

Room for Design

How to plan kitchen remodeling

by
Cloria
Cohen



Where do you start when planning your new or remodeled kitchen? Appliances, storage units, and counter tops should be on top of your priority list.

Less easily defined essentials — efficiency, attractiveness and practicality — are next on the list to be considered. When planning for a new kitchen, there's so much to be decided and achieved.

First, you should know that wise use of space is the secret of kitchen planning. It's the starting point for designing a room that's right for your needs and purposes. A large floor area alone won't guarantee efficiency. In fact, a large kitchen with misused space can be twice as effort-wasting and annoying as an unhandy small kitchen.

One of the main aims of kitchen planners is to avoid run-around and unnecessary backtracking to do daily jobs. This is achieved by following a few simple rules and by using a lot of common sense.

IT MAKES SENSE to arrange your major appliances so you can go from one to another without too much walking. Storage space for utensils should be close to the place where they are used most often.

Many of the nicest features in a kitchen have to be anticipated in advance. These, such as islands and peninsulas, fireplaces, unusual ceilings, practical and pretty backslashes, easy care and attractive flooring, all must be built into a kitchen. It costs a lot more if you decide after your kitchen is half done that you need or want these built-in features.

When you have a plan that satisfies

you, it's a good idea to try a final check on the space and efficiency by imagining daily jobs in the kitchen. Imagine that you are clearing the table after dinner, doing dishes, or putting them in the dishwasher, mixing a cake, making a salad, unloading groceries. Be detailed enough to visualize the small equipment you will need for each job. This is one of the best tests to give any kitchen plan.

Average measurements that are used in most of the new kitchens can serve as your guide when you're planning. Even your preliminary sketches should be done to scale so you can tell how much space is available.

IDEALLY, EVERY appliance will have a work top immediately adjoining it. The refrigerator door should open away from its work top. For most jobs, plan for at least 24 inches of counter. One counter can then do two or more jobs.

Here are standard heights and depths for kitchens:

Usual work top is 36 inches from the floor. Food preparation and mixing top is 32 inches high. A sit-down counter is 26 to 30 inches from the floor. Bottoms of wall cabinets are 55 inches from the floor. Outlets and switches measure 44 inches high.

Without great expense, most kitchens can't be rearranged to correct mistakes in design and organization. Built-in appliances become a permanent part of your room. Consider carefully what you need — don't buy a piece of equipment that you don't anticipate using often. Major appliances are a big investment, and they should justify all the money you spend.

There are several basic styles for each range, refrigerator, freezer, sink and dishwasher. In cooking equipment, you can have an eye-level oven and cook-top stacked on a base cabinet, a freestanding console with one or two ovens, a drop-in or side-in unit, a separate wall oven and cook top or the familiar freestanding range unit.

Because insulating techniques are better now, larger capacity refrigerators fit where smaller units once stood. There are adjustable shelves, special food storage compartments, no-frost and movable models from which to choose. Try to look at many different brands.

Don't skimp on space when you plan your family's dining center. A cramped eating area is a major annoyance that's apparent three times a day. For comfortable dining, you should allow at least 24 inches of table or counter elbow room per person.

A desirable kitchen lighting plan starts with a ceiling fixture, or fixtures, scaled in light output to the size of the room. In addition, each counter work center should have its own lighting unit.

The smaller the kitchen, the more important the cabinet's efficiency. Use all space wisely.

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