

# THE COMFORT OF THINGS

THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS IN YOUR HOME THAT ARE LIKE GOOD FRIENDS: THEY ALWAYS CHEER YOU UP. THIS MONTH WE FEEL THE LOVE FOR A COSY CORNER

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A cosy corner of your very own. Grey Oslo knitted throw, £125, [alsohome.com](http://alsohome.com). Cove 2 stove, [charmwood.com](http://charmwood.com)

There are moments in the depths of winter when even the thought of leaving the house seems ridiculous. As the rain pelts the windows and the wind whips in under the front door, the call of the sofa is irresistible. Who needs to go out when everything you require is right there, and can be enjoyed in your slippers? How pleasing to listen to the rain from the warmth and comfort of indoors, wearing your favourite jumper and no make-up.

Once you accept that putting on a coat and stepping outside is just not going to happen, your thoughts might turn to making your home even cosier, more cocoon-like, more seductive. What you need is a cosy corner to call your own. Somewhere to retreat to with a cup of tea and a book (or a copy of *The Simple Things*). A comfortable chair to sink into and a throw to pull over your legs. A place to read, knit, munch a biscuit, listen to music... preferably by a wood-burning stove.

Creating this mini sanctuary is an essential element of homemaking in our book and, with a few adjustments and additions, easy to pull off. First, you need the right chair (see below for guidelines), and then you need to create the right mood. Bear in mind that this is a place to curl up rather than sprawl, and is

introspective rather than expansive, so you will need to feel protected and secure. If a sofa is your seat of choice, follow feng shui principles and put it against a wall, ideally with a view of the door, to feel safe. If you prefer a chair, choose one with a high back.

Fabrics in different tactile textures are comforting, too: layer up fake-fur blankets, soft woollen throws, velvet cushions... then throw on a sheepskin for good measure, too.

Pools of light create an intimate and cosy mood. Go for a task light to read by, and low wattage elsewhere. Candles and tealights will increase the general sense of mellowness, as will flames from a fire. Giving the walls a new lick of paint might also help: colours that echo nature – pale green, smoky grey, heathery purples and log pile browns – soothe and quiet the chattering mind.

The one thing you don't want to introduce is technology. The demands of smartphones and tablets have no place in your haven, but you knew that already.

"Bear in mind that this is a place to curl up rather than to sprawl"

## A GUIDE TO EASY SITTING

**When it comes to creating a place to curl up, getting the chair right is a big deal. Fortunately, today's high-street retailers offer many options, and a return to old-fashioned styles has seen the return of high-backed chairs and love seats which have plenty of room to nest in. Here's a brief guide...**

**Wing chair** With a high back, side pieces at head height and padded arms, this is the ideal curl-up-to-read-in chair. Try

[ikea.com](http://ikea.com) (Strandmon, £179); [tesco.com](http://tesco.com) (Carrington, £349); [made.com](http://made.com) (Kubrick, £399).

**Club chair** The comfiest versions are the vintage ones with soft, battered leather that look like they came from a gentlemen's club. Slouch here after a meal with a brandy. Try [argos.co.uk](http://argos.co.uk) (Salisbury, £449.99); [arloandjacob.com](http://arloandjacob.com) (Pembroke, from £850); [sofaworkshop.com](http://sofaworkshop.com) (Whipper Snapper, from £1,469).

**Cuddler sofa or love seat** A sofa/armchair hybrid

intended to snuggle up on with your other half but just as good to flop into alone. Room for a cat, too. Try [willowandhall.co.uk](http://willowandhall.co.uk) (Lyneham Love Seat Sofa, from £805); [sofasandstuff.com](http://sofasandstuff.com) (Stourhead, from £890); [loaf.com](http://loaf.com) (Crumpet Love Seat, £995).

**Chaise longue** More of a place to stretch out than curl up, but included here because it is intended for one person alone. Try [loaf.com](http://loaf.com) (Fats Chaise Longue, £1,145, right); [arloandjacob.com](http://arloandjacob.com) (Philo sofa chaise, from £1,795). »







## THREE TO MAKE, BUY OR CUSTOMISE

A home without cushions is a cheerless place. These pillowy pockets are an affordable and simple way to boost comfort and warmth.

