

# 7 principles of ergonomic interior design essay sample

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Ergonomics as a science strives to bridge the gap between man and his surroundings. The knowledge gained in this endeavor is most commonly applied in the workplace setting. That is, it is thought that by applying ergonomic principles to the design of the workplace and tools, greater functionality can be achieved, yielding higher productivity and lower incidence of worker injury. Of course, all this is true. But seldom considered, by comparison, are the practical applications of ergonomic intuition to the design of the home. Ergonomically-minded interior design produces living spaces that are not only “easier” to live in, but by virtue of this ease, facilitate “happier” living.

In their 1998 paper “The Universal Design File: Designing for People of All Ages and Abilities,” Story, Mueller, and Mace outlined seven principles of what has come to be known as “Universal Design” in North America, and “Inclusive Design” or “Design for All” in other parts of the world. Having evolved since the 1970s, this approach to design seeks to create environments that are “usable by all people to the greatest extent possible.” According to Story et al, these spaces should encompass: 1. Equitable use: The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

2. Flexibility in use: The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities. 3. Simple and intuitive use: Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user’s experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level. 4. Perceptible information: The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user’s sensory abilities. 5. Tolerance  
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for error: The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions. 6. Low physical effort: The design can be used efficiently and comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue.

7. Size and space for approach and use: Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility. It is not difficult to see how living spaces which strive to embody these qualities would not only be easier to use, but would most likely increase home productivity. Imagine, for example, a living room which utilized thoughtfully-designed lighting fixtures, placed such that they illuminate adequately the areas of interest within the room.

Chairs, tables, and footstools would be easy to relocate, thereby making the space amenable to a wider range of uses, while each furniture piece would be able to accommodate persons of every size and ability. This room, and others designed with Universal Design in mind are easier to use, and facilitate happier living.