



HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE TO KITCHEN REMODELING

Part I: How to Plan Your Kitchen Remodeling Project



ABOUT NEAL'S



In 1972 Neal's Construction Company, Inc. began and has since grown into one of the top 2% of all remodeling contractors in the United States. Neal Hendy's sons, Neal Jr., Steve, and Alan, and Neal's daughter, Leanne, joined the team. Over the years, many design, innovation, and quality awards have been earned from the local and national media, trade associations, and national trade publications. However, the real success at Neal's Design•Remodel has been the people working together to plan and construct our clients' home dreams into reality. Our goal is solving home improvement living needs, within the budgets of our clients, by delivering a superior product through quality service. We never lose sight of the fact that our future in this industry depends on how we "wow" our customers today.

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FORWARD

Kitchen remodeling projects take time to plan. There are many details to consider and decisions to make. Tackling a major home improvement project may seem overwhelming. Where do you begin?

In our 40+ years in business, we have come to understand how homeowners approach kitchen remodeling projects. Often they look through magazines, watch how-to television shows, search for information online and visit showrooms or home shows seeking ideas before coming to us to discuss their needs. Our job is to listen to their ideas and help bring their concepts to life.

When we first meet with a homeowner, we start by asking a series of questions. For us, it's important to know their priorities. We want to know what they like and dislike most about their current kitchen and all of the items on their "wish list". From there, we review their "needs" and "wants" to design a plan and determine a budget range for the project they are considering.

We have prepared a "Homeowner's Guide to Kitchen Remodeling" to help you plan your new kitchen project.

Part I of the guide, "How to Plan Your Kitchen Remodeling Project," includes questions to answer to help you set your priorities and budget expectations. It shows you how to research kitchen design ideas, the elements of a functional kitchen, and how to prepare for a first meeting with a kitchen design professional.

Part II of the guide, "[How to Select Products for Your Kitchen Remodeling Project](#)," takes you step-by-step to find the right products for your kitchen remodeling project. It provides valuable information and insights about cabinets, cabinet storage options and accessories, cabinet hardware, appliances, sinks, countertops, backsplashes and lighting. All of the products you will need for your project.

Throughout the guide you will find many photos of kitchens we have remodeled in the Greater Cincinnati area to serve as an inspiration for your own project. We invite you to visit our [showroom](#), explore our [website](#) for helpful information, view [photos of kitchen projects](#) and attend one of our free kitchen [planning seminars](#). You can also schedule an appointment for a [complimentary in-home initial consultation](#) with one of our Project Consultants to help you get started.

We hope that you will find this information helpful and we welcome your questions and comments.

The Neal's Design•Remodel Team

PROJECT BUDGETING & PRIORITIES

One of the first questions most homeowners ask is: “How much should we budget for our kitchen remodeling project?” The answer is as varied as your options, and is based on what you plan to do and what it will take to accomplish that plan. Setting financial objectives and project priorities is the first step toward assuring that your project is on target. *So let's get started.*



Setting Priorities

The process of determining your budget should start with some questions. By defining the priorities and purpose of your remodel, you can start to create limits and expectations for how much you want to spend.

What are your plans for your home?

Are you raising or planning to raise a family here? Is this where you plan to live during your retirement years? Is it your first home or do you want it to be your dream home? How you intend to use the house feeds into how the kitchen needs to perform for you and your family.

Is the home a long-term or short-term investment?

If you plan to live in the home for less than five years, updates to the kitchen should appeal more to prospective buyers. If you plan to stay longer, think about designing a kitchen that you will enjoy over time.

Are you concerned about the return on your investment?

With any changes you make to the home, you will want to maximize the home's equity if you're looking for a return. This is determined by keeping up with recent sales of comparable homes in your area and using those as a benchmark for the price you paid for your home plus the cost of any additional investments you make to your home. [The Cost vs. Value Remodeling Report for Cincinnati, Ohio](#), published annually by *Remodeling Magazine*, is a valuable tool for guidance.

