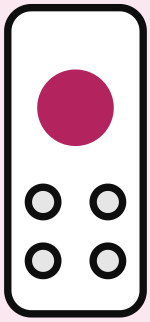
Model

Ten principles for good design

Ten criteria Dieter Rams set out at Braun to judge whether a product is well designed: from useful and understandable to long-lasting and with as little design as possible.



In Spanish
Diez principios del buen diseño

Origin
Rams (1985); published by Braun in 1987

What problem it addresses

It gives a short list for reviewing a design with arguments, not just taste. Product design uses it as a quality guide and as a case for objects that last.

Components

Innovative
Makes use of what new technology allows, without innovating for its own sake.

Useful
Serves its practical purpose, but also the psychological and aesthetic ones.

Aesthetic
We live with objects every day, so their beauty matters too.

Understandable
The product itself shows how it is used, ideally without instructions.

Unobtrusive
It is a tool, not a work of art; it leaves room for the person using it.

Honest
It doesn't pretend to be more powerful, new or valuable than it is.

Long-lasting
It doesn't follow fashions, so it doesn't age before its time.

Thorough down to the last detail
Nothing is left to chance; precision is a form of respect.

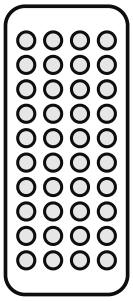
Environmentally friendly
It saves resources and avoids pollution, visual pollution included, throughout its life.

As little design as possible
It keeps what is essential and removes what is not needed.

An example

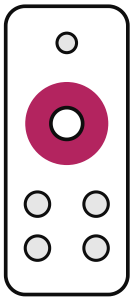
An illustrative example: a TV remote control.

Everything in view



Forty buttons of the same size, many for functions almost nobody uses. **Finding the volume is hard.**

Essentials first



Few buttons; the everyday ones are bigger and easy to find. **It makes sense without a manual.**

The second remote meets several principles at once: useful, understandable, unobtrusive and with as little design as possible.

How it works

1 

You take a design, your own or someone else's;

2 

you review it against each principle as if it were a question;

3 

and you fix or remove whatever fails the review.

Applications in design

Use it like this

Review a design as a team with the ten principles so you argue with reasons, not tastes.

Avoid

Treating them as a style (white, gray and minimalist) instead of as criteria.

Don't fall for it

They were made for physical products of the 1980s. Check how they translate to what you design, such as an interface or a service.

3 → 6 → 10



What the research says

Rams's rules grew over the years: three for Braun design (1975), six principles (1983) and ten (1985), as reconstructed by Klemp (2012).

Connections

Used in

- Industrial design
- Sustainable design
- Design principles

Related to

- Form follows function
- Data-ink ratio

Authors and works

1985	**Dieter Rams**	Presented the ten principles in a lecture at the ICSID congress in Washington. Braun published them in 1987 as the philosophy of its design department.
2012	**Klaus Klemp**	Reconstructed how Rams's rules grew from three to ten between 1975 and 1985.
	Vitsœ	Explains the context. In the late 1970s, Rams was worried about a world full of shapes, colors and noise, and asked himself whether his own design was good.

Sources

Academic reviews

- Klemp, K. (2012). Dieter Rams: Ethics and modern philosophy. What legacy today? Docomomo Journal, 46, 68–75. View source (https://doi.org/10.52200/46.A.ERBGMDKW)

Secondary sources

- Vitsœ (n.d.). Good design: Dieter Rams' ten principles for good design. Consultado el October 27, 2026. View source (https://vitsoe.com/us/about/good-design)

Last reviewed: October 27, 2026

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