



HOW TO SHOP FOR

BOOKSHELVES

Interior architect and furniture designer Andrew Waller flips through the ins and outs of bookshelves.

STARTING POINTS First, determine your needs. Are you a serious reader with a lot of paperbacks? Do you want books stacked vertically, with spines out? Do you want to display large photographic books and, if so, do you want them lying flat? Would you want to display artefacts or objects with the books, or to use the books as a framework for a focal artwork?

LOCATION, LOCATION If you plan to make a feature of the bookcase, perhaps as a room divider, consider where it will be positioned and how it will appear from all directions. If it will be installed in a private reading zone, such as a bedroom, pay attention to scale and mood. You don't want anything too prominent or intrusive.

BALANCE AND PROPORTION

A well-proportioned bookshelf can give structure to a space lacking architectural detail and visually heighten a low ceiling.

FEATURE WALL If your bookshelf is going to function as a whole-wall backdrop, you can use it to 'frame' other furnishings (like the window niche pictured above).

THE BIGGER PICTURE The style of bookcase you choose will be dictated by other elements in the space. You can either match the existing joinery, creating a continuous story, or you can use the bookshelf as an accent feature in a different style to the rest of the room.

To watch Andrew talk about the aesthetics of bookshelves, use the free [viewa](#) app and scan this page.



TIMBER TALK Timber has an inviting, tactile nature that makes it a perfect display surface for books. If you're using veneers, introduce solid timbers into your design; a solid lip detail on shelves, for example, will be more durable and convey the illusion of solid timber joinery.

METAL WINNERS Steel-framed shelves have a robustness that suits a home with strong architectural lines. A bookcase made from tubular metal, with opaque glass shelves, can create an 'open' feeling. This gives the structure a visual lightness that's good if you want to divide a space and allow uninterrupted views.

FLOAT THE OPTIONS Shelving options available range from monolithic-style floating shelves with no visible supports to the delicate lines of the String modular range, designed by Nisse Strinning in 1949 and available through Great Dane.

LINE AND DETAIL The thickness of shelves and the height between them will depend on individual tastes and needs. You need to look at these elements in terms of the overall size of the bookcase and the height of the ceiling.

TIME TO ADJUST If you want your shelving to be adjustable, be specific with the heights you require and minimise the number of adjustment holes, as they can detract from the look of the shelves. **H&G Andrew Waller operates from his boutique design practice in Sydney's Redfern; 0422 992 676 or www.mrwaller.com.**