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Brian Smith, a founding partner at Studio Tack, has a name to describe the pitfalls of a stereotypical bachelor pad: catalog syndrome. "It's when everything begins to blend together, making spaces feel more like homogenized showrooms and less like homes," he says. "While they may not be dirty, there's a visible laziness to them."When a bachelor pad fits this description, it means that a quick tour illustrates practicality over personality. The design leans heavily on matching furniture sets or passed-down items—like an old sofa placed directly in front of a television, with chairs lined up against a wall—which fill a room...but do so without style. Smith also mentions how the artwork, if it exists, tends to be something bland or juvenile. "The problem is often one of semantics," he says. "Men can view decorating as mindlessly buying accessories at a store and then scattering them around their house. But we can't blame them for this. We've been conditioned by catalogues and store windows that design can be, quite literally, a one-stop shop." Nacho Alegre/Studio TackSo how can this problem be fixed? We asked Smith to share some ideas on how to avoid the bachelor pad cliché, and his answers are as much about shopping carefully as they are about fostering comfortable details. Follow his advice, and a place that exemplifies catalog syndrome can eventually become a space worth showing off. "This may sound wishy-washy, but you need to do a little soul-searching before you set out to decorate," Smith says. "Your home should tell the story of you, not a brand. Take Your Timeln order for a home to tell a story, as Smith recommends, the first step in design is likely the hardest: patience. "You need to have patience," Smith says. "I can't emphasize this enough: Design is a process. Consider the type of style that best suits your taste—such as modern, traditional, eclectic, and so on—and then take your time to collect pieces that fall under that category. Of course, decorating your home this way won't be done as easily as buying everything at one store. But that's the point. "If you view your home as a work in progress that's never really complete, you'll see it as a living canvas for your self-expression that evolves over time," Smith notes. "This way, you have the freedom to snag that beautiful chair you saw at a flea market without worrying if it will fit with everything else you own. Don't Forget: "If you're moving into a new space, don't rush to buy everything at once, as eager as you are to have a 'finished' look," Smith adds. "If your home is layered with things you truly love, it will look beautiful, because everything will have a significance that no catalogue or store could possibly replicate. "Mix Old With NewIn keeping with the idea that you shouldn't furnish a home from one store, Smith says that you also shouldn't buy everything new. Either hold on to family heirlooms—no, a broken recliner doesn't count—or search through vintage collections. "Beautiful homes have a healthy mix of old and new pieces," he notes. "For media and clothing storage, try looking for something vintage, like a beautiful mid-century credenza. These can be found at any decent vintage or thrift store, and for good reason—they've stood the test of time because they're well-constructed."Smith says that sofas, on the other hand, should always be bought new. "It's going to be easier to pick one that perfectly fits your space and meets your comfort needs," he says. "Take advantage of stores with white-glove delivery service. There's nothing worse than having to figure out how to get a used sofa from one space to another. Don't Forget: "When I'm arranging a space, I like to use my phone to take photos of the process," he says. "It's a good way to step back and look at everything objectively. If your home is your story, then think about creating little 'chapters' or vignettes throughout different rooms. This could be as simple as a putting a narrow console table in your foyer with a small vase of flowers and a bowl for your keys. Light Each Room ProperlyNow that you're considering which furnishings are best for your home, don't forget about the proper way to illuminate them. "Lighting is crucial, but too often it's the last thing people think about," Smith says. "You can have the most beautiful space in the world, but if the lighting is bad, no one's going to notice. "Stay away from fluorescent lighting, which is too harsh for most spaces and can lead to headaches or blurred vision. Instead, Smith says, stick to warm incandescent or LED lights that can be adjusted with dimmers. "Dimming is crucial to adjusting light levels to suit a space or mood," he says. "You can buy these at any hardware store and install them yourself. Be sure to bulbs that have a Kelvin temperature from 2,000 to 3,000K. At these levels, the light will be inviting and intimate. Anything higher, and your home will begin to look institutional."Read McKendree/Studio TackDon't Forget: "In design, we use the phrase 'touch point' to describe the things that you literally touch a lot, like light switches, door knobs, and faucets," Smith says. "It's worth investing more on these items, because they will be used so much, and there's nothing more satisfying than a beautifully sturdy rotary dimmer knob—favorite of mine is Forbes & Lomax."Create a Sanctuary in the BedroomA bedroom should be the place where you feel especially at ease, so spend plenty of attention to its design. Smith says that it should start with a well-made mattress for a restful night's sleep, and then—much like the rest of your home—expand on your tastes. "Avoid