

Build It

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Q&A: THE KITCHEN EXPERTS ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS

How can I make sure the style of my kitchen, dining and living rooms work well together?

"Some clients want a very sleek look, where the kitchen/living areas are entirely designed and constructed from the same materials. Others prefer distinct zone, subtly united by design details; whether they be colour, texture or actual materials. A single flooring product, for example, will unite the areas; as can wall cladding (for instance in wood or glass) running through from the kitchen to dining/living area. Often my clients will already have a table, chairs and sofa and we can choose harmonising materials for the kitchen furniture. Another highly effective approach can be to match the worktops to the dining table top."

Neil Lerner, Neil Lerner Kitchen Design

How can I create a defined and practical area?

"Designing the space so that the utility functions of the home, such as the laundry, can still be kept separate makes sure that the main area is a place for relaxation and entertaining – rather than becoming a constant reminder of chores that need to be done. It's important to define sections and functions. You can do this by using rugs or adding an accent colour to a wall, for example, or creating a line of demarcation from living to dining, and from dining to kitchen."

Andrea Geach, Bohem

How do I illuminate a multifunctional zone?

"Circuiting is key to ensure flexibility. A pre-set scene control system will help to simplify how you manage the space and create different moods. All the zones relate to each other; remember that when dining you won't want the kitchen to be in complete darkness, so allow for some low level lighting. This could be an LED strip under the island or steplights set into the kickplate to wash across the floor. Everything should be linked to a dimmer for maximum flexibility."

Luke Thomas, John Cullen Lighting



This striking white kitchen has been designed in a minimalist style to fit neatly into a relatively narrow living and entertaining zone. Light-reflecting high-gloss cabinets and mirrored plinths have been used to create the illusion of more space. The ergonomic design enables the owners to move easily between the working and dining spaces, as well as the relaxed living area. **From £30,000, Woodstock Furniture**

cooking area that can be used as a more formal dining hub when needed? Questions like these allow designers to create individualised 'zoning' for each client."

Each functional space needs to have its own sense of purpose, and be defined somehow to prevent everything merging together in a clumsy fashion. Imagine how the space would look with walls in it; replicating a series of chambers, rather than working with one giant room will stop you from lumping everything together. Also, don't forget to allow space to open doors, cupboards, drawers, move chairs and

so on. The great thing here is that you have flexibility – open plan layouts are adaptable and can change to suit your needs relatively easily.

Storage

One of the downsides of a barrier-free arrangement is that it's hard to escape from the clutter – so you need to consider where you'll stow things away at the planning stage. "Making sure the design has enough storage to pack away the pots, hideaway the post and house essentials, such as a vacuum and mop, will ensure that your room doesn't become a bugbear," says Andrea from Bohem.

Right: Use your storage space wisely to ensure your open zone has a sleek finish. Here the cabinets tie together both the living and kitchen areas; they are minimal in style and would suit a range of settings.

Cabinetry from £19,000, Cue & Co

