



sink and fridge (and other electronic gadgets), as it facilitates comfortable movement of at least two people in the area."

The lifestyle of the client is also of paramount importance. "We designed a studio apartment or a one-room kitchen for a young couple some time ago. Their lifestyle involved very little cooking at home as they largely ate outdoors, so the layout allowed for the counter doubling as the dining table. This allowed for more space in the living area, making the house look bigger," says Baid.

Another factor to be taken into account is that the area should be well illuminated with enough light, both natural and artificial.

The pluses

The design comes with advantages other than efficient utility of space – you can design the entire kitchen in an area of ten feet – like increased communication, connectivity, ease of use and the modern label appeal.

Abbas Contractor, Proprietor, Midas Kitchens says, "One of the positives of an open kitchen is that it allows more interaction between family members, bringing them closer."

Now you can whip up a meal, watch your favourite TV programme and help your kids with their homework at the same time. "Increased connectivity to the rest of the house allows for multi-tasking while in the kitchen," says Sacheen Pai Raikar of Pai Raikar & Associates.

Another plus is that home owners don't have to be extra careful while operating in this kitchen as the hardware - counter tables, sinks, hobs, chimney, shelves, cabinets, drawers, panels - , are designed to make working easier. The right kitchen hardware and fittings also ensure longevity of appliances and improved functionality. For example, the material used to make cabinets and drawers allows for them to open completely with little effort, hydraulic hinges permit smooth and easy opening of shutters and cabinets with folding doors are easier to access.

These kitchens are also pretty to look at, as they are designed in a way that appliances, electrical gadgets and utensils are easily accommodated. Units and cabinets are available in a variety of materials, colours and finishing.

And some minuses

This design allows a near complete visual of everything in the kitchen, so extra care has to be taken to maintain cleanliness. "If the cooking process is on and unexpected visitors drop in, the sight will not be easy on the eye!" says Baid. But tackling this has become that much easier as the material used for these kitchens user friendly, being both water and heat resistant.

A wide range of accessories specifically designed for this kitchen type are available in the markets today, which offer efficient use of space, and increased functionality. "Cleanliness is a given which is possible with several space-saving devices to neatly hide all the lesser used implements," says Raikar. Electrical gadgets like ovens, microwaves, steamers, fryers, frills, hot plates and packaged ingredients have changed the traditional way of cooking and made keeping the open kitchen clean easier. The design is used more for dry kitchens as heavy cooking is not done in these areas.

One aspect that cannot be ignored is that most families today hire domestic help for cooking, increasing the possibilities of clutter. "Here the hygiene factor has to be taken care of by having finishes that can be easily wiped off and good waste disposal facilities," says Anjali Lovekar of Lovekar Design Associate Projects.

Another not-so-pleasant facet is that process of cooking results in emission of aroma which permeates the living area, so a neatly-installed and effective exhaust to suck out the fumes and smoke is necessary. And then there's the noise that has to be dealt with. "A 'must have' for this design is hardware that minimises the shutter opening or sliding noise, a sink that does not resonate when vessels are kept in it and a foam flow faucet that softens the sound of running water," says Lovekar.

Colour specifics

Ideally, the colour scheme for the kitchen should be chosen to blend with that of the adjoining living room. If possible, it should also blend with the rest of surfaces, walls and counters.

Lovekar says, "Though the size and budget of the kitchen dictates the finishes, the storage unit colours can be co-ordinated with the rest of the decor as an open kitchen is as much an area of the adjoining dining or family or living space from where it is visible." The play of natural light in any room is a very important element in the choice of the colour scheme for the kitchen.

Promising future

With an increase in the number of housing projects, a burgeoning population with higher per capita income and organised players offering services, it seems a given that the market for open kitchens is going to increase manifold in the coming years. Designers tend to create kitchens that are in tune with clients' personalities and needs. The open kitchen wins hands down and the closed variety is rare in most designers' repertoire today. The open kitchen has arguments in its favour that cannot be ignored, and is being embraced by an increasing number of people. The pluses of throwing the kitchen open to another room far outweigh the cons.