

FREE GUIDE · ALEX NEO HOME

Decor Starter *Plan*

*Find your next 3 decorating moves
before you buy anything else.*

8

DIAGNOSTIC CHECKS

3

MOVES TO MAKE

1

CLEAR STARTING POINT

The problem isn't your taste.

It's that nobody told you where to start.

Most decorating mistakes happen before anything goes on the wall.

You scroll. You save. You buy something that seemed right in the store. Then it sits in your room feeling slightly off — not exactly wrong, just not *quite right either*. So you buy something else to fix it.

This isn't a taste problem. It's a sequencing problem. The room didn't need more things — it needed a clearer starting point. This guide gives you that in four steps:



This guide is printable. Print it out, check boxes with a pen, and write your 3 steps on page 5. It works better on paper — keep it somewhere visible until Step 1 is done.

HOW THIS GUIDE WORKS

1

DIAGNOSE • PAGE 03

Name what feels off

An 8-item checklist. Check what's true about your room right now — vague discomfort counts.

2

PRIORITIZE • PAGE 04

Find your fix-first starting point

The Fix-First Map turns your checklist into one ranked priority — not a to-do list.

3

ACT • PAGE 05

Decide your next 3 moves

One friction fix. One visual anchor. One spending category to stop. Specific, not vague.

4

SPEND SMARTLY • PAGES 06 - 07

Filter every purchase before you buy

A 3-question buy/pass filter + common mistakes to avoid — before anything goes in the cart.

What feels off?

Check everything that's true about your space right now. Be honest — vague discomfort counts.

You don't have to name the style problem precisely — just check what matches your gut feeling. The letter beside each item maps directly to your Fix-First starting point on the next page.

☐**The walls feel bare or empty**

Clear wall space with nothing on it — or one small thing that disappears in the room.

A☐**The layout feels wrong or cramped**

Furniture placed by default, not by design. Traffic flow feels awkward.

B☐**There's only one type of light source**

One overhead fixture, nothing else. The room feels flat or harsh at night.

A☐**Nothing feels like it belongs together**

Items bought separately don't read as a set. Assembled, not designed.

C☐**There's too much clutter or visual noise**

Adding more things makes it worse. Surfaces feel heavy or overwhelming.

C☐**No clear style direction**

No anchor aesthetic. You like too many different things and they conflict.

C☐**The room feels temporary or unfinished**

Bare corners, floating furniture, no finishing touches. Looks like you just moved in.

D☐**The budget feels unclear or wasted**

You've spent money but can't point to one thing that made a clear difference.

E

The Fix-First Map

Find your most-checked letter. That row is your highest-leverage starting point.

Each row shows a symptom → a fix. Don't try to address everything at once. Start with the single row that matches the most checks.

A	<i>Empty walls, flat or single-source light</i>	START HERE	Walls + lighting layers first	WALLS / LIGHT
B	<i>Layout feels wrong or cramped</i>	START HERE	Measure and rearrange before buying anything new	LAYOUT
C	<i>Mismatched, cluttered, no style direction</i>	START HERE	Choose one style anchor and edit around it	STYLE ANCHOR
D	<i>Room feels temporary or unfinished</i>	START HERE	Add the finishing layer — textiles and small anchors	FINISHING LAYER
E	<i>Budget feels unclear or wasted</i>	START HERE	Set a buy/pass rule before your next purchase	BUDGET + RULES

NOT SURE WHICH LETTER APPLIES?



If your room feels wrong but you can't name why, try **FREE AI Room Snapshot** — upload a photo and get a specific, room-level diagnosis in minutes. (alexneohome.com)

Your Next 3 Decor Moves

Use your Fix-First Map letter. Tick each box when done — not before.

Three concrete actions. Each one should take a sentence to describe. If it takes a paragraph, it's too vague — break it down further.

1
FIX

STEP 1 · HIGHEST FRICTION FIRST

Fix the one problem your Fix-First Map letter points to.

☐ I've identified my Fix-First letter: ____

☐ I've named the specific problem in one sentence (written below or in my notes)

☐ I've decided on one concrete action to take — no purchase yet until the action is clear

My problem + action: _____

2
ANCHOR

STEP 2 · ONE VISUAL ANCHOR

Choose the one piece everything else in the room will reference.

☐ I've chosen a category: **Art print / Rug / Lamp / Mirror / Curtains / Shelf**

☐ I can describe its style, color, and scale in one sentence

☐ It passes the 3-question Buy-or-Pass filter on page 06

My anchor: _____

3
PAUSE

STEP 3 · STOP ONE SPENDING CATEGORY

Name the category you're buying on autopilot. Stop it until Step 1 is done.

