



Is it Time to Remodel your Kitchen?

Many homeowners think their kitchen is outdated from the looks of their worn cabinets, dated appliances and cracked countertop. What they may not realize is that there are many other reasons, more important than cosmetic, why a kitchen needs to be remodeled.

The National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) offers the following tips to help homeowners evaluate the current condition of their kitchen and decide if the time is right for a remodel.

- **Adequate space:** Are you satisfied with the amount of counter space, cabinet space and floor space in your kitchen? The position of your refrigerator or shape of your counter may be taking away useful workspace. According to the NKBA Kitchen and Bath Planning Guidelines, when replacing a countertop or changing the shape of your kitchen, keep in mind that a total of 158" of countertop frontage, 24" deep with at least 15" of clearance above, is needed to accommodate all uses, including landing area, preparation/work area and storage.
- **Traffic flow:** If there's more than one cook in your household, you may want to consider making more room around the main workspace. If you enjoy entertaining, you may want an open plan kitchen that allows for more social interaction between the kitchen and other rooms. According to the NKBA Kitchen Planning Guidelines, the width of a walkway should be at least 36" and the width of a work aisle should be at least 42" for one cook and at least 48" for multiple cooks.
- **Children:** Depending on whether or not you have children, and their ages, your kitchen may need to be remodeled. Dated appliances and the design of your kitchen can be hazardous for young kids. If you are in the process of extending your family, you may want more room for cooking larger meals and lower cabinets for easier access to children's food. Based on the NKBA Kitchen Planning Guidelines, microwave ovens should be installed 3" below the principal user's shoulder but no more than 54" above the floor to avoid accidents. The NKBA also suggests avoiding sharp corners on countertops with kids around.
- **Efficiency:** If your appliances are dated, they may be costing you more money than you expect. New technological advances with dishwashers, disposals and refrigerators could save you a considerable amount of money and may be well worth the investment. For example, purchasing a dishwasher with low-energy consumption, delay timer and economy cycle or half-load button will result in saving water and money.
- **Universal Design:** Is your kitchen accessible to individuals with disabilities? Will you be able to use your kitchen safely as you get older? Considering these issues is vital in a kitchen remodel. Employing Universal Design techniques in the remodel will help assure that the space is as accessible to or useable by all people, regardless of age, size or physical ability without the need for adaptation or specialized design later on.
- **Location:** Thinking about adding a deck to the side or back of your house? Incorporating a door into the layout of your kitchen would be a great convenience for outdoor entertaining. You also may want to rearrange the position of windows to allow more or less sunlight or to watch your children play in the yard. When rearranging the layout of your kitchen, according to the NKBA guidelines, the clear opening of a doorway should be at least 32" wide, which would require a minimum of 2'10" door. Keep in mind that a cooking surface should never be located under an operable window.

Before you remodel your kitchen, make a checklist of major and minor problems and keep notes of the features you dislike and like the most. When it comes time to sit down with a qualified kitchen and bath designer, they'll know exactly how to suit your needs, taste and style.