Once you have some idea of your intentions for the home and how you expect to use it, you can begin thinking about the details of your kitchen remodel. Write out your answers to the following questions.

What do you like about your current kitchen?

List anything that is working for you, including the layout, certain appliances, the general style, etc. These are things that may be worth keeping or factoring into your remodeling plan.



What do you dislike about your current kitchen?

Chances are high that this is the longer list, but focus initially on the items you feel are the most displeasing about your kitchen. Is it hard to maintain? Is the work space confined? Which appliances need to be replaced? Is storage a problem? Are cabinets old? Is there enough room for entertaining or for expanding families? This list will help to define your priorities later.

What types of activities do you do, or would like to do, in the kitchen?

Do you prefer to sit down in the kitchen for breakfast? Is your family computer in the kitchen? Do you multi-task in the kitchen with chores, like laundry? How does your family choose to use the space? Does it serve as a family or friend gathering space?

How many people do you need to accommodate most days?

Does your kitchen need to allow just enough room for one, or do you have a large group in and out all the time? What sort of access do they need to the working areas of the kitchen?

What sort of seating do you require in the kitchen?

Do you have dinner at the kitchen table? Are you happier with stools at the counter? Is your kitchen better off with no seating, or chairs that are easily moved out of the way?

Do you entertain?

Large or small groups? Formal or casual? Do your guests tend to congregate in the kitchen, or is it “mission control” for parties? Do you need double ovens, a beverage center or storage for special glasses and dishes?

To further hone in on the budget for your kitchen remodel, take some time to determine your needs and wants. **Needs** are aspects of your project that are essential to your goal, while **wants** are aspects you would prefer to have but are optional to the success of your goal. The process of identifying where each aspect of your project falls between these two categories can be lengthy, since items you originally thought were needs may turn out to be wants compared to everything else you want to accomplish.

Answer the following questions about the functional space in your kitchen:

- **Do you have all the floor space you need in order to move around?**
- **Do your appliances function effectively for you, and do you like the way they look?**
- **Do you have enough accessible storage? Do you need pantry storage?**
- **Can your family, especially young children or aging parents, use the space safely?**
- **Do you have adequate counter space for preparing meals?**
- **Do you need more space or considerations for your pets?**
- **Is the space connected to the rest of the house in a manner that works?**
- **Are your mechanical systems (plumbing, electric, etc.) working for the space?**
- **Is the style of the space suitable to your tastes and the rest of the home?**



Now, use the chart on the next page to prioritize the main parts of your kitchen.

Priority Checklist

	NEED	WANT	NOTES
New Cabinets			
New Countertops			
New Flooring			
Oven(s)/ Wall Oven(s)			
Warming Drawer			
Refrigerator/Freezer			
Beverage Cooler			
Cooktop/Range			
Microwave			
Dishwasher			
Sink(s)			
Lighting Fixtures/ Task Lighting			
Water Purification System			
Waste Disposal System			
Trash Compactor			
Recycling or Composting Needs			
More Workspace			
More Storage			
Pantry			
Wet Bar			
Window(s)/Skylights			
Eating Area			
Media/TV Center			
Family Organization			
Pet Areas			
Other:			

Setting a Budget

The cost of your kitchen remodeling project will depend on your priorities and how much work needs to be done to achieve your goal. Once you have determined your priorities, it's a good idea to meet with your designer/contractor who can provide an initial estimate for your project.

