

kitchen rebel

Step outside the status quo as we debunk the traditional rules and present a kitchen that's tailor-made to your needs

WORDS ANNA McCOOE



Stick to the working triangle

Think back to kitchens past and the 'working triangle' (where the fridge, the sink and the oven/cooktop are all within easy reach of each other) was all the rage. This golden rule was supposed to be the one-size-fits-all solution to your kitchen conundrums. Luckily, rules are made to be broken! "The working triangle was devised back when Mum would tuck herself away in the kitchen to have dinner on the table when Dad came home," says Tim Wright of Taste World Kitchens. "These days, the kitchen is increasingly integrated into the living space and there's often more than one person using it. Throw in a microwave and a dishwasher, and the working triangle is no longer relevant." >



RULE 2 *Small appliances belong on the benchtop*

Benchtop appliances are abandoning their posts in an effort to streamline the afternoon rush. The new solution is a snack zone, where a kettle, sandwich maker and microwave are tucked away in a deep drawer or a pantry with a power socket, plugged in and ready to go. The zone should also include storage for cutlery and plates, and spots for your favourite snacks.



RULE 3 *Groceries belong in the pantry*

Food and the pantry are no longer going steady. "Instead of the all-encompassing walk-in pantry, we're seeing smaller pantries – 30cm wide – with internal drawers for better access," explains Michael Kitchener of Kitcheners Kitchens. "Further food storage is then placed strategically throughout the kitchen." For instance, avid cooks might find it more practical to have oils, vinegars and spices in a drawer tucked below the cooktop or in tall cabinets next to the oven. Even if you're not renovating, the concept can still be applied. Consider relocating dishes and serving trays to the pantry to free up a drawer or shelf for seasonings.

RULE 4 *Lighting should be bright*

With the kitchen area being integrated into open-plan living spaces, traditional ultra-bright overhead lighting is a sure way to ruin a relaxed mood. Ditch the 7-Eleven effect by directing light exactly where it's needed. Pendant lights above an island bench will keep your fingers safe while you're chopping, while under-cabinet lights will brighten a workbench without casting shadows from above. We love lighting within cabinets because it lets you see exactly what you have stored. But above all, our most beloved lighting tool is the all-important dimmer switch, which lets you tailor your overhead lighting to the task.





RULE
5

Follow a universal design

The buzz in kitchen design these days is about personalisation. "Rules are outdated, full stop," says Marianna Cseh of A la Carte Design. Kitchen designers are now analysing their clients' needs and planning accordingly. Michael Kitchener designed this kitchen to follow the Blum 'Dynamic Space' approach, which uses a flexible system of five zones: cooking, preparation, consumable storage (food), non-consumable storage (dishes, for instance) and cleaning. "The priority given to each zone depends on the lifestyle of the owners; young couples who entertain will have different