

Make the Most of Your Dorm

Interior Designer Debbie Wiener shares her tips and tricks.

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With the holidays right around the corner, most of us are thinking about what we want for Christmas over cleaning our dorm room. But what happens when you and your roommate come back from winter break full of new coats, hats, sports equipment and more that you are then expected to cram into your tiny dorm room. How can you make room for storage without turning your room into a life size closet? We caught up with licensed interior designer and owner of Designing Solutions Debbie Wiener to get her decorating solutions for your dorm this winter. Wiener is the author of *Slob Proof! Real-Life Design Solutions* and was a college student herself not too long ago, so she knows the limited space you have to work with.

Kiwibox: What made you want to write this book?

Debbie Wiener: I had an article in *USA Today* about slob proof designs and Penguin came to me about a book. I was eager to share what I've learned and accumulated over the past few years because even though I am a professional designer and I love to do beautiful homes the truth of the matter is in my own home I live with slob! I really needed to be smart with my approach to interior designs and find things that not only looked good but could also hold up to my own real life slob.

KB: The book focuses on family homes and people living alone. Does this include students in school as well?



DW: It includes students, 13-year-olds, people with pets and most importantly it includes people without a lot of time. That's really the focus of the book. Going to class, getting homework done, having social activities, things that prevent you from having the time to take care of your living environment, that's who I wrote the book for.

KB: What specific tips do you have for incoming college freshman or any student to decorate and make a home out of their tiny dorm rooms that are also practical at the same time?

DW: Not too long ago, I decorated my own dorm room. Because dorm rooms are the size of postage stamps with very little floor room for adding large pieces I do recommend utilizing all the wall space that you have, that really opens up new possibilities. One of the best sources, like Ikea or a container store for shelving is a great place to store books, photos, CDs, anything that doesn't require a lot of depth can go up.



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KB:What about dealing with a sloppy roommate? Can you decorate and organize around that?

DW:There's not much you can do to change people, I've learned this the hard way as I watched my own family destroy my own. So anticipate that you may not be able to change your roommate and ideally you want to avoid conflict. Instead, try and furnish the joint areas of the room with really durable things. For example, the space between your two beds you want to put down a soft rug. A great option would be getting something that is reversible so that after your roommate spills something you can reverse it and it has a little more life left to it and you can flip it over. I'm also a big believer in buying the risers that you can put under your bed for more storage, and

you can encourage your roommate to do the same to keep your room clutter free, giving you both more space.

B: What are your top tips, according to your readers and clients?

DW: In general, my top tips are to invest in good lighting. When I was living in a dorm I had an adjustable floor lamp by my bed so I could focus a narrow beam of light when I was reading in bed and my roommate could sleep at the same time without being disturbed. I also had a really great desk lamp and I used uplights, these little cans that sit on the floor like movie lights and allow you to angle the light going up. You can hide it behind a potted plant or a piece of furniture and it's a great way to add some fun lighting to your room, plus they are inexpensive.

Second, if you think your roommate belongs in an institution, then furnish with institutional grade items. Look for indoor/outdoor rugs, synthetic fabric furnishings for upholstery, items that are intended and expected to take abuse. On a limited budget, put your money on the things you sit and stand on. They will last longer and look better over time. Get a great desk chair and spend less on everything else because that is what you will use the most.

For more information on Debbie, visit **SlobProof.com**.