For general guidance on kitchen remodeling projects, we suggest looking at *Remodeling Magazine's* annual Cost vs. Value Report for the Cincinnati area. It provides cost estimates for three categories of kitchen remodeling projects based on a 200 square-foot kitchen:



2013 Cost Vs Value Remodeling Report

	Minor Kitchen Remodel	Major Kitchen Remodel	Upscale Kitchen Remodel
Average Cost	\$15,000 - 30,000	\$50,000 - 80,000	\$100,000+
Percentage of Payback	69%	63%	54%
Return on Investment	\$10,350 - 20,700	\$31,500 - 50,400	\$54,000+

Minor Kitchen Remodel

If you plan to update your kitchen without changing the floor plan and existing electrical or plumbing, the overall cost of a minor kitchen remodel is about \$20,000, which is based on:

- No floor plan changes
- 30 linear feet of non-premium cabinets and new countertops
- Leaving the cabinet boxes in place and replacing doors and hardware
- Installing new undermount sink
- Replacing laminate counters with stone, quartz or solid surface
- Installing new tile backsplash
- Removing and replacing resilient flooring
- Adding a new energy efficient cook top, wall oven, sink and faucet
- Painting trim and adding wallcovering

Major Kitchen Remodel

A major kitchen remodel involves changing the layout of a kitchen and major repairs and updates. The average cost is \$60,000 and would include:

- 30 linear feet of semi-custom wood cabinetry
- Stone, quartz or solid surface countertops
- Double bowl stainless steel sink with new faucet
- Energy efficient appliances including a wall oven, cook top, ventilation, built-in microwave, dishwasher and disposal
- Custom lighting
- New resilient flooring
- Painting walls, trims and ceilings

Upscale Kitchen Remodel

An upscale major kitchen remodel involves a major over-haul and significant upgrades. The \$113,000 cost estimate from Remodeling Magazine includes:

- 30 linear feet of top of the line cherry cabinets with pull-out shelves and accessories
- Kitchen island
- Stone, quartz or solid surface countertops
- Built-in refrigerator
- 36" commercial range and vent hood
- Built-in warming drawer
- Undermount sink with designer faucets
- Built-in water filtration system
- Cork flooring
- Task & custom lighting
- Cherry trim and finishing

Once you decide on the scope of your project, you can discuss a preliminary budget with your designer or contractor who can provide an initial estimate and work with you to refine the details.

DESIGNING A STYLISH & FUNCTIONAL KITCHEN

A well-designed kitchen is both stylish and functional. In a stylish kitchen, all of the elements – cabinets, counters, lighting, appliances, tile, flooring, fixtures – are harmonious and visually pleasing. A functional kitchen considers the way homeowners use the room for cooking, dining, entertaining and other activities. A functional kitchen is designed for efficiency and every day use.



The following sections of the guide will show you how to gather design ideas for your kitchen remodeling project, the elements that comprise a functional kitchen, and how to prepare for a first meeting with a kitchen design professional.

Collecting & Organizing Ideas

Any home remodeling project begins with ideas. Before you sit down with a contractor or designer it helps to have some idea of what you want to do. There was a time when you could put together a list and some simple rough sketches to initiate a meeting with a building professional, but today there is a wealth of information available to use in your planning process to more clearly define your objectives and plan a budget.

How to Collect Kitchen Design Ideas

Here are some of our favorite resources to help you collect design ideas for your kitchen remodeling project:

1. Neal's Design • Remodel Showroom

Why not start by visiting our showroom to see kitchen design ideas implemented? Our [5,500 square foot showroom](#) features kitchen displays created by Certified Kitchen Designer Connie Hampton. Products you will find include [Woodmode](#) and Brookhaven cabinetry, countertop options, flooring, tile, hardware, fixtures,

moldings, kitchen furnishings and accents. We offer seminars to help you plan your project and we have an online “[Idea Center](#)” where you can find information about home design trends and ideas from our blog. You can also download our “[Homeowner's Guide to Kitchen Remodeling](#)” which discusses setting a budget and establishing priorities for your project.

2. A Camera

If you are attending home shows, visiting showrooms or at a home that has features you'd like to include in your project, take photos. You can use either a digital camera or smart phone. Create a folder such as “My Kitchen Remodeling Project” on your computer or tablet to house all of your design ideas.

