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SPACE FOR ALL THE FAMILY

HOW TO GO OPEN PLAN AND GET IT RIGHT

Gone are the days when a family waited in one room while the cook slaved away next door. Opening up the kitchen to create multi-functional spaces is on many wishlists, but needs careful planning to make it suitable for everyone. Follow this advice to ensure your space is stylish and safe

Words: **Ysanne Brooks**

A familiar set up in older properties, the separate dining room was originally intended to keep family and guests away from the kitchen's heat and mess. Lifestyles and the quality of appliances have changed significantly, and our homes have had to keep up with this shift. A growing desire for a more integrated family life, connected to one another as well as to our wider environment, fuels the growth in demand for kitchen-diners and open-plan spaces with links to the outdoors. No longer confined to the kitchen, the cook can interact with the family, who use the space for other tasks. "As one of the most frequented rooms in the house, the modern kitchen-diner is a place to spend quality time with loved ones – so when planning your space it's important to consider how you will use it," says Joanne Emery, marketing manager at Burbidge. "Will it mainly be for cooking and eating, or do you foresee yourself entertaining friends and family? Do you need space for kids to do homework, take part in arts and crafts, or have friends over for after-school dinner?" Of course, the whole family occupying one large room raises challenges, but gathering the right information before you start will help guide you to a new space where everyone can safely work, rest, and play. Consider the following to ensure your space is a success... ▶

Practical solutions

Work with your builder and kitchen designer to ensure all your services are perfectly placed – particularly if you are planning an island or peninsula with appliances on it. This includes water as well as electricity and plumbing, which will all need to run under the floor. Think carefully about where you’ll put small as well as large appliances, too, as having to add plug points once plastering and tiling is completed is a costly mistake to make. This is also crucial if you’re planning a homework or office area, as you’ll need to have somewhere to plug in phones, tablets, and computers. “As we’ve become increasingly reliant on electronic devices, such as tablets and mobile phones, it is becoming very popular to have strategically located plug points all around the kitchen, especially in family homes,” says Adrian Stoneham, managing director at Stoneham Kitchens. “Make sure any mains outlets are safely placed so there is no danger of electrocution or water damage. Also look out for plug points integrated into work surfaces or islands that pull out easily and offer on-the-go, secure charging of any device. Not only are these convenient, but it means you can keep the kids nearby to work at a breakfast bar while you’re in the kitchen, or you can work from home while the kids play in the same room.” To really future-proof your space and ensure there are plenty of power points to suit the whole family, consider investing in plugs with USB ports. Think about adding one into a tambour unit, too, or behind doors which can be closed to obscure charging tech. ▶

A hob on an island can create a real sense of theatre, but isn’t always possible when combined with seating – especially if you have children. This bespoke McCarron & Co design’s owner was concerned about little hands reaching over, so the hob was placed on the back wall and the island hosts the sink and dishwasher instead. McCarron & Co kitchens start at £35,000.



↑ A bank of units containing cooking and cooling appliances, with an island running parallel, can help create good sightlines in an open-plan space. In this Roundhouse matt lacquer Urbo and Metro design, the addition of floor-to-ceiling cabinetry with a blackboard paint finish helps keep the children amused. Roundhouse bespoke kitchens start at £35,000.

