



Ceramics Styling Guide

20+ ways to arrange, organize, and just generally make
the most of your handmade pottery collection

BY CARRIE WALLER

About The Author

A FEW WORDS ABOUT MY MISSION



Nice to meet you

Hello and thank you so much for your support of my pottery business! Whether you've purchased one or two of my pieces for your home, or you've simply helped spread the word about my handmade ceramics with your friends and family, I'm so grateful.

In case we haven't been introduced, I'm Carrie. I live in Virginia in a retro ranch home that I'm gently renovating with my husband. I've been a lifestyle and home décor blogger for fifteen years, and started my journey in ceramics in 2018.

Fast forward to today and the blog is still thriving (even despite constant changes in web algorithms!) and I'm *still* pouring my heart into ceramics. I wanted to write this guide as yet another way of inspiring you, and to help you maximize the display possibilities of your handmade ceramics collection. Let's dive in, shall we?!

Carrie Waller



What to Expect From This Guide



Learn to think creatively

I'll be here to help jump-start your creative thinking so that you can come up with out-of-the-box ideas all on your own for showing off ceramics in your space.



Master styling in four steps

You'll hear all about my favorite formula for styling just about any type of tabletop or shelf in your home, and we'll be including *all* décor in this section—not just ceramics.



Let color take the lead

Hone your instincts for creating a cohesive collection when shopping for ceramics. In this instance, we'll be talking color (and a little about pattern, too).



Trust your instincts

My hope is that you'll walk away from this guide feeling more confident in the styling concepts you try in your space, and that you won't let mistakes slow you down. Remember: I'm always here to help!



A Quick Note:

While styling may seem like a complicated thing to pull off, it's actually based on fairly rudimentary concepts. Because of that, I realize that many of the tips I'm about to share won't sound like rocket science to a lot of you, especially if you're already a seasoned decorator. Even if some of my suggestions are "old news" to you, I know that there's *someone* out there who hasn't thought of trying these certain hacks, so I'm going to tell all—from the ultra simple, to a little more complex. Feel free to skim through until you find that one tip that will change the way you think about styling at home. I feel strongly that you'll come away from this guide with at least some new ideas!

An Introduction To Home Styling



I've been a professional writer, photographer, and home stylist through my blog, dreamgreendiy.com, for 15 years, but I've actually been honing my styling skills long before I clicked "publish" on that first blog post in 2011. Even as a kid, I was constantly organizing and tidying

Point being that decorating has been my passion since practically the moment I could walk, and now, as an adult, I can barely catch my breath between room makeovers and DIY decor projects in our current mid-century ranch home.

A passion it may be, and I've certainly picked up on tried and true tricks to make the process easier for myself, but I've still made plenty of mistakes along the way. I'm not a trained interior designer, and I won't ever claim to be one, but I've experienced that extra special "aha" moment when a certain piece of art or new paint color turns out to be just right, and I've made it my mission to repeat that glorious moment over and over through my life as a DIY decorator and homemaker.

Designing a home is one of those things that takes time to get right. The reality is that it's nothing like what you see on HGTV design makeover shows, but, in my opinion, there's not much fun in that anyway! The

rooms at both my friends' houses and our own childhood home. My mom once told me as a teenager that I was in danger of making my walls physically thicker thanks to all the new paint colors I kept rolling on every few months as my interests changed.

satisfaction of a job well done in décor comes from experimentation and taking your time to land on the perfect combination of colors, patterns, furniture choices, and, of course, styling.

There's no way that I could teach you all of my DIY tricks for decorating a home in just 16 pages ([I have a separate 60-page eBook for that](#)), but I *can* take this abbreviated time to share how I go about styling a space. This is actually my favorite part of the decorating process, and I'd argue that it's the most important.

The next pages will provide you with a roadmap for finding just the right spot for your handmade ceramics at home, and the good news is that these concepts work for any type of accent, so you'll *also* be able to hit the ground running styling potted plants, favorite books, framed art, and sentimental trinkets, too.

Let's kick this discussion off by focusing on office organization and display ideas...



01

Maximize Organization In Your Office

My overall goal with this guide is to inspire you to rethink the functionality of any singular type of pottery piece. Instead of seeing a bowl as just a soup or ice cream dish, let's think of *all* the unique ways we can use a bowl.

For example, you can make a pile of push pins look so much more stylish on your desk by dropping a handful into a multi-colored ceramic bowl. Or if you love having a candle going in your office during work hours, use a miniature bowl to show off your matchbook collection. I also personally love displaying my own business cards in a bowl on my desk as a way to keep me motivated.

It's amazing how a pretty handmade bowl can turn even the most mundane office supplies into something that looks more intentional and cool. Another bonus is that having these types of everyday desk supplies out on your tabletop in a bowl allows you to free up space in your desk drawers to hide away less aesthetic supplies.

02

Coffee Table Styling Inspiration

When it comes to this central tabletop zone in a living room environment, I generally always follow the same formula: a potted plant, some kind of bowl or platter, and a stack of books. This arrangement somehow always works for me!

