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LESSON ONE
into the blue

Homeowner Vanessa Francis's trick for a unified gallery wall? "Though the frames and sizes are different, the look is all tied together by the colour blue. Black and white travel photos, plus pictures of my parents and my in-laws in their youth, provide visual relief."

PRETTY TOGETHER

TEXT BETH HITCHCOCK | PHOTOGRAPHY KELLY HORKOFF

A decorator and blogger's family home puts the fun in functional.

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LESSON TWO tabled motion

Vanessa's small living room contains a bright ottoman that serves as a resting place for essentials plus three tables - an end table on either side of the sofa and a side table in between the armchairs - making for loads of display space.

LESSON THREE
double duty

Vanessa's boldly feminine craft room is organized to double as her daughter Maya's playroom, so the two can spend quality time together, and get creative in the process.

LESSON FOUR
express yourself

Vanessa covers inexpensive bulletin boards with linen fabric, then uses them around the house to corral inspiration photos, fabric swatches and souvenirs.

LESSON FIVE
tall tale

Baskets filled with craft and sewing supplies are stacked almost as high as the desk's surface to make the most of the vertical space.

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LESSON SIX child's play

The gallery wall in Maya's playroom has more variety than the grouping in the living room, incorporating jackets from her favourite books and original art that speaks to her interests. It will continue to change as she gets older, creating an evolving memory board.

LESSON SEVEN give it the slip

Slipcovers are for more than just protecting fabric. Vanessa used this skirted slipcover over a settee, hiding small toys, board games and books underneath the piece.

Looking around the lovely 2,850-square-foot Milton, Ontario, home that interior decorator Vanessa Francis shares with her husband, Rick, and 10-year-old daughter Maya, it's safe to say she knows what she likes: "I've always loved pink in all of its incarnations," she says. "Simply put, it's pretty!" But since Vanessa works from home, where she also updates her popular design blog, Decor Happy, she has to balance the pretty with the practical. "I need to be ultra-organized," she explains. "I can't afford to spend the better part of the day looking for a fabric sample, invoice or purchase order," she says. "Plus, the quicker I get my work done, the more time I have to spend with my daughter." Here's how Vanessa makes organizing look so good – and so easy.



Interior decorator and homeowner Vanessa Francis runs the design blog Decor Happy, decorhappy.blogspot.ca.



LESSON EIGHT
on the shelf

Vanessa carefully curates her open storage, displaying only the most meaningful or functional items. Vanessa and Maya styled the shelves in Maya's bedroom together.

“Having a girl who loves pink meant I could use it in her bedroom *and* her playroom.”

VANESSA FRANCIS, HOMEOWNER

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LESSON ELEVEN
material
world

Selecting one standout fabric as the focal point for a neutral room, as Vanessa did with the fabric on Maya's headboard, maintains a sense of balance and order.

LESSON NINE
be trayed

Trays are used throughout the house to group similar items. In Maya's room, a tray on the dresser works as a way to consolidate her collection of figurines.

LESSON TEN
fine lines

Vanessa gravitates toward stripes, which she likes for their tailored feel. Here, the armchair fabric complements the headboard and offers a neutral resting spot for the eye.

Vanessa dishes on her inspiration and all things design at STYLEATHOME.COM/VANESSAFRANCIS.