3. Better Homes and Gardens Magazine

Generations have relied on Better Homes and Gardens Magazine for home design ideas. BH&G was first published in 1922 and is the fourth best selling magazine in the U.S. according to Wikipedia. The magazine's publisher, Meredith Corporation, also publishes a number of special interest magazines under the BH&G brand that provide information about kitchens and baths, storage and whole house remodeling. The [BH&G website](#) is free and fun to browse with many great resources you can download. BH&G is a source for product information including appliances, cabinets, flooring, furnishings and paint colors.

4. Midwest Living Magazine

Meredith Corporation also publishes [Midwest Living Magazine](#). Founded in 1987 and printed six times a year (bi-monthly), the magazine has a readership of over four million and is targeted to residents of 12 heartland states offering regional lifestyle content. ML has great photography and a free online site that you can search for [kitchen ideas](#) and other topics such as food, travel, home and garden.

5. House Beautiful Magazine

What sets House Beautiful apart from other publications is its focus on American interior designers. On the [HB website](#) you will find tips about kitchen design, planning and even interior color options.

6. HGTV

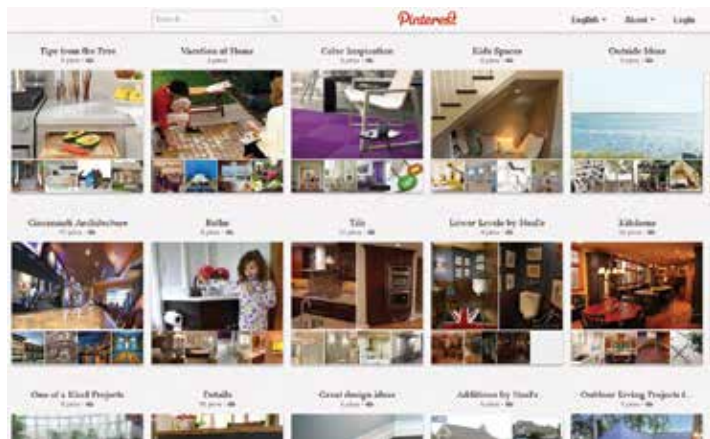
HGTV has many great programs and a website, [HGTV.com](#), featuring projects designed by some of the best interior designers in the country. The website includes videos from shows and how-to-do-it information. The content is easy to browse and changes daily. Photos are in high detail. The [Designer Portfolio](#) features hundreds of innovative kitchen designs. Hearst publications introduced HGTV Magazine to the market in 2011. In 2012, five issues were published and 10 issues are planned for 2013.

7. Houzz

Many homeowners find Houzz – a website for home design, remodeling and building – to be very helpful for collecting ideas and sharing them with their contractor. The website allows you to browse photos by room, style and metro area (e.g., Cincinnati). If you set up a free account, you can create “Ideabooks” by adding favorite photos of projects you find on the site. The content on Houzz continues to grow everyday as architects, interior designers, builders and consumers add photos and blog articles to the site. Check out [Neal's Houzz page](#). We'll be adding to it in the upcoming months.

8. Pinterest

Pinterest is a social media scrapbook that allows you to create pin boards of images of interest to you. It was developed in 2009 and launched in 2010 so it's a relatively new website with a growing interest. If you're planning a remodeling project you can create a free [Pinterest](#) account and collect photos of design ideas and products from virtually anywhere on the Internet. In our blog articles, you'll find “Pin It” buttons attached to photos, which makes it easy for you to add directly to a “board” in your account. Check out some of our boards on [Neal's Pinterest Page](#).



9. National Kitchen & Bath Association

NKBA has an online “[Inspiration Gallery](#)” that you can browse to see some incredible kitchens in a range of styles equipped with some of the latest products on the market. We hope that you find this list helpful in gathering ideas for your own home. We would like to invite you to meet with one of our project consultants or designers to discuss your project. We love to answer questions and share ideas.

