



Aberdeenshire
Health & Social Care
Partnership

Top Tips for Kitchen Design and Use



If you are planning to upgrade your kitchen these top tips will guide you to plan your kitchen to meet your needs now and in the future.

Tip 1

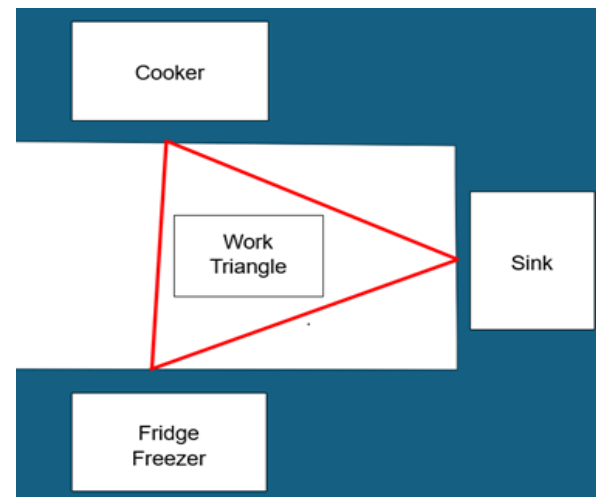
Planning your kitchen layout

Consider the size of your kitchen. Try to maximise usable storage space while still leaving room for equipment to support your mobility. Many kitchen designers plan kitchens around a “Kitchen Triangle” between your fridge, sink and cooker to make it easy to move between these areas.

Think about the way doors open to ensure that you can access all storage areas.

Consider door types to enable better access e.g. slide/partition door, pocket door, bi-fold door, stable door. Think about where your washing machine will go. If it is possible, a washing machine can be raised on a plinth to reduce the need for bending to take items out of the machine.

Integrated appliances can be aesthetically pleasing but consider how practical they may be to access now and, in the future.



Tip 2

Ovens

If you intend to continue using your oven, consider having this at worktop height and having an area adjacent to it or with a pull-out shelf for hot items. Make sure you have easy access to the oven. Some people choose a door that opens from the top and slides out of the way to give you closer access to the oven.



Tip 3

Lighting

Consider the lighting required in your kitchen. Under cabinet lighting can provide good visibility when doing tasks. Central ceiling lights can cast shadows in certain areas of the kitchen and hinder visibility. Consider spotlights which give greater coverage across the whole kitchen and give light to areas otherwise in shadow.



Tip 4

Taps

A tap with lever style operation can be easier to use than taps with turning handles, which may be dirty from food preparation or difficult to use due

to issues with your hands. Make sure that the tap is clearly marked for hot and cold, so it is easy for the user to understand how to safely operate.

Consider the position of the taps for easier access – may be better sitting to one side rather than at the back of the sink.

Tip 5

Boiling water

Kettles can be awkward and heavy once filled. Have the kettle positioned at a safe but convenient distance from the sink. Some people choose to fill the kettle with cold water from a small jug to save having to lift the kettle to and from the sink. Others choose



a travel style kettle which is lighter to use. There are kettles available which have a built-in tipper which makes it easier to pour from when full. One cup kettles boil enough water for one cup of tea and then dispense it in a cup.

Recently boiling water taps have become more popular. These can be expensive to install and tricky to operate with sore hands. The safety features on these taps mean pushing and twisting rings on the tap to operate. You also have to notice the colour of the LED lights to ensure you are getting the desired temperature

TIP 6

Where to keep everything?

Plan to keep regularly used items within easy reach and items that you use less frequently in less accessible cupboards. Labelling items and decanting into containers can make them more usable.

Tip 7

Window Opening

Many kitchen windows have a worktop in front of them which can hinder the ability to open and close them safely. Consider this in the design of your kitchen or consider purchasing a window opener tool which prevents you having to stretch to open the window.

Tip 8

Where are you going to eat?

Carrying hot food and drinks can be tricky if you have difficulty with walking and need to rely on a walking aid for support. Think about where you are going to eat your meals. If there isn't space in the kitchen for eating meals, consider purchasing a trolley to make transporting meals between rooms easier.

Tip 9

What can you do differently?

Plan your task in advance and consider using kitchen appliances to lighten the load such as food processors, dish washers and countertop cooking appliances, such as slow cookers and air fryers. There are many gadgets available to help in the kitchen such as jar openers, chopping and preparation boards and non-slip mats which can make tasks easier. These are widely available from online sites or some chemists locally can order these items in for you.

Tip 10

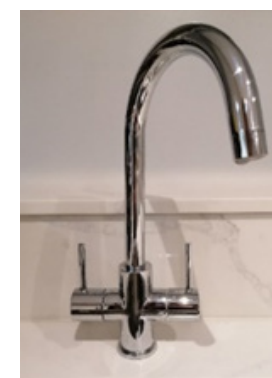
Assessment if you have specific conditions

We trust this guide assists you with planning the layout of your kitchen. However, if you have a medical condition which is hindering your independence in the kitchen and would like further assessment, please consider referring yourself to Occupational Therapy for advice.



Storage: Tip 6

(above) Labelling items and decanting into containers can make them more usable.



Taps: Tip 4

(left) A tap with lever style operation can be easier to use than taps with turning handles.

For further information and guidance, please contact Aberdeenshire Council Occupational Therapy Service on **0345 608 1206**

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