bedroom sets where the bed, side tables, and dressers all match," he says. "If you want a more streamlined look, try buying the bed and side tables in the same wood finish but from different sources. Then, try to balance heavy and light furniture. If you have a platform bed that sits on the ground, balance it out with side tables that have slender legs. This will keep your room from looking too bulky."Read McKendree/Studio TackAfter you've figured out the furniture, move on to details like artwork and lighting to complete the look. Layering in these pieces should feel balanced, too, and it's best to work in groups of three. If you don't like how a collection looks, rearrange the pieces until you do—there's no time limit. Don't Forget: "Layering doesn't have to mean cluttered," he notes. "A layered space considers how all the elements in a room blend together. It could be as simple as putting a vintage rug under your bed, or adding a small lamp and beautiful incense holder on a nightstand. "Where to ShopReform: "Reform is a company that creates beautiful, design-forward fronts and countertops for Ikea kitchen cabinets and wardrobes," Smith says. "It's an easy and affordable option to add personality to Ikea's popular modular pieces. "Framebridge: "Framebridge has revolutionized how we frame and display photos and artwork," Smith says. "In an increasingly digital age, our memories often remain locked up in our phones. Framebridge's custom framing makes it easy to capture these moments and put them on display. Look through your phone, pick out some of your favorite photos, and send them to Framebridge, and they'll take care of the rest. They'll even assign you a designer—free of charge—to help you pick out the best frames for your space."TRNK-NY: "Tariq and Nick have carved out a space in the design world that's focused on helping men create homes that are modern and beautiful," Smith notes. "They have a line of custom and curated furniture, lighting, and accessories. "Schoolhouse Electric: "This brand has a wonderful and affordable collection of lighting and accessories that are all handmade made in Portland, Oregon," Smith continues. Fort Standard: "Based in Brooklyn, Fort Standard designs and builds furniture that is timeless and modern," he adds. "If you buy a piece from Fort Standard, you can be sure that it will never look trendy. Their pieces are so high-quality that you'll probably be able to pass them down to your children. "Follow House Beautiful on Instagram. A hardware device with several asynchronous connectors and an X.25 attachment. This commercially available device can be connected to a public or private X.25 PSDN and has the same capabilities as a public PAD. [Source: IBM Information center] See also PAD. Forget what you know about bachelor pads. While some may envision bare-bones places where single men hole up when they're not out and about, these spaces have become far more refined and stylized without losing their comfort. Bean bags have been replaced with cushy leather statement chairs and those liquor collections are no longer relegated to an obscure cabinet but rather a swanky bar cart. The best part is, even if you appreciate the familiar appeal the stereotypical bachelor pad has, you can still get a homey vibe and a space that's styled to the nines. Whether it's a cozy place to return to, a spot where you hang with friends, a way to impress a new love interest, or a mixture of all three, you'll find an inspiring mix of suggestions below. 01 of 20 A unique piece of artwork never hurts a space, and if your bachelor pad is feeling a bit blah, this is the perfect solution. Tyler Karu Design + Interiors' space here is modern and elevated, but a few pops of color through the framed work and throw pillows help make it feel inviting and inspired. 02 of 20 Don't banish your specialty collections or gear to a closet—these items can serve as decor to really differentiate your space from a run-of-the-mill bachelor pad. "It was really fun working with a bachelor," Holly Kopman of Holly A Kopman Interior Design says. "Turned out he had a great art collection to begin with and a unique collection of accessories—vintage glassware, found objects, and a sunglasses collection any rock star would envy." This room and Kopman's eye for design prove that even the most eclectic wares can be shown off stylishly. 03 of 20 Colors and different material textures are a surefire way to jazz up a space, but don't forget patterns either. This doesn't have to be obnoxious polka dots or vivid florals, but rather a gentle wash of color. This living room by Gail Davis Designs utilizes a subtly printed wallpaper for one extra layer of personality that's not too overwhelming. 04 of 20 A game room is a given in a bachelor pad. Interior designer Marlaina Teich's take on this space doesn't feel immature or bonus-room-like, but rather it works as a comfortable, adult-friendly place to hang out. Trying copying this room's chill color palette or the implementation of jerseys on the wall, which is a fresh way to show off your love of sports without resorting to posters. 05 of 20 If a game room sounds great, but you're still craving something a little more unique, it might be time to consider a spa-like space. Marlaina Teich created this bachelor pad, wanting to "give a nod to a sophisticated, masculine style that still has a sense of warmth and homeyness," and the spa certainly delivers. Whether it's a place to snooze or indulge in a Saturday massage, it's a worthy consideration. 