How to Organize Ideas - Create a Project Binder

Details are at the heart of every well-designed kitchen. Most people gather ideas by looking at photos in magazines and brochures. Rather than tearing pages from a magazine and sticking them in a folder, why not organize your ideas in a binder? It will help you to set priorities and identify elements and products you would like to include. You can also print photos and Webpages containing designs you like and keep them in your binder.

Here are some tips for creating a project binder:

- Select a sturdy 3-ring binder, 3 inches in width, with multiple pockets. This will provide enough room to insert product catalogs, brochures, paint color charts, drawings and other information you will need to share.
- Purchase 8 ½" x 11" clear sheet protectors for filing photos and pages from magazines. This a great way to organize ideas you've collected without having to punch holes in pages only to have them tear. The sheet protectors are also helpful for filing drawings and notes. Sheet protectors are often sold in 100 count packages and cost between \$10 and \$13 but are worth having for anything you may file later including recipes and scrapbook pages.
- Use tabbed index dividers with pockets. Five to eight count dividers are helpful for organizing a binder. You may want to set it up for ideas, budget, drawings/plans, contract, change orders, products and other categories essential to your project. Pockets help to keep notes, brochures, receipts and other information organized and easy to access.
- When you file pages from magazines or photos, take the time to make notes on them or circle items you would like to include in your project. For example, if you're planning to remodel a kitchen and find a photo of a kitchen you really like label, note and circle items on the photo such as counters, backsplash, knobs, cabinets and flooring. Be specific so that you can review your preferences with a consultant or designer who can incorporate your ideas into the plan and help you find those items.
- Consider using the binder for filing warranties for your project. It will serve as a record and you may want to provide it as a reference to a realtor or documentation to a buyer if you should decide to sell your home.



Elements of a Functional Kitchen

Floor Plan Options

If you are planning to [remodel a kitchen](#), you will need a floor plan design. The design should address the basic functions of a kitchen including:

- **Food prep**
- **Cooking**
- **Baking**
- **Food storage**
- **Storage of small appliances, cookware, glassware, dishes and utensils**
- **Clean up**



Other functional areas to consider in your kitchen plan may include space for informal dining, a beverage center, a message center, or a walk-in pantry.

While kitchen floor plans can include many variations, there are [four basic designs](#) that fit most homes:

1. L-Shaped Kitchens

This kitchen is enclosed on two sides with work zones for cooking, food storage, food prep and clean up. An L-shaped kitchen may be able to accommodate an island, kitchen table or peninsula, depending on the dimensions of the room.

2. U-Shaped Kitchens

Three walls of a u-shaped perimeter are used for cabinets and appliances. Many U-shaped kitchens feature an island in the center for additional food prep, dining and storage space.

L-Shaped and U-shaped kitchen layouts have space in the center of the room and you may want to consider adding an island. Islands won't work in all kitchens. In most cases, kitchen islands require at least 100 square feet of floor space for the island and work aisles. The island should be at least 2-by-4 feet.

3. Galley Kitchens

In galley kitchens, cabinets and appliances are installed on two parallel walls separated by an aisle. The width of the aisle should be between 36 and 60 inches. Optimal floor width is 48 inches to allow for door swings, drawer extensions and functional workspace. The stove, refrigerator, dishwasher and sink are often placed on the same wall for efficiency.

4. One-Wall Kitchens

This option may work well for a small home or apartment. Appliances should be placed as close as possible to optimize counter and cabinet space on the wall. In a Galley or One-Wall kitchen every inch counts. Consider recessed cabinets and a refrigerator built into the walls.



The Kitchen Island

Kitchen islands evolved from the age-old wood farmhouse table. If you have visited historic homes such as Mount Vernon, Monticello, or the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, NC, you may have toured the simple but organized kitchens that feature a [sturdy farm table](#) placed in the center for food prep and with a shelf beneath for storage of cookware, dishes or supplies. Tables were the work center of the kitchen for preparing all meals at a time when people baked their daily bread.

