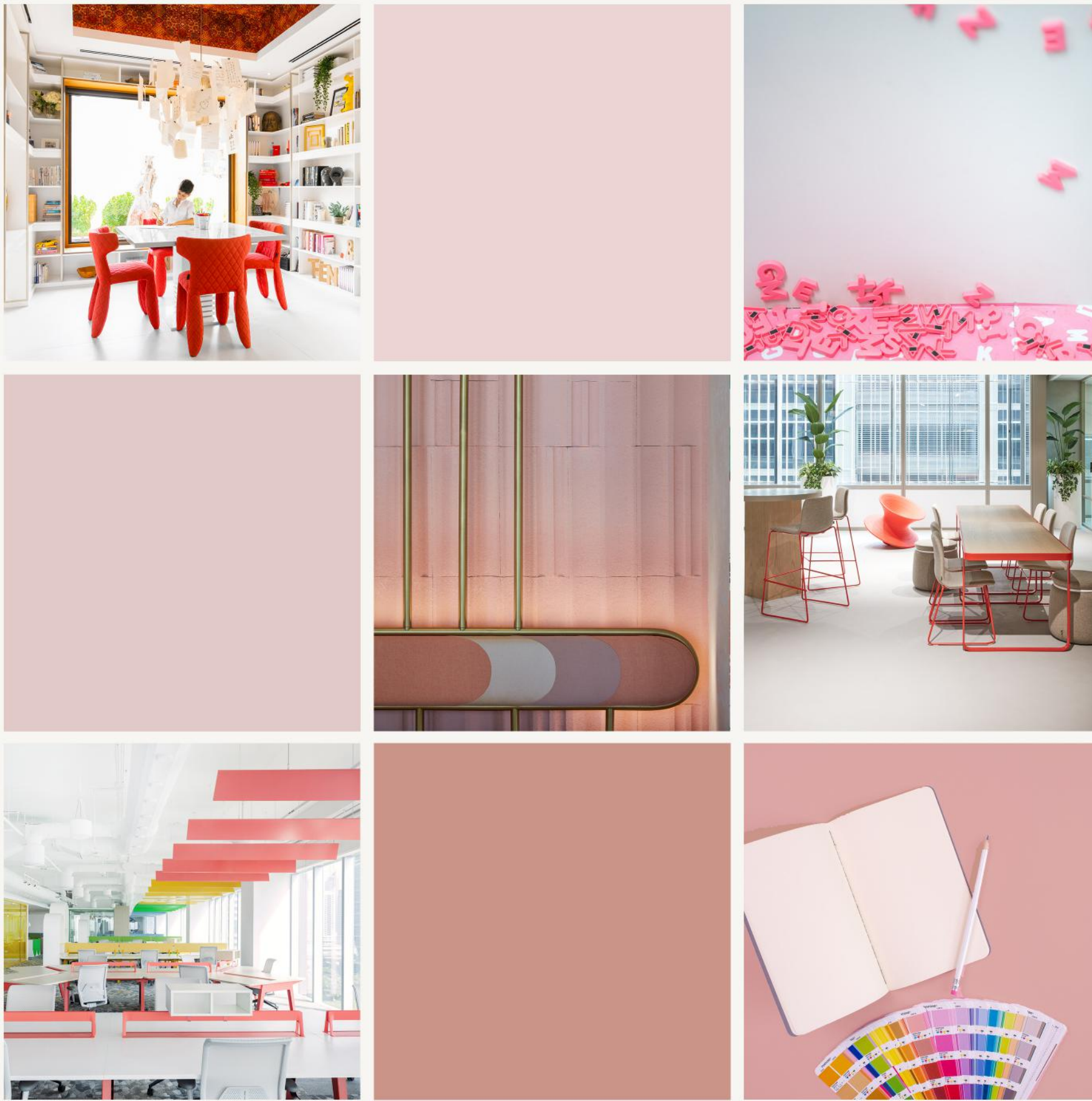


*Seven trends that will transform
home design in 2021*

2021
DESIGN
TRENDS





01

Optimism

We've always known that interiors can have a massive impact on moods - that's our super power as designers! The pandemic has amplified this tenfold, which is why "optimism" is our top trend of 2021.

Start with colour. Colour psychology tells us that yellow is the most optimistic hue, with orange and violet close behind. Red and black are a generally a no-no for residential interiors, but green and blue can work if you want a more serene, thoughtful mood. For neutral spaces like floors, walls and ceilings, be wary of brilliant white, which can be sterile; favour off-white, ivory or dove grey.

The other quick win is lighting. Maximise natural light by removing anything that blocks it: curtains or a cupboard are easy, but you might want to dig deeper. Replace a wooden front door with a glass door; replace bulky windows frames with something sleeker. And of course, you can fake it! Floor-to-ceiling mirrors and glossy wall paint bounce natural light around the room, while LED soft white bulbs mimic the midday sun.

