





Interiors guru Sophie Hodges on how to take a basement room to new heights

## INSIDE track

Q My living room is in a basement and the ceiling is low. How can I give the illusion of more height?

A It always helps to focus on anything that draws the eye upwards, so paint the ceiling bright white in a satin finish; it has a soft sheen that will bounce light back into the room. For the walls, vertical stripes give an instant illusion of height. I've recently discovered Ottoline wallpaper (ottoline wallpaper (ottoline.nl) and Swedish company Sandberg (sandbergwallpaper.com),

which has a large collection of stripes in all shades.

I would also take all lighting out of the ceiling (even downlights), as it emphasises a lack of height.

Instead, stick to uplighters for a softer feel. Make sure to hang full length curtains as high as possible and place your pictures slightly

higher than normal, too. The same goes for a large mirror, which will reflect light well. I think it's worth investing in vintage here, as antique mottled mirrors have so

much more character—
especially the Venetian
kind, as they're decorative
without being OTT. B&T
Antiques (bntantiques.co.
uk) has a great selection.
Low-level seating also

makes obvious sense, and there are so many options on the high street at the moment. Try the distinctive Toga sofa (above, inset) from Heals (heals. com) or Design Market (design-mkt. com) for an original 1970s piece.

But most importantly, think positive. Low ceilings make for a much cosier room than cavernously high ones.