In today's homes, kitchen islands take on a variety of functions. While still used primarily for food prep, kitchen islands can also be designed for cooking and baking, for multiple cooks, informal dining, entertaining, as a station for cleanup after meals or a place for the kids to do their homework. If you're planning to remodel a kitchen, there are many [options for designing an island](#) that meets your needs.

Here are some basic facts to consider in designing a kitchen island that works for you:

1. Minimum Space Requirements

An island should be designed to fit within the floor space of your kitchen. Islands will not work in kitchen spaces that are less than 8-by-12 feet. Kitchen islands require adequate clearance space to be functional. The National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA) [guidelines](#) recommend an optimal allowance of a 42-inch aisle around the island, especially on sides facing appliances where there are door swings to account for, and 48 inches for two cooks. With that said, depending on how the kitchen is laid out, the minimum aisle width

should be at least 36 inches to be functional. The minimum counter width of an island should be 24 inches.

2. Island Height

The height of an island can be varied based on function. The standard [kitchen countertop](#) height is 36 inches. This is the height that most people feel comfortable with when working in the kitchen. The standard height of a dining table is 28-to-30 inches. Bar height tables are typically 40-inch and 42-inch. In designing an island that would accommodate seating for diners, factor at least a 12-inch overhang.



3. Cooktops and Other Appliances

Islands can be used as a location for appliances within a kitchen. An island can be a good spot for a cooktop. Island cooktops should allow 12 inches of counter space on each side and 9 inches behind for safety. A cooktop will require venting and the two options are downdraft venting designed for island cooktops or overhead venting. You should discuss venting with your contractor before selecting products. If you plan to add a microwave oven, dishwasher or an under-cabinet refrigerator for beverages to the island, consider the door-swings in your design. Also, consider the placement of electrical outlets on the island for operating small appliances such as mixers, blenders, food processors and crockpots.

4. Sink Requirements

An island can be a great place for a sink. If an island sink is in your plans, how will you use it? Will it be the primary sink for the kitchen or a prep/bar sink? Bar sinks come in a variety of shapes and sizes. For food prep, the sink should be at least 16-by-16 inches and 8 inches deep.

5. Island Storage

A kitchen island is a work center and [storage should be geared toward the primary functions of the island](#). If the island is used often for entertaining, consider adding storage for wine, glassware and serving bowls and dishes. If you love to cook, create storage for spices, bake-ware, cutting boards, sheet-pans, utensils and cookbooks. Your selection of cabinets will be important. Identify the items you need to store on the island.

In creating an island you may want to consider [custom](#) or [semi-custom](#) cabinetry to make the unit as efficient

as possible. Consider open shelving to keep contents at hand; vertical storage for baking sheets and cutting boards; deep drawers for pots, pans, bowls and bake-ware; narrow drawers for spices and utensils; and pullouts for easy access to items stored in base cabinets. If you plan to include cabinets in a seating area of the island where you have to move stools to access contents, store items you use infrequently in the space.

6. Island Seating

Allow 24 inches per person for comfortable seating at an island. Counter height should also be factored in to determine the allotment for knee depth. The higher the counter, the less space will be needed for knee depth. The knee depth for a 42-inch counter is 12 inches; 15 inches for a 36-inch counter and 18 inches for a 30-inch counter. Seats for the island should allow 8-to-12 inches of leg room beneath the counter.