Finally, add optimistic flourishes with upbeat art, bold photography, statues, books - even inspirational quotes in 3D or 2D text by your favourite author, leader, singer etc.



02

Earthy, unfinished materials

We're spending so much time indoors that we crave the rustic imperfection of nature. Textures are your friend here, with unvarnished wood furniture and accessories the obvious quick win. Rugs and throws are another off-the-shelf fix, while curtains are a more permanent (and expensive) solution. For maximum impact, hit the walls. Textured paint and wallpaper are fairly straightforward, but you could go all-in with a feature wall clad in natural material like wood, slate, leather or rough-cut marble (the Roar office has pink faux fur!).

Then there's biophilia - the idea of bringing the outside indoors. For plants, go for something like a yucca that has a trunk. And don't be shy about artificial plants - the effect on your mood is much the same, but with much less hassle.

If you've got an outdoor space like a balcony or garden, try to bridge the gap between it and your interiors. That's not easy - most homes have fixed barriers between these spaces, to defend against thunder storms and 50 degree heatwave. Steal the tricks of restaurant designers, who resolve this dilemma with sliding/folding doors, canopy shades, fans and heaters, to extend the indoor-outdoor season.

A final word on multi-sensory design. With interiors we think first and foremost visually, but don't neglect the other senses. Tactility is super important to us (particularly when we're cooped up during lockdown) and these earthy, unfinished materials are gorgeous to touch. They also help with acoustics by dampening echo. For smell, reach for scented candles or oils. As for taste - look, we interior designers are good, but we ain't chefs! We can build you a nice kitchen, but you've gotta cook the food yourself!



03

Goodbye open-plan, hello Zoom Room

Open-plan homes look gorgeous in magazine photo shoots, but they're the enemy of #workfromhome, especially if you have a family (I would know, I have both!). Imagine the cacophony: mum & dad on work calls, while the kids join a school debate. Throw in grandparents shouting grocery orders down the phone and you've got a perfect storm.

Enter the Zoom Room. There are three essential features that you must get right: a good background, strong lighting and acoustic privacy. Let's break them down. But before we do, remember that it's not about having a 'spare room'. I've been on calls with senior executives in huge villas who fail epically, and others who live in a small apartments who nail it.

First, the look. The background doesn't have to be amazing - book shelves are a safe bet - but camera angle and lighting do. Put your laptop on a stack of books and buy a \$30 ring light from Amazon - job done. Natural light is great, but I've been caught out by long meetings that started late afternoon with gorgeous illumination from a window, and ended with me in darkness!

Then there's acoustics. If you're tight on space, you can buy or build padded space dividers quite cheaply - or just manoeuvre free-standing bookshelves into position. Even if you have the luxury of a dedicated room, dampen the sound. Rugs, wallpaper, plants, books all absorb echo well. There's really no excuse: until recently, acoustic paneling was an expensive specialist product for corporate offices - now IKEA sells one (called Oddlaug).



04

Cocoon sanctuaries

Amid all the chaos and madness of lockdown life, many of us crave a small place we can call our own. As always, this is easier if you have space to play with, but it's not all about sq ft. Here are three tips for creating a sanctuary.

First, lighting. Find a room or part of a room where you can install dimmer lighting. It could be your bedroom, the bathroom or a corner of the living room.

Second, install comfort-seating that is DIFFERENT to your regular task or dining chairs. A bean bag, a chaise long, an armchair you can sink in to. The point is it must be lean-back seating - not the lean-forward seating we use during the normal day.

Finally, think about sound, smell and touch. So get yourself a speaker to play relaxing music, scented sticks, and a faux fur rug to snuggle up with.



05

Multifunctional spaces

We all need our homes to do a lot more heavy lifting these days. Suddenly during the pandemic they had to take on new roles: gym, office, coffee shop, movie theatre, school, spa, playroom - I could go on. In addition to their traditional rolls of eating, sleeping and relaxing.

The challenge for residential designers is to squeeze all of these new experiences into the same space. There is only one solution: multifunction.

One example: create a hybrid yoga studio and movie theatre. These may seem unlikely bedfellows - the peaceful serenity of sun salutations vs. eating popcorn while watching Avengers Endgame. But think about it: the screen and speakers for your ashtanga tutorials are no different to the home video surround sound system your kids love for TV. Chuck a few bean bags round the sides of the room and you're good to go.

