



**Creating Order, Relieving Stress, Improving Your Life...**

## Arranging Books For Style And Function

by Nancy Peham, HelpingHandsPS.com  
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Have you ever browsed through a decorating magazine or seen a model home in which every bookcase looked like a work of art? Ever wish you could make the books in your home enhance the beauty and style of a room rather than detract from it?

If you're like many people, your bookshelves may be overcrowded, haphazardly arranged, or uninviting. I've seen shelves that sag from excess weight, are covered with

dust, or have become a catch-all for the papers and knick knacks their busy owners haven't had time to put away.

If you love books, they're probably in your living room, home office, children's rooms, and formal areas. Cookbook collections in your kitchen, craft or hobby books in your project area, books by your nightstand and sitting on your coffee table. Books everywhere!

To improve the look of a room, add style and class to your bookshelves, and feel great, try these suggestions:

- Get rid of books you'll never read again. Donate them to a library, senior citizens' center, or your favorite charity. If you want a little extra cash, sell them to a used book store, but call first to inquire about the purchasing policy.
- In the more formal areas of your home remove the paperbacks and put them in a cupboard, on a closet shelf, or in another room.
- Show off the spines of your cloth bound and hardcover books by removing the sleeves, giving the room a richer feel and showing off the quality workmanship.

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- If you own a series or collection, group them together.
- Sort books by category such as finance, self improvement, novels, fiction / non-fiction, how-to, history, literature, health and wellness, business, and others.
- Gauge the amount of space you'll need on your bookshelves for each type. You may find that two or three topics need only one shelf, while others require several.
- Consider keeping special topics like cooking, gardening, and collecting in the areas they're most likely to be referenced.
- Arrange books so that those you access most often are at eye level and within easy reach.
- Leave open spaces on bookshelves.
- Hide manuals, notebooks, magazines and binders in a closet or inconspicuous shelf.
- Not every book needs to be standing upright. Stack books on their sides and place a vase or other decorative object on top to add variety and break up the monotony of vertical spines. Place books at an angle.
- Vary the distance of one shelf to another.
- Arrange a few books on a coffee table in odd-numbered settings. Fan them out slightly or stack unevenly for added interest.
- Experiment until you feel a comfortable flow from shelf to shelf.
- For a little drama, attach a light source on the underside of a shelf.
- Add interest by placing art objects, appropriately sized décor, and interesting bookends . In the history section, place a bust of a president. In the children's section, a pair of bronzed baby shoes. Perhaps a silk plant next to the landscape and gardening books. Use your imagination. Have fun!

*Nancy Peham, owner of Helping Hands Personal Services is a professional organizer and home stager in the Dallas area. Nancy is also available as a speaker and to the media as an organizing expert. For more information, visit her website [www.HelpingHandsPS.com](http://www.HelpingHandsPS.com)*