There are lots of ways to incorporate ceramics within this styling formula. Use a handmade bowl to corral remotes if it's large enough, or printed Polaroid photos if it's on the small side. A stoneware planter pot can be used to house that pop of greenery I suggested, and a sculptural art object is the perfect topper for a stack of coffee table books to make them just a little more eye-catching.





Bedroom Tabletop Ideas

The bedroom is one of my favorite places to display ceramics. It's such a personal space, so surrounding myself with the things I love most and that I find inspiring is one of the many ways my home brings me joy.

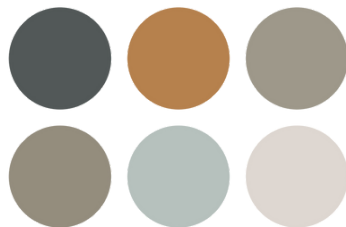
I tend to prefer functional ceramics in my bedroom to maximize the small square footage that we have at our disposal, so things like clay boxes, trays, and lidded containers. These I fill with jewelry and also my essential oil bottles to keep those within easy reach.

Vases are another favorite type of ceramic shape that I like to keep in the bedroom. There's nothing quite so soothing as a fresh bunch of flowers sitting on top of your dresser or nightstand, and if you choose a really sculptural vase, then the piece will look lovely all on its own, even if you don't happen to have fresh flowers on hand.





04



Creating A Cohesive Collection

It's time to talk COLOR! Imagine for a moment pulling all of your favorite handmade ceramic bowls, plates, mugs, sculptures, and jars onto your dining room table. What colors will you see? Will you be looking at a rainbow's worth of color, or do you tend toward softer tones in a more limited palette? Maybe your collection is somewhere in between?

No matter *what* your style, do your best to stick with it and invest in pieces that are all generally done in the same colors. This will make your styling job so much easier, and will give your home a more cohesive look.

The same goes for pattern, too, of course. Try intentionally curating pottery pieces that feature similar painted or carved motifs on them, like animals or flowers, that way they will look natural when displayed together anywhere in your home.



Use A Vase For More Than Just Flowers

If you thought bowls were versatile, just you *wait* until we get into vases. It's only natural to want to reserve them for flowers alone, but there's so much more that you can do with a lovely vase. Try storing nice pens and pencils in a wide-mouthed vase, as an example. I love to do this in areas of our home away from my office where you might not necessarily expect to find writing tools but where you actually need them pretty regularly. I'm talking about places like a living room where you might want to jot down something cool that you saw on TV, or in the kitchen to quickly scribble notes in a cookbook without having to dig around in the junk drawer for a pen. A beautiful ceramic vase sort of conceals the fact that your pen is in an add place, and adds so much functionality (not to mention style!) to your space. I also love to use vases to hold things like inlaid wood chopsticks in our dining room, makeup brushes in the bathroom, and I've even filled a thin-necked vase with dish soap by the kitchen sink.



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One of my favorite things about ceramics as a craft is the fact that the results so perfectly marry form with function. It's art that you're actually *encouraged* to touch and feel and use, unlike a traditional painting or drawing that you're only able to admire from a distance.

And that's why it's so easy to style ceramics in a home. They work in any room on any surface—from the bathroom countertop, to right beside your stove. Here are a handful of additional ideas:

06

Rapid Fire Ceramics Styling Hacks:

1. Group together 5-7 similarly shaped vases on one shelf to create a high impact display.
2. Use a ceramic bowl or handmade lidded vessel by the stove as a salt cellar.
3. Store pet treats in a lidded ceramic jar that you won't mind leaving out on your entry table.
4. If you prefer bar soap by the sink, why not use a pretty ceramic tray as your soap dish?
5. Keep a pack of playing cards handy by placing them on a stoneware platter on the coffee table.
6. Turn a mug (maybe one that's chipped and unusable for coffee) into a handled pot for your cactus.

Styling in Four Steps

Here's an excerpt from my 60-page eBook, [Your DIY Guide To Home Decorating](#), that explains my go-to formula for nailing good styling every time.

01 Clear The Surface

Start by removing everything from the surface in question. You'll need a totally blank slate before creating a new arrangement. Take this opportunity to thoroughly clean the tabletop or shelf, too. It's okay to leave big things like lamps and artwork in place if you know you'll want to use them, but just be open to the fact that you might end up having to nudge the lighting off to the side to make room for styling accents, or rehang art higher or lower to suit your new arrangement.

02 Gather Décor Accents

Next, find a nearby area to pile all of the décor accents you think you'll want to use. Pull together a bigger collection of items than you'll ultimately need since some things will get cut during the process. This will also afford you a chance to see everything together to make sure it's cohesive. Pull out anything that doesn't fit the overall vibe and/or color palette of the room.

03 Experiment With Arrangements

Now, it's time to play! Start arranging things until it looks good to you. Step back often to evaluate. Groups of three will look more organic. Stacks of books can be used under smaller items to make them look proportionate. You probably won't get it right until the third or fourth try, and that's okay.