06 of 20 You may have the furniture and walls all figured out, but don't forget about your floors. There's no need to sort out tiles or wood flooring if you're not in the mood (or want to avoid high costs)—a simple rug can do just the trick. This bachelor-worthy pad from Studio Munroe is a great example of how a rug can instantly tie a space together, no matter what style or color scheme you're working with. 07 of 20 This space from KD Reid Interiors is remarkable in itself, but it goes to show how much the right lighting and fixtures can do for your bachelor pad. Soft, cozy mood lighting is never a bad idea, and there are a plethora of ways you can make that happen, whether it be a pendant light, a cool task lamp, or a statement chandelier. 08 of 20 Studies, offices, and libraries are extremely underrated when it comes to decorating a bachelor pad. But, focusing on one of these rooms may help set the tone you're going for throughout your home. Patrick Ryan's Office designed this sharp space that combines features every bachelor pad should have, including a small bar area, plenty of good reads, and personalized flair. 09 of 20 It can be easy to get overwhelmed by all the décor options out there. But, taking the time to find what really strikes your fancy will lead to a home you'll always love coming back to. Alan Tanksley, Inc.'s space here highlights how cohesive your bachelor pad can look if you settle on a theme and stick to it. In this case, a few classic, worldly accents mix perfectly with a handful of more modern, contemporary shapes in the room. 10 of 20 Designing your dream bachelor pad really comes down to you, how you live, and what's important in your life. Traci Connell Interiors explained that this bachelor pad was thoughtfully curated with the client in mind. Everything from his preferred espresso machine down to his certification to teach scuba lessons was considered—hello 14-foot pool. You can still keep a space looking fresh and put together—just look at that serene bedroom—but have it catered specifically to you. 11 of 20 Looking to stand out from the flat-pack furniture crowd? Completely understandable. If you're looking for ways to upgrade your space, take a page out of Benjamin Johnston Design's book and rely on modern shapes and lines to make a statement. Investing in just a handful of cool pieces will make a difference, meaning you can totally keep that IKEA shelving system if you want. 12 of 20 Your bathroom may be low down on your list, but aside from your bedroom, it's really where you'll start and end a majority of your days. Whether you're brushing your teeth or taking time for a self-care night, getting this space right really makes a difference. Keep things straightforward and rev up those chill vibes with black-and-white tiles and accessories. A palette as chic as the one in this bathroom by Beauty Is Abundant will never feel tired or stale. 13 of 20 Another room from Traci Connell Interiors' bachelor pad is this stunning kitchen, which feels strong and sophisticated, but doesn't lose out on the inviting vibes many people want their home to emanate. While most of the palette is cool and sleek, the addition of warm wood accents completes it. 14 of 20 Corners and stylized vignettes are the keys to making your bachelor pad feel lived in and cozy. The ideas are endless; you can set up a reading nook or designate a corner for your horticulture hobby. Regardless, it'll help fill awkward spaces or empty-feeling rooms, which in turn prevents the "just moved in" look—even when it's eight months down the road. 15 of 20 We'll never say no to maximalism and eclectic homes, but there is something so calming about keeping your bedroom quiet and toned down. If you feel drawn to this bedroom from The Home Consultant, it might be worth considering sleeping quarters that reflect the zen feelings you're striving for after a long day at work. 16 of 20 The vibrant energy of a space like this can be just what you need if you prefer a room to invigorate you. Forbes + Masters designed this stunning room with playful patterns and textures, but kept it grounded through a mostly monochrome color scheme. Whether you're a minimalist or maximalist at heart, you have plenty of options. 17 of 20 While white and ultra-light neutrals are popular kitchen colors, don't be afraid to stray in the opposite direction and play with deep, dark tones. A navy or slate blue is eye-catching and plays well with lighter hues on your cabinets or backsplash. This room done by Benjamin Johnston Design shows how you can make a bachelor pad kitchen feel grounded with the right moody shade. 18 of 20 A bachelor pad should be timeless enough to match your taste for years—even if you're done living the bachelor life. Or, it should be adaptable enough to allow you to make a few tweaks and feel like you have a fresh new space. This gorgeous room by Alvin Wayne is a stunning example of a classic space with modern twists that can be rearranged and swapped out if you ever feel like it. 19 of 20 While you may be accustomed to the bachelor pads consisting solely of neutral colors, it's time to consider a sprinkling of saturation. Courtesy of Studio Munroe, this bachelor pad shows how the right combination of shades still feels laid-back and slick. If you're unsure where to start, trying picking your favorite color and going a few shades darker. 20 of 20 There are far too many bachelor pad ideas out there—but what about for bachelorettes? It's hard to find a chicer option than this apartment done by Desiree Burns Interiors. Whether it's a studio apartment or a first-time home, metallic accents, and a bright white palette are certainly solid options for making your space feel homey, customized, and different from your roommate's days.

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