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OPEN PLAN vs BROKEN PLAN DESIGN

Not sure which option will work best for your project? We discuss the pros and cons of each to help you plan a successful scheme

Words **Charlotte Luxford**



First things first: let's be clear about what open plan and broken plan actually mean. An open-plan layout is about removing physical barriers between the different functional living zones to create one seamless, interconnected space. However, with a broken-plan layout, the idea is to maintain that element of visual connection between the spaces, but with the ability to define distinct areas using physical features such as different floor levels, half walls or glazed internal doors.

While open-plan layouts naturally go hand in hand with modern-day family life, in a post-pandemic world some homeowners are reverting back to a more divided, broken-plan design as they crave quieter spaces away from the hubbub of the communal kitchen. With WFH now the norm and many of us spending more time at home, there's an argument that broken-plan is the way forward. However, many designers maintain that it's simply a matter of individual preferences, lifestyle considerations and household dynamics. So which camp will you sit in? Read on to discover the pros and cons of each space and how to achieve both layouts successfully.



This rear extension by Proctor & Shaw features tall rear doors, high ceilings and a palette of white cabinetry, Douglas Fir and poured concrete, which all enhance the feeling of spaciousness. Twenty kitchen in white satin lacquer with Caesarstone worktops. Kitchens at DesignSpace London start from £25,000.



A spacious central island subtly splits the cooking area from the adjacent living space in this broken plan layout. The Sheraton kitchen is painted in Farrow & Ball's Inchyra Blue and Ammonite and costs £50,000.

How to make BROKEN PLAN WORK

Broken plan works well if you need to include multiple functions within the space and want a sense of separation while still maximising light and visibility," says Julia Brown, director at Mowlem & Co. "Broken plan can be achieved by something as simple as bench seating separating an office area from the rest of the kitchen, or fluted or glass doors leading to the pantry, an island on wheels, or by introducing a raised level, particularly at a transition space to other areas of the house." This works especially well in city homes with subterranean gardens where the kitchen extension is at a lower level to the rest of the living spaces at the front of the property.

If you're working with an L-shaped floor plan, Will at Herringbone suggests making one area a dedicated kitchen space, while the other side of the L becomes a dining area adjacent to the kitchen with a living space at the back. The sitting area can be closed off using pocket doors to provide a quieter space to relax. Light is another important element, so wherever possible ensure that at eye level you have a view to the outside or access to natural light. Glazed partition screens, room dividers that you can see through, glass doors and windows (consider clever clerestory, slit windows and roof lights, particularly in darker spaces) will all help maintain that element of airiness. >



Internal glazing helps partition off the kitchen from the living space when needed. Devoil kitchens start from £12,000.

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