



WHAT? NO SOFA?!

Sofas have been at the heart of American living rooms forever. Traditionally newlyweds invested in a sofa as one of their first pieces of furniture. Many living room designs have historically started with a sofa as the focal point. In today's eclectic world, however, sofas have been - well - upended as tastes and home decorating have changed. They are far from disappearing but are no longer considered a staple in every living room.

Sometimes a sofa simply isn't a workable option. Often, formal living rooms are small or narrow. Or the room doesn't have a wall that is free of windows, a fireplace, a television or a wide entryway taking up space where a sofa might fit. Many of Westfield's older homes fall into this category. Even spacious newer homes frequently limit living room space.

One creative solution trending in the design world is an arrangement of chairs, which can be visually stunning as well as versatile. Four chairs placed so that a cocktail table or ottoman nestled in the center make it easy for people to reach drinks or food, eliminating the need to stand up and pass things. A grouping of chairs creates an intimate "lounge" environment conducive to relaxation and comfort. Chairs can swivel for social interaction and are easy to rearrange when necessary to accommodate more table surfaces or lighting. They also can be more inviting and easier for conversation than sitting two or three people in a row on a sofa.

If you think chairs instead of a sofa would be a good solution in your space, size and scale are important. In a small room, incorporate chairs with a low back and relatively small size. Larger rooms can handle more substantial chairs with high backs and deep seats. There are so many choices on the market you're sure to find what works best.

"Here at Elements, we love creating 'adult lounges' for our clients," said designer Marty McDevitt. "They can be so flexible - morphing from a calm space to listen to music or read to a vibrant entertaining area."

