

8 Essential Steps to Planning Your Perfect Kitchen

1 Set a Budget

Set a budget, and then plan on spending 80% of it. That 20% you held back from your budget can be used to cover any unforeseen circumstances which inevitably pop up such as small changes or unperceived problems.

Caution

Don't try to save money by cutting back on storage space. Over time you accumulate quite a lot of stuff in your kitchen and you don't want to clutter worktop space with these items.

2 Get involved in the Design

Enjoy designing your kitchen, it's the most used room in the house, the heart of your home. Get everyone involved with the planning. Make it a family affair and you'll get through it with a lot less stress.

Caution

Don't make the mistake of agreeing with a kitchen design just to please the salesman. Your new kitchen should reflect your taste, not the designers. Work with the designer to achieve the practical, tasteful space that fits your needs and lifestyle. Ask for virtual drawings and stay involved throughout the design process.



3 Plan in advance

Plan your kitchen as early as possible, particularly if you are having an extension.

Caution

Avoid using a kitchen company who won't design a kitchen until the walls are in place. A kitchen design and quotation can be worked on from your architect's drawings and a check measure carried out when the walls are up.



4 The Triangle

The Working Triangle - kitchen layouts are based on a concept called the 'Work Triangle'. This means that for the most efficient use of space, the oven, sink and fridge should form a working triangle, ideally no more than 2.5m apart.

Caution

You don't want your new kitchen to look cramped. Try not to crowd tall units and wall units too close to windows and doors. This makes the kitchen feel smaller.



5 Quotations

Make sure the company you choose give you a quotation describing the work, the specific products to be used, costs and starting and completion dates - plus the terms of payment. Get detailed drawings of the project to ensure that you, the designer and the contractor are envisioning the same kitchen.

Caution

Don't rush! With so much to consider when buying a new kitchen, you have to take your time and look at all the options.



6 Appliances

Buy 'A' Rated Appliances. Ovens, refrigerators and dishwashers can be very expensive to run. Using 'A' Rated appliances will reduce your annual energy bills and is better for the environment.

Caution

Don't include items which are too hard to replace or repair. Avoid specialised items so that repairs and replacements don't turn into logistical nightmares. All joinery, electrical, plumbing and gas work should be repairable with the minimum of fuss.

7 Quality Materials

Invest in well-built cabinets and drawer mechanisms since they get the most use. Make sure all cabinets are manufactured from 18mm board and are supplied with solid backs as standard. Good hinges such as Blum are also very important.

Caution

If possible avoid buying cheap worktops. As the worktops cover such a vast area of your kitchen, a cheap laminate worktop can make even the most expensive doors look cheap, but good quality worktops can make budget cabinets look premium priced.

8 Skilled professionals

The most important ingredient in a successful kitchen project is selecting the right people to work on the job. Any gas work carried out should be done and certificated by a qualified gas safe installer and any electrics should be carried out by a certificated Part P qualified electrician. The installer should be an expert in joinery kitchen installations.

Caution

Don't be tempted to install appliances yourself, however good you are at DIY!



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