

DIRECTORY

Building a new home together

Couples should agree on colour scheme and discard knick-knacks

After the matrimonial bliss of a wedding, the reality of merging two personalities and living styles can be a couples' first challenge as husband and wife, especially if each is used to his or her own space.

A shared living space always involves an element of compromise, whether that means making space for outdoor pursuit equipment or inherited heirlooms that mean more to one than the other.

And when the bride and groom are both moving into the marital home with a lorry load of possessions from a previous set-up, a willingness to embrace each other's preferences and eliminate some of their own will be even greater.

One of the first things a couple should do is to find a common ground in their new living space.

"Decide what you both want out of the space - is it something formal, casual or for entertaining? By pinpointing a common goal, it will become more clear what will work or not, for both parties," says interior designer Nicole Cromwell. "Identify certain features of furniture that you both like, for example wood, metal, glass or textured fabrics. This will help in making choices."

A neutral base can be a great starting point to build a new home together, which will make it easier to find a common ground and merge individual tastes.

While a blank canvas can be a great starting point, fail-safe off-whites and magnolia are not to everyone's taste, and couples may need to experiment with colour.



A couple need to agree on things to create a comfy home. Photo: Thinkstock

"If one likes bold and the other neutral, you can always use the odd accent wall with a neutral

elsewhere to incorporate the two tastes," Cromwell says.

When it comes to whittling down

existing possessions that will bring each other's personalities into the new home, be ready to purge.

Smaller, less important items such as accessories and knick-knacks can be eliminated by 90 per cent, and items that are old or of little monetary or sentimental value can be easily replaced by things a couple can choose together.

When it comes to bigger pieces such as valuable or recently purchased furniture or artwork, individuals can bargain harder to keep them; but try to keep big pieces neutral and use accessories to incorporate specific tastes, Cromwell says.

"Look at the pieces you have and may want to keep. If your partner disagrees, remember that furniture can often be recovered, stained or jazzed up to work for both parties," Cromwell says. "You both need to be willing to go into the new home with an open mind. This is a great opportunity to start afresh, de-clutter and consolidate your tastes."