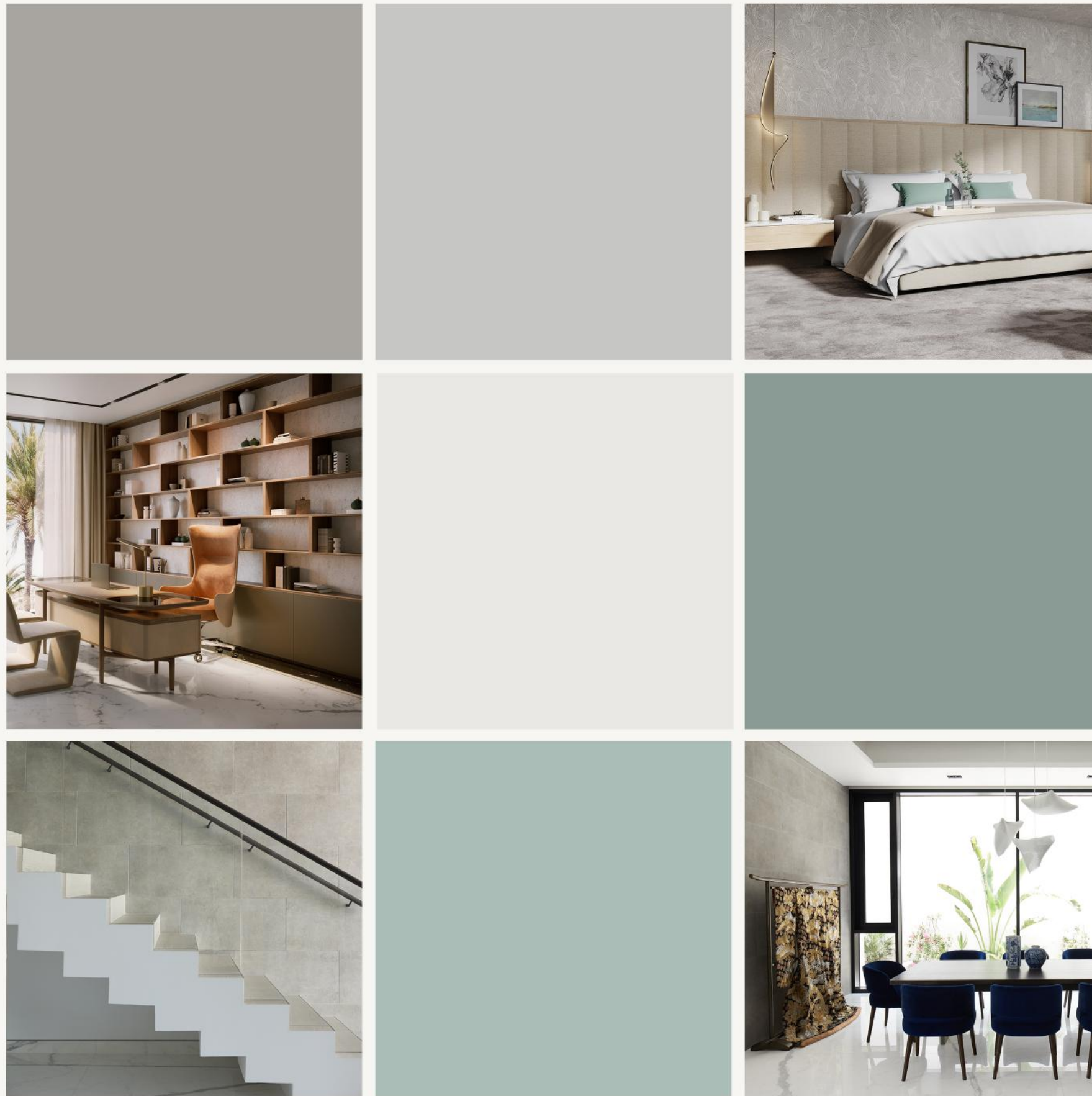


06

Vintage vibes

There's a certain comfort in re-connecting with our childhood, hence the residential retro revival. We're not suggesting you call all-out 70s with tie-dyed wallpaper (though there's a website for that if you want <https://www.wallpaperfromthe70s.com/>).

*But subtle vintage accents can add real character. We like vinyl record players, PAC-MAN arcade machine or some retro geometry in art. A close cousin is using the theory of *Vuja de* – seeing the familiar with a fresh view.*



07

Hack your space

Our final transformative trend for 2021 is hacking - that is, quick changes you can do in a weekend, rather than a full refit. Look, we all hope the current reality of on-off lockdowns and home schooling - wherever we live in the world - is a temporary rather than permanent thing. A short-term problem requires short-term solutions - hence the focus on quick-and-easy hacks.

Many of them are mentioned above. To recap, our favourite five residential hacks are walls (textured paint or wallpaper); lighting (mirrors and soft white LEDs); sanctuary spaces (candles, music and a lean-back seat); optimism (an inspirational painting, book or quote) and multifunction (the hybrid yoga studio/movie theatre).