

# BEWARE! KITCHEN DESIGN ERRORS

**While the kitchen is undoubtedly the heart of a home, preserving its warmth while updating its look, feel and function can be one of the most challenging aspects of kitchen design.**

There are lots of reasons to update your kitchen, perhaps you want to upgrade and increase the value of the home, or maybe you just want to make your cooking time more efficient and enjoyable; but beyond the siren call of the glossy design magazines and those shiny new appliances you've been eyeing out, there are basic design errors that you should be aware of to ensure your new kitchen is both attractive and practical.

## ROOM TO WORK

One of the most common mistakes is not allowing for sufficient countertop space. Though you may want your countertops to be decorative, they need to be functional too. When updating your kitchen, ensure you have sufficient countertop workspace by evaluating how you use the space you currently have and planning for your future needs. The amount of space you require will be specific to your circumstances and will vary with the size limitations of your room as well as your budget. Understanding how traffic will flow through the kitchen is a useful tool in organizing countertop space so that it will be efficient and comfortable. Make a list of the type of activities you need specific 'zones' for and evaluate how they may overlap when more than one person uses the kitchen.

Materials matter too. Natural stone, quartz, solid surfacing, concrete and natural wood counters all require regular maintenance and special handling. Make sure you educate yourself about the material you want to use before making a final decision as you may accidentally choose a high maintenance finish that keeps you on your toes.

## ISLAND DESIGN

An island can add some much needed additional counter space; however, if it's too big it can ruin your kitchen. If you choose the wrong island or place it in the wrong spot it can be a disaster. Islands that obstruct the flow of traffic to and from the sink, refrigerator, stove and primary workstations will create bottlenecks and impede the functionality of your kitchen. One solution is to add a sink or stove to the island so it forms part of the functional

kitchen triangle. Another is to position the island so that it has lots of space around it and doesn't impede foot traffic. Rule of thumb is to allow a minimum walkway of 900mm between counters and/or cupboard units.



## TOO TRENDY

Remember, trends and tastes change. Pomegranate may be the most stylish colour around this season, but chances are in five years, those luscious red hues may look garish and dated. Most trendy designs have a short half-life, and when they're out, they're really out. Even if you're sure that red is your favourite colour when you come to sell prospective buyers may not share your passion. Going too trendy with the design, colour and material choices could jeopardise your sale. Rather opt for colours and materials that have longevity, appealing to multiple tastes. These finishes can be easily dressed with wall colour, appliances and pictures that add your personal tastes and these can be updated as your tastes change.

## STICK TO THE PLAN

Progressing from the planning stages to the actual work may involve some inconvenience and expense. To ensure your success, decide on a plan and stick with it. Changing your mind once the work has begun can be expensive and usually results in more than a few unexpected and frustrating glitches.

It is a good idea to get more than one company to quote on your kitchen but allow each company to do their own measurements and come up with their own design. If you take one design to all the companies for them to quote from you will never know if there is a better kitchen design than the one you have. Each designer will have a unique interpretation of your brief. You should give the designer a full understanding of the budget they have to work with then set them free to interpret your brief. This way you will have several design options to choose from assisting you to find the best design for your space and requirements.