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Blink: You May Not Be Aware of It, but These 12 Design Tricks Help to Make a Home Look Polished

credit: Stephen Paul

In *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, Malcolm Gladwell affirms what we already know: our intuition is a pretty powerful tool. We often make instant judgments or observations that, in the end, turn out to be spot-on.

What does this have to do with design? A lot, actually. Gladwell describes one experiment, where strangers and friends alike were invited into someone's dorm room, and then asked to describe that person. The strangers were actually *more* accurate, even though they'd never met the person – simply because we are incredibly adept at translating the visual language of someone's personal space.

How do you control what your space says about you, in the blink of an eye? In a word: styling. These expert tips can help you make sure that first impression is polished and put together, whichever way your design tastes leans.

3. Remember that less is more.

"My go-to trick for making a space look pulled together and polished is editing," says Courtney Thomas of Courtney Thomas Design, in Southern California. "The negative space on a bookshelf is as important as what fills it."

The key is to give the accessories you do want some breathing room. "Accessories can get lost and overlooked when they compete for shelf space," she adds. "Too many pillows can drown out the lines of a sofa. If you stop seeing the surface spaces in your room, consider pulling everything off and starting with a fresh slate. Discard what you don't love and put back only the items you do."