

MINIMALIST FLAT

'I wanted to come home and feel calm and relaxed'

Pure white walls, natural materials and carefully curated furniture have given Hannah's home a pared-back look that's fresh and infused with warmth

Hannah Fullagar has always had an interest in homes and interiors, having loved BBC's home improvement show, *Changing Rooms*, when she was young. She spent years browsing property websites, planning what she might be able to buy when she was eventually in a position to do so, and in early 2019 she was finally able to move forward with her dream. 'I'd got really frustrated living in rented flats where I was limited to experimenting with cushions and bedding,' she says. 'I love properties with period details, but I couldn't afford to take on a renovation. Within weeks, I'd found a flat in an Edwardian building and instantly loved the parquet floors, high ceilings and ornate cornice in the hallway.'

However, there were some compromises, as the ground-floor flat had just one bedroom and no garden. 'The bedroom and living room

'I find I am always drawn to white, bright spaces where the decoration isn't too busy.'

were bright and big with period features and glimpses of the sea, whereas the two-bedroom flats I'd seen for the same money were small and poky,' says Hannah. 'It made sense for me to have more living space and, when guests stay, I give them my bedroom. Being close to the beach, I didn't really need a garden.'

A FRESH START

The Edwardian property had been extended many years before and a reasonably new kitchen and bathroom occupied the newer part of the flat. The bedroom and living room had all their original features but some damp problems, which Hannah quickly sorted out, along with removing Artex from the walls. When the work was done, she couldn't wait to start making the flat her own. 'I'd worked



THE LIVING ROOM

The low-key décor reflects Hannah's love of calming neutrals. 'I didn't want my home to look too stark, so wood tones and textured cushions in off-whites and creams have softened the look'

OUR MUST HAVES Funambule floor lamp, £270, La Redoute. Harrogate sofa, from £899, John Lewis. Matisse 3 print, from £8.95, Dear Sam. Galdom tray table, £19, IKEA

► Is there a pricey piece of furniture you have your eye on? Look out for it on online marketplaces. 'I found ex-display Talbot Atkin & Thyme shelves on Facebook Marketplace for £100 cheaper and they're in perfect condition,' says Hannah

Good idea!
Make a contemporary radiator cover by gluing pieces of MDF together, nailing them to the wall and painting them to match your scheme.



COME ON IN...



I AM Hannah Fullagar (@thenoviceblog), 30. I work in wedding sales for a wedding venue.

MY HOME Is a one-bedroom flat in an Edwardian building in West Sussex.

MY BEST BARGAIN Homesense chairs I re-upholstered in an off-white bouclé fabric.

SHOPS I LOVE Design Vintage for kitchenware, H&M for cushions, and when I do food shopping in Sainsbury's I can't resist having a look in the homewares section. I also like Brighton's independent shops for individual homewares.

MY BEST IDEA WAS Buying a black mirror from Dunelm and spray-painting the frame to match my gold dressing table stool.

MY ADVICE IS TO Create a mood board for each room and don't rush into decision-making, or you could make costly mistakes.



Feature Jane Crittenden Styling Marisha Taylor Photos James French



Good idea!
Use only three colours like Hannah's mix of black, neutral and green, for a balanced, minimal scheme

▼ Hannah is able to maintain a minimal aesthetic thanks to the handy storage options in her flat, including double doors on the far side of the kitchen-diner, which hide away her washing machine and boiler



'I'm really pleased I've tackled projects that, prior to lockdown, I would have considered out of my comfort zone.'

▲ 'I placed a mirror above the fireplace because I didn't want the TV to be the focal point in here,' says Hannah. 'I couldn't find the right style or shape in my budget and was surprised to find a local frame shop was able to custom-make one for a reasonable price'

► After struggling to find the right ottoman, Hannah bought two chairs from Homesense and reupholstered them in bouclé fabric instead. 'There was something about the chair shape that jumped out at me in the shop,' she says. 'They sit much better in the window than an ottoman would'

THE DINING ROOM

Hannah's feature wall brings high-end hotel style to her flat, but was an easy and cost-effective DIY. She nailed 3cm-wide MDF strips to the wall and painted them in Craig & Rose's Regency Cream from Homebase

OUR MUST HAVES Lucide Gipsy cone plaster ceiling pendant in White, £42.49, Lighting Direct. **Calia dining table**, from £399, John Lewis. **Dining chairs**, £15 each, eBay





Hannah was happy with the layout of the existing kitchen, so just needed to update it. Changing the previous handles for sleek black ones from IKEA was a simple swap but makes a big difference

in luxury travel and was fortunate to stay in hotels all over the world, which was a good way to try out different interior styles,' she says. 'I'm always drawn to white, bright spaces where the decoration isn't too busy. Now I work long hours in wedding sales, and I wanted to come home and feel relaxed.'

MADE TO LAST

Hannah painted the living room in a standard pure white emulsion and liked it so much she decided to decorate the rest of the flat in the same colour. Much of the furniture from her previous home was replaced with key pieces that will last. 'It could have been tempting to fill the big rooms with furniture, but I didn't want to lose that spacious feel,' says Hannah. 'For the first time, I made investment buys that I'll take with me when I move on.'

