

## BALANCE

There are no absolute rules for the creation of good design. However, there are suggested principles that lead to a greater amount of success.

Balance is the resolution of interacting forces, attractions, or weights. Another word for balance is equilibrium. Some general characteristics are:

1. Large objects and spaces appear heavier than small ones, but a grouping of small objects can balance a large object.
2. Opaque materials appear heavier than transparent materials.
3. Bright, warm, dark-patterned colors appear heavier than grayed, cool, light colors.
4. Textures and patterns hold one's attention longer than smooth, plain surfaces.
5. Unusual and unique shapes and objects have importance beyond their size, while typical shapes and objects settle into the background.
6. Contrasting textures, patterns, and colors have greater impact than close harmonies.
7. Objects above eye level appear to be heavier than objects placed below eye level.
8. Brightly-lighted areas attract more attention than dimly lit areas.
9. Strong contrasts add weight.

The balance in a room is ever-changing:

When a person enters a room, the balance of the room is changed. The clothing they are wearing and the places they move will also change the balance.

The constant changing of natural light is another factor.

A third factor is the little things that happen every day: reading materials placed in a room, toys, fading of carpets and furniture, etc.

There are three basic types of balance: symmetrical, asymmetrical, and radial.

### SYMMETRICAL BALANCE

Symmetrical balance is also known as formal balance. It is achieved when one side of a room is the exact reverse, or mirror image, of the other half. This type of balance is easy to see, for when things are balanced they are identical. It creates a quiet and restful feeling. Symmetrical balance is usually found in classical architecture and traditional interiors. It tends to focus on the center of the room. This division makes the room look somewhat smaller.

This type of balance is easy to work with, but can still be imaginative, subtle, or complex. Small changes of symmetry help to maintain interest.

Symmetry is indicated when:

1. Formal, traditional, or calming effects are desired.
2. One wishes to focus attention on something important.
3. Use of the room suggests symmetry, such as sofas or chairs facing one another.
4. Contrast with natural surroundings is desired.

### ASYMMETRICAL BALANCE

Asymmetrical balance is also referred to as informal balance. It is achieved when visual weights are equal, but elements are different in size, form, color, pattern, and spacing. It makes us feel more invigorated and suggests movement and informality. It forces one to try to discover how the balance is found, and has more lasting appeal.

Asymmetrical balance is indicated when:

1. Informality and flexibility are desired.
2. An effect of spaciousness is wanted.
3. Use of the room suggests asymmetry.
4. Harmony with nature is sought.

### RADIAL BALANCE

Radial balance involves having furnishings or patterns arranged in a circular manner. Radiation creates a sweeping, dramatic, circular motion in a room.

Transparencies illustrating symmetrical, asymmetrical, and radial balance are found on the following pages.