Kitchen Storage

Strategic Storage

“Strategic storage” is an asset in any kitchen. When determining the placement of [cabinetry](#), think about the way you use your kitchen. Store items you need near your “work stations”. Here are several strategic storage tips for selecting kitchen cabinetry:

- Use deep drawers to store pots, pans, baking dishes and bowls.
- Narrow cabinets will hold cutting boards, griddles and baking sheets.
- Include storage for canned goods, dry foods and root vegetables in a carousel, tall cabinet or pullout.
- Pullout shelves and inserts ease access to pantry items and dishes.
- Plan storage for cooking essentials such as spices, vinegars and oils by assigning these items to drawers, cabinets with narrow shelving, carousels or niches and open shelves placed near the stove or food prep area.
- Pullout cutting boards and tables can be used to extend food prep space.
- Glass doors on cabinets will permit you to decoratively display contents but more importantly, they make it easy to view and access items.
- Frameless, full access cabinets and drawers have larger openings for storage.
- Self-closing hardware on drawers is a convenient feature when you are working in a kitchen.



Pantry Storage

Pantries are making a big comeback in today's kitchens. Homeowners who enjoy cooking and entertaining often find that a typical kitchen doesn't have enough storage space. Butler's pantries, walk-in pantries, tall storage cabinets and free standing cabinets are all options for storing items used for entertaining in one place. For efficient storage of china, serving dishes and crockpots, the shelves should be 14 inches deep.

Universal Design Features

Why not design your kitchen for a lifetime of use? [Residential remodeling professionals](#), [AARP](#) and the National Kitchen and Bath Association recommend applying principles of Universal Design to our homes. Here are ten Universal Design kitchen products and features that will add function and make your home "user friendly" for a lifetime:

1. Kitchen Floor Plan Configurations

The most functional kitchen designs are **L- and U-shaped**. In designing a floor plan, allow 30-to-40 inches of space for clearance in front of the refrigerator, stove, cooktop and oven. Kitchen aisles should be 42-to-48 inches wide. This is an optimal space for cooks but will also accommodate a person who uses a support for walking.



2. Lighting

Proper lighting is essential for work areas. Use dimmer switches to adjust lighting for every user. Lighting should limit glare and light switches should be easy to operate. Choose switches with large, flat panels. Install cabinet lighting to easily view contents.

3. Visual Aids

Contrasting colors can be used as a visual aid in the kitchen. When used on a backsplash as a border and as a trim on a counter edge, contrasting color can help define where a surface begins and ends. It will also aid dimensional vision (i.e., depth perception).

4. Flooring

Slip-resistant and non-reflective flooring products are essential to a safe, functional kitchen. Consider matte finished wood or laminate flooring, distressed wood, textured vinyl, soft ceramic glazed tile or slate flooring.

5. Appliances

When purchasing appliances look for cooktops with controls on the front or side, never on the back because you can be burned when reaching. Drawer dishwashers make loading easy and you may want two for convenience. If you plan to add space for laundry to the kitchen, use a front-loading washer and dryer placed side-by-side rather than stacked.

6. Placement of Appliances

Locate appliances where everyone can reach them. Mount wall ovens side-by-side rather than stacked. Elevate them so that they are about 30 inches above the floor. Locate the microwave oven 24-to-40 inches above the floor to avoid reaching and for easy removal of hot food and dishes. Place the cooktop and ovens close to each other and the sink to minimize lifting of heavy pots and baking pans. Use kickplates to elevate appliances 6-to-12 inches above the floor to avert back strain and bending.

7. Counters

Counter heights should be 36 inches or more above the floor and counters should be designed for residents of the home. When possible, counters should have long, unbroken work surfaces. Avoid sharp edges on the ends of counters, islands and peninsulas. Pullout counters can be placed under a wall oven or microwave for easy transfer of dishes.

8. Storage

Bring wall cabinets to counter height or use large, deep drawers with pullout glides for storing dishes. Rollout shelves ease access to the contents of cabinets or pantries.

9. Faucets

Use lever faucets in sinks. To test the ease of operating a faucet, try to turn it on with your fist. Use anti-scald devices to regulate water temperature.

10. Seating

Look for adjustable height seats to use for counter seating rather than stationary stools and chairs. Swivel seats will also add comfort for diners allowing them to easily enter and exit the chair, and adjust positions for conversations at the counter.



