofa in relation to the walls is not what matters! Furniture needs to be placed in an arrangement that allows for conversation. In a large room, this means you may “float” the seating area in the room leaving room to breathe around the furniture. **Always consider that you need room to circulate.** A large room can have two seating areas or add ottomans for extra seating on book club night! – Christie Leu



Design by [Uma Stewart Interiors & Lifestyle](#), Photos by [Laura Moss](#)

Uma Stewart continues with the best sofa types for different settings:

**Loveseats + Settees:** I mostly like these for bedrooms or offices and smaller seating areas in rooms that are large enough to have 2 seating areas. I often use them near a fireplace.

**Sofas:** A classic for family rooms and living rooms

**Small Sectionals:** Sometimes you have a smaller space but need wrap around seating. I like these when you want to keep a more clean and minimal look.

**Large Sectionals:** Family rooms or in a formal fabric you can do in a modern living room too. Everyone thinks a sectional is great for TV viewing, but they are equally great for conversations.

**How To Style**



*Design by [Uma Stewart Interiors & Lifestyle](#), Photos by [Laura Moss](#)*

“Most people instinctively put chairs facing a sofa, but I always feel that looks so oppositional! If I have the right space I like to place the chairs to the side in a pair, or split up flanking each side of the sofa. Ottomans can go 18: to 24” in front of the sofa.” says Uma

“Sofas with exposed wood legs and arms have a more formal look. I like to pair them with chairs that are upholstered to the ground for a balanced look – or vice versa. A sofa or section upholstered to the ground looks nice with a chair with exposed wood,” says Christie.

For more designer tips, check out [these tips for styling your shelves](#), or the [best indoor plants!](#)