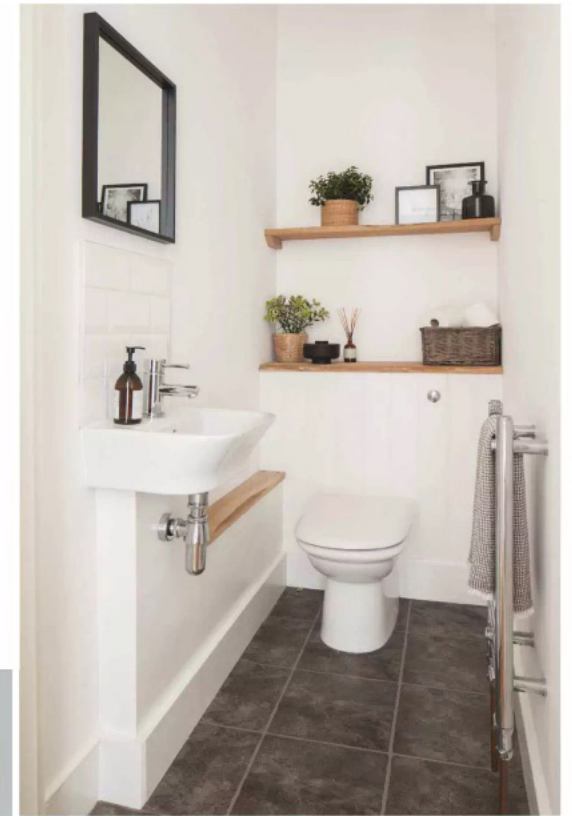
Two grey John Lewis sofas in a classic shape will last if Hannah's interior taste evolves, as will the wooden Atkin &

Thyme shelves. She also re-upholstered two Homesense chairs in an off-white bouclé fabric. 'I'm quite a creative person – I used to be a dancer and often altered costumes or fixed buttons back on, so I sewed the fabric by hand,' she says. 'Bouclé is forgiving and hides the stitches, plus white suits my scheme better than the original patterned material.'

SETTING THE MOOD

The next project came on rather suddenly, when the ceiling of Hannah's bedroom collapsed due to a leak from the flat above. Fortunately, she wasn't in the room at the time, but it meant she had to redo the room. 'It was a scary experience and after the repairs were done, I had to decorate,' she says. 'I put together a mood board this time, focusing on warmer tones than the living room with natural materials of wood and rattan.'

During the first lockdown, Hannah was furloughed and soon itching to take on



▶ Hannah is planning to redecorate her separate WC with a warm lime wash and add brass fittings, which will match the fixtures she's got in mind for her bathroom makeover



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THE KITCHEN

'The kitchen is naturally quite dark because it's at the back of the flat and is overlooked, so I don't usually fully open the blinds,' says Hannah. 'I couldn't go wrong painting the cupboards white'

OUR MUST HAVES Borghamn handles, £11 for a pack of two, IKEA. Pure Brilliant White satinwood paint, £24 per 2.5L, B&Q

◀ Hannah has been savvy with space in her flat, choosing streamlined storage solutions like these corner shelves which give her a petite bar area that fits with her minimalist aesthetic

Good idea!
Match your dining chairs and table to the worktop and cabinets for a cohesive kitchen-diner.

IDEAS TO STEAL



32cm Bamboo bowl pendant shade, £30.99, Wayfair

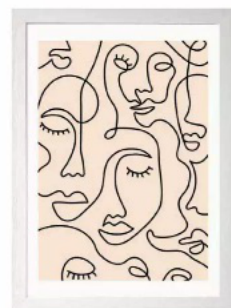
Pink pampas, £14, George Home



Elemental vase, £8, Matalan



Rocco Industrial rustic oak dining table, £629, Modish Living



East End Prints Single Line Faces A3 framed print by Sundry Society, £40, Very



Miro three-seater sofa, £599, Made.com

FOR STOCKISTS SEE PAGE 140

Good idea!
Hannah made the plain linen cushion cover using fabric from a bargain-buy jumpsuit that didn't fit properly, with tassels as the finishing touch.



▼ A white kitchen step from IKEA doubles up as a useful bedside table, with two surfaces for displaying a luxe gold lamp and books, and is less bulky than a chest of drawers might be

▲ Previously there had only been wall lights in the bedroom, so Hannah installed a ceiling pendant, too. 'I saw the wicker lampshade at The White Company, but a friend tipped me off that the same product was on eBay for half the price,' says Hannah



THE BATHROOM

Although Hannah plans to update the bathroom, she's made the existing one her own for now, adding accessories in her trademark natural tones

OUR MUST HAVES Havern bath rack, £9, IKEA. Dried yellow craspedia, £24.99, Dowsing & Reynolds



THE BEDROOM

Hannah carefully planned each room to achieve a cohesive look. 'I am pleased I did a mood board, as the natural materials and warm tones have turned my room into the restful space I wanted,' she says

OUR MUST HAVES Milano 2-drawer console table, £357, Style Our Home. For a similar mirror try Uyova round mirror, £60, La Redoute



another décor update, so turned her attention to the kitchen. 'As this is in the new part of the building, the ceiling is lower, the windows smaller and there are no period features,' she says. 'The cupboards were blue-grey and didn't really flow with the rest of the flat, so I repainted the doors white and fitted new handles.' She also planned to put brick slips onto the wall behind the dining table, but changed tack when she realised she couldn't do the work alone.

As an active Instagrammer and blogger, she sought inspiration from the interiors

community. 'I recreated a wall panel idea I'd seen,' she says. 'It's made with MDF strips nail-gunned to the wall and only took a day.'

KNOWING YOUR STYLE

With one eye on updating the bathroom and separate WC next, she'll be sticking to her warm, neutral palette. 'It's been so lovely to finally have the home I've always wanted,' she says. 'I'm pleased I've tackled projects that, prior to lockdown, I would have considered out of my comfort zone. I love my choices. The whole flat feels very personal to me.' 🏡