☐ I've named the category to pause: _____

☐ I won't buy from this category until Step 1 is complete

Common ones: small accessories · throw pillows · "almost right" sale items · more storage

Mini Buy-or-Pass Filter

Run every purchase through all 3 questions. Any fail = put it back.

Works for any category — furniture, art, textiles, accessories. If an item fails even one of these, it's not the right purchase right now.

1

Does this solve the actual problem I identified?

✓ BUY

You can name the exact problem this solves — it's on your Step 1 or Step 2 list.

✗ PASS

You like it, but can't link it to a specific problem in your current room.

The specific friction point from your 3 Steps — not a general problem, not a future-room problem. Buying for imaginary problems fills a room with things that don't help.

2

Does it belong in the same world as your style anchor?

✓ BUY

It shares color, material, era, or mood with your style anchor.

✗ PASS

It's a different aesthetic world — you'd have to explain why it belongs.

Your style anchor (Step 2) is the piece the room references. Everything new should feel like it's from the same collection. Mix is intentional. Random is not mix.

3

Will it still make sense in 6 months?

✓ BUY

You'd still want it in winter, in a different mood, after the trend passes.

✗ PASS

You're riding a mood or a flash sale. Wait 48 hours — see if the feeling holds.

Trend items feel right for about a month. You're furnishing a home, not decorating for a photoshoot. Durability of decision matters as much as material quality.



WANT THE FULL SYSTEM?

The **Apartment Design Action Kit** includes all 50 buy/pass filters, a Smart Budget Planner, room-by-room checklists, and a style direction workbook. (alexneohome.com)

Common Mistakes to Avoid

These purchases seem reasonable in the moment. They become mistakes before you have a direction.

None of these are wrong forever — only wrong right now, before your first move is clear. Read through and check any that match your current situation.

Small decor before you have a direction

Candles, vases, figurines — these are finishing-layer items that belong at the end, not the beginning. Without a style anchor in place, they look scattered and get visually lost. They don't make a room feel complete; they make an already-directionless room feel busier. Buy these last.

AVOID

AVOID

Large furniture without measuring

Scale is the #1 mistake in small and rented spaces. A sofa 6 inches too wide changes the entire room's flow. Before any large piece, measure the floor space, the doorway clearance, and the traffic path through the room — not just the item's dimensions on a product page.

AVOID

A gallery wall without a layout

Buying prints one by one and hoping they'll work together is how gallery walls end up scattered and mismatched. Plan the full arrangement on the floor first — frames, spacing, total footprint — before a single hole goes in the wall or a single print gets ordered.

AVOID

"Almost right" items on sale

50% off the wrong color, wrong scale, or wrong material is still the wrong purchase. Compromises don't disappear once they're in the room — they accumulate into a space that never quite resolves. If it's not exactly right, the discount doesn't change that.

AVOID

More storage before editing

Buying another basket, box, or shelving unit to manage clutter postpones the real decision: what actually needs to stay. More storage before an edit just means more containers full of things you haven't decided about. Edit first — then buy only the storage you still actually need.

The rule before any purchase: Can you answer "what specific problem does this solve in my room right now?" If not — wait.

You have a starting point.

The Decor Starter Plan gets you oriented. Here's where to go once you know your first move.



IF YOU WANT THE FULL PLANNING SYSTEM

Apartment Design Action Kit

The complete PDF + Excel system: Smart Budget Planner, full 50-filter Buy-or-Pass guide, room-by-room checklists, and a style direction workbook.

GET IT →
ALEXNEOHOME.COM



IF YOU WANT ONGOING TOOLS, ART, AND MEMBER-ONLY PLANNERS

Cozy Club Membership

Annual membership — all digital wall art, member-only web planning tools, new kits as they launch, and priority access. Everything in one place.

JOIN →
ALEXNEOHOME.COM



IF YOUR MAIN ISSUE IS BARE WALLS

FREE Instant Gallery Starter Kit

A curated set of illustrated digital prints sized and styled to work together — for renters who want a finished-looking wall without starting from scratch.

GET IT →
ALEXNEOHOME.COM



IF YOUR MAIN ISSUE IS "WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY ROOM?"

FREE AI Room Snapshot

Upload a photo of your actual room and get a specific diagnosis — layout, lighting, style gaps — in minutes. Built on Claude AI, made for renters.

TRY IT →
ALEXNEOHOME.COM