Consulting a Kitchen Design Professional

You may have watched kitchen remodels on television that seem too good to be true. A show host comes up with a great design and “presto” surprises the homeowners with the finished project within a week. Or do-it-yourselfers take down walls with sledge hammers and build a beautiful kitchen over a weekend.

The reality is that kitchen remodeling involves more than tearing out old appliances and cabinets and replacing them with new fixtures. There are many details to consider including building code, structural issues, mechanicals, aesthetics and a functional floor plan. It takes time and careful planning before construction can begin.



Kitchen design professionals are one of your greatest resources. Why? Kitchen design professionals include architects, interior designers and certified kitchen designers who have the training and experience to handle all of the major and minor details in designing kitchen spaces. That training includes a thorough understanding of building codes and design fundamentals as well as product knowledge. Here's what you can expect during your initial meeting with a kitchen design professional:

1. Kitchen design professionals will listen to your ideas and aspirations.

Their job is to listen to your ideas, assess your needs, create a design plan that meets your expectations, and communicate with you throughout the design process. At Neal's, our [Design Team](#) has more than 125 years combined experience and has worked with hundreds of Cincinnati homeowners to design the types of projects you see throughout our website.

2. Consulting a kitchen design professional doesn't have to be costly.

We offer a [complimentary initial home consultation](#). If you hire a design/build firm, such as Neal's, to remodel your kitchen, the cost of design services is typically included in the total cost of the project.

3. Have some ideas to share during your first meeting.

The National Kitchen and Bath Association, a professional organization of kitchen and bath designers, advises you to do some research prior your first meeting. NKBA suggests that you prepare for the meeting by taking

the following steps:

- Make a written checklist of major and minor problems you have with your current kitchen.
- Collect ideas and information to share with your kitchen design professional. Having a project binder will facilitate this discussion.

Answering the questions and completing the checklist in this guide will help your design kitchen professional create drawings and estimate the cost of your project.



4. Be prepared to discuss your budget expectations.

It's important that your project consultant and designer know what you intend to budget for the project. They will be able to make suggestions to help you achieve your desired outcomes and keep within the spending limits you set. Kitchen design professionals are knowledgeable about product lines and can help you save money and remain within your budget.

SETTING YOUR TIMETABLE

The last piece of the puzzle is to establish when you would like to start your project, and when you hope to have it completed. Give yourself 30-60 days to complete a feasibility study of design and pricing options before construction can begin. Shorter timetables will introduce new challenges, particularly in terms of scheduling and requiring quicker turn-arounds on the work involved. Also, keep in mind that many elements of your kitchen remodel, particularly your cabinets, are dictated by industry-standard timelines and delivery schedules. Plan to discuss the logistics of your project with your designer or contractor, including any scheduling issues that may impact your family.



NEXT STEPS

With the answers to these questions in hand, your next step is to speak with your remodeler and lay out the budget considerations and priorities you have identified. Your designer/consultant will be able to talk with you about the items on your priority list, and offer some solutions for staying within a budget that can work for you.

Download Part II: How to Select Products for Your Kitchen Remodeling Project

Our follow-up guide includes product information for choosing cabinets, counters, sinks, and more!

Visit our
DESIGN CENTER

7770 E. Kemper Road
Cincinnati, OH 45249
(513) 489-7700



Sign-up for Complimentary Initial Consultation

Now that you've got a better idea of what you might want in your kitchen remodel, it's the perfect time to contact us! One of our project consultants will visit your home to discuss your remodeling project with you. They will give you an overview of Neal's, answer your questions, and listen to your ideas.



Sign up ▶

Mark Your Calendar for a Free Design Seminar at Neal's Showroom

Still not sure about your kitchen remodel? Every month, Neal's Design hosts free seminars at our 5,500 sq. ft. showroom about home remodeling. Our team discusses many of the ways you can get the kitchen and bath of your dreams and stay on budget. While at the showroom, we'd be happy to discuss your project further!

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