04 Take Periodic Photos

Take photos throughout the process. These don't need to be fancy edited images that you'll share with anyone else. Just snap a quick photo using your phone, pause, and evaluate it. Does the lamp look like it's too close to the edge of the table? Move it an inch to the right. Do you have too many books with black spines stacked together, and colorful books all on the other side? Mix them up to make the arrangement look more balanced. I can't explain why, but you'll spot inconsistencies and areas that are working much better through a digital screen than you can with the naked eye.

Favorite Fellow Ceramics Artists

Check out these incredibly talented artists who also sell their work online. You might just find the style or look that your space has been missing.

01

Jake Johnson Ceramics

Of course, I had to include the work of [Jake Johnson](#)! As his hands-on glazing assistant, I've had the chance to witness his rich creativity and expertise firsthand.

02

Sage, of Hand + Fire

I'm very inspired by the organic, earthy look of [Sage Cortez's pottery](#). She also does a great job explaining her process online in a way that gives her work real intrinsic value.

03

Hsin-Chuen Lin

[Hsin-Chuen Lin](#) creates beautifully intricate ceramics that feel very classic in design. It's now my ultimate dream to own one of his gorgeous handmade dishes.

04

Florian Gadsby

I started following [Florian Gadsby](#) for his how-to videos, but I've since fallen in love with his finished ceramics, too. The simplicity of his forms is captivating.

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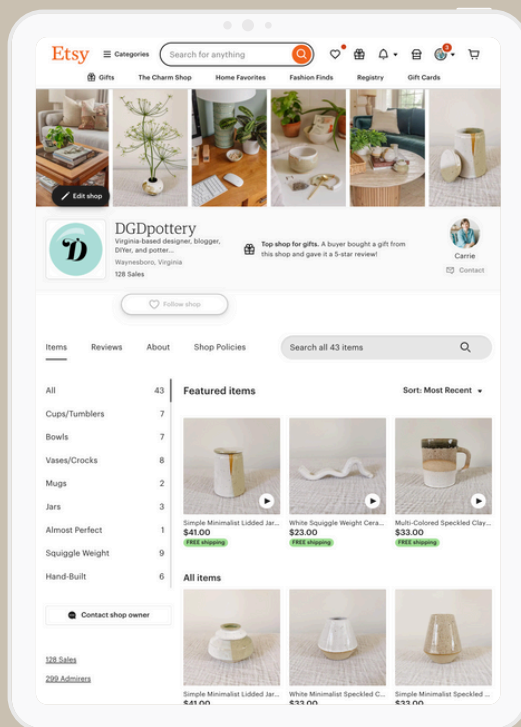
From Tree To Sea

I also discovered [Lauren Strybos](#) through YouTube, and am so drawn to her vibrant painted designs. Her work would be a fun addition to any collection.

06

Mutsa, of Kindred Workshop

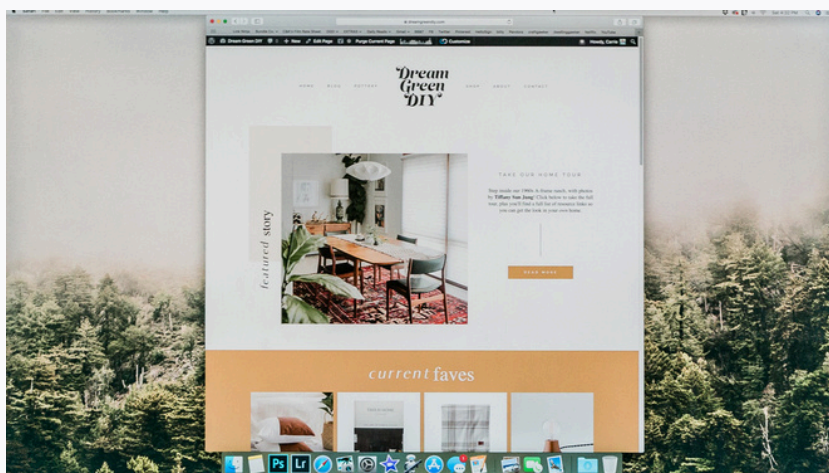
I'm actually new to [Mutsa James's work](#), but am fascinated by her rustic style. Her hand-carved and painted pieces feel calm and soothing somehow. Such raw talent!



I hope you found this guide helpful!

Now it's time to put your newly gathered tips and ideas into action. Click the button below to visit the DGD Pottery Etsy shop and peruse my latest collection of handmade work. If you find a piece that speaks to you, I hope you experiment with new ways to use it to add style and personality to your home. If you ever need more ideas or specific direction, don't hesitate to [send me a message!](#) I'm always here to help. I find that it's the conversations I have with others that help me broaden my own decorating skills, so let's continue learning together.

[SHOP ON ETSY](#)



Find weekly inspiration on the blog

If you enjoyed this guide and want to spend more time learning how to design a home you love, I invite you to make the leap over to my blog! Dream Green DIY was built on the same foundations as this guide. My purpose with each blog post is to help inspire you to tackle décor projects on your own using your innate creative style. Click the button below to check out 15 years worth of archives, including DIY project tutorials, room tours, antique store hauls, and homemaking tips.

[READ MORE THIS WAY](#)

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"The worst enemy to
creativity is self-doubt."

Sylvia Plath

