

Decorating Fireplace Mantels

The fireplace is often the focal point of a room. But what about the empty mantel? What do you put there? How do you arrange it? Keep the following ideas in mind, and your mantel will be the perfect finishing touch.

❖ **Color**

It is important to keep color in mind when decorating your mantel. Keep darker colors lower on the mantel to help the room feel anchored. If your mantel is high above eye level, lighter colors will feel more pleasing.

❖ **Scale**

The proportion and scale of the items you place on the mantel is crucial. Consider the width of the fireplace and the height to the ceiling above. Your display will look most pleasing if the items you choose are proportionate to the space in which you are using them. On a large, wide mantel, one large item is often more appropriate than many smaller ones.

❖ **Balance**

Once you feel that you have the perfect items picked out for the mantel, you need to arrange them so that the mantel feels balanced. There are three options for creating balance: symmetrical displays, asymmetrical arrangements, and radial composition.

- For formal rooms, most people chose a ***symmetrical*** display. This arrangement creates perfect, equal balance. Place one item in the center of the mantel, and flank it with identical items on each side.
- For a more casual approach, ***asymmetrical*** displays are popular. These arrangements have good balance, but the sides are not perfect mirror images of each other. The balance is created from “visual weight.” A small, dark-colored item can be balanced by a tall, lighter-colored item on the opposite side of the mantel.
- A ***radial*** arrangement creates movement and excitement, and is a nice combination of formal and informal moods. The center item acts as the anchor, and all other items circle out from it in a balanced way.

The possibilities are endless when it comes to decorating your fireplace mantel. And if you remember these simple tips, you can create an eye-catching display!