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Kitchen Function and Style

Finding the right design for your kitchen is a balancing act of finding the right layout to meet your needs.

*Beth Mathews/Mathews Construction
Community contributor*

The kitchen has come a long way from just serving as a place to prepare meals. For most families, the kitchen serves as the social center of the home. When you are creating this space, a high level of detailed space planning and design prowess should be employed to ensure the kitchen's efficiency and beauty.

It is important to choose the right size and layout of the kitchen. An ill-planned kitchen can be a daily irritant, but a well thought-out one will eliminate wasted energy and make the room a pleasure to work and play in. One of the first steps is to think through your needs and desires for the space, which should then be incorporated into the kitchen's design and space planning. There are three primary work centers in the kitchen: storage, food preparation, and cooking, which

all should play a role in establishing the room's layout. Also, if you have other desired functions for the kitchen, such as an eating space or a children's study nook, these should be considered during this process.

The most convenient passage between the refrigerator, sink and cooktop/range should form the "working triangle."

There are several common kitchen layouts, but as you are deciding which one best fits your needs, it is advisable to spend some time thinking about the "working triangle" of your kitchen. On your kitchen space drawing, you should create a diagram of your movements between the primary elements in your kitchen: refrigerator, sink, and cooktop/

range. The most convenient passage between these components should form a small triangle, or the "working triangle." If the space permits, I advise clients to incorporate an island into their kitchen design, which allows either the sink or the cooktop/range to be accessible from several different directions and adds additional work space to the room.

I usually lean toward an open kitchen plan that allows someone in the kitchen the ability to see and communicate with other family members in surrounding rooms and suits itself well for entertaining. With an open plan, the style of the kitchen should fit in seamlessly with the other architectural and design elements of the home.

Cabinetry may be painted or stained. If you paint your cabinets, I recommend utilizing a neutral color tone to create a nice backdrop. Add some pattern and texture to the room with your kitchen tile backsplash and other decorative objects in the kitchen. If you desire stained cabinetry, ensure the proper type and quality of wood is used.

There are many options for countertops from natural stone, like granite and marble, to manufactured products, like quartz. Do your research on the pros and cons of each, such as their stain and heat resistance and maintenance, then decide which one fits your family's lifestyle.

Lighting is a topic that should be given much consideration in the kitchen. A frequently-made mistake is not in the fixture type itself but in the positioning of the light source. It is important that light beams are cast directly upon a desired work space rather than behind the person working, which can create undesirable shadows.

Stone and tile kitchen floors can be beautiful, but they tend to be a little hard on the feet. Some other options to consider are wood or cork flooring, which are both warmer and softer underfoot.

If you are thinking about building or remodeling your home, call Mathews Construction at 334-799-0047 or email us at mathewsinc@gmail.com. To learn more about the company, check out our website at johnmathewsconstruction.com.



Top: Updating or adding on to your kitchen adds value and functionality to your home.

Bottom left: Beth and John Mathews of Mathews Construction.

Bottom right: Tile accents of the kitchen, such as the tiles, should add texture and color.

Photos courtesy of Mathews Construction (top, bottom left); Fouts Commercial Photography (bottom right)