### MAKE

You don't need to worry about zips or fastenings: an envelope-style cover simplifies the project. There are many tutorials on the internet: check out Ikea's video using its Akerdulla fabric on [youtube.com/watch?v=nTeJgtZuyGI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTeJgtZuyGI), or read How to Sew an Envelope Pillow Cover on [instructables.com](https://www.instructables.com).

### BUY

The choice is endless, varied and overwhelming. The best approach to a cosy-cushion purchase is to refine the selection by material. Faux fur, sheepskin and velvet are the most tactile and deliver maximum strokeability. West Elm ([westelm.co.uk](https://www.westelm.co.uk)) has a pleasing range of textured bouclé cushion covers, from £29; and [sainsburyshome.co.uk](https://www.sainsburyshome.co.uk) has snug, light-grey faux-fur cushions for £12.75.

### CUSTOMISE

Add piping perhaps, or introduce zips or buttons. For an excellent tutorial with helpful, but not free, video (£4.95 for 24 hours), go to [sew-helpful.com](https://www.sew-helpful.com). Dorling Kindersley's *Handmade Interiors* is a sensible and uncomplicated guide to making cushions and soft furnishings (it also includes bolsters, round cushions and others).



Wool cushion covers, £19.95 each, [decoratorsnotebook.com](https://www.decoratorsnotebook.com)



A quietly purring cat is welcome. Annoying human beings, less so.

## HOME QUANDARIES

*There has been many a time when I have retreated to my nook with a book and a cup of tea only to be disturbed over and over again by the other inhabitants of my household. They seem to have no regard for my need to be quiet and solitary. What can I do to keep them at bay?*

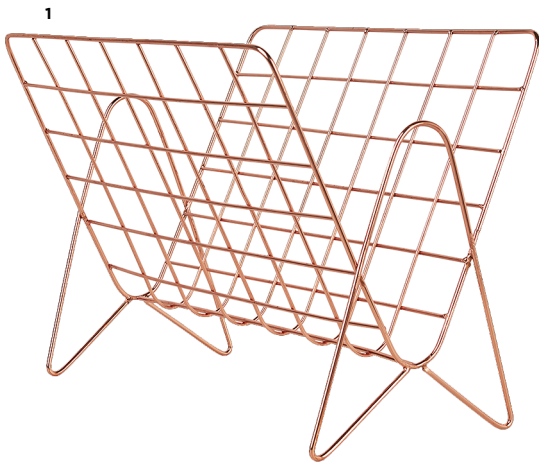
**Answer in brief:** create boundaries, either real or perceived.

This depends on whether the inhabitants are animal or human and what sort of behaviour is involved. No one welcomes a cat persistently pestering to be fed, or a dog bounding all over them when there is a book to be read. But a purring cat on the lap is a restful and companionable thing, as is a dog slumbering on a rug beside you. Train your animals and they will respect your quiet time. Alternatively, shut the offenders in a different room.

Human beings with their constant demands, however, are trickier to control. Some people (children, husbands, we're looking at you) see the stationary you as someone available to be bothered with questions and calls to action, rather than a person to respectfully leave alone. If clear and commanding orders to stay away don't work, try enclosing the area with soft boundaries like a row of houseplants, a bookshelf or a screen. Alternatively, shut the offenders in a different room.

**"A purring cat on the lap is a restful thing, as is a dog slumbering on a rug beside you"**

PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES



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## EASY PIECES

Create a snug bolthole in your home with these cosy additions



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8



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1 Bendt wire magazine rack, £18, [made.com](https://www.made.com) 2 Blush velvet Hampton pouffe, £129, [made.com](https://www.made.com) 3 Saffron herringbone throw, £48.95; light grey wool cushion cover, £17.95, [decoratorsnotebook.com](https://www.decoratorsnotebook.com) 4 Lush Mongolian lambskin cushion, £99, [modern-rugs.co.uk](https://www.modern-rugs.co.uk) 5 Light grey Ludwig armchair, £549, [swooneditions.com](https://www.swooneditions.com) 6 Marble effect table lamp, £30, [asda.com](https://www.asda.com) 7 Little Parker side table, £175, [loaf.com](https://www.loaf.com) 8 Lambswool woven Pennan throw, £320, [donnawilson.com](https://www.donnawilson.com) 9 Indigo Drop mug, £12.95, [decoratorsnotebook.com](https://www.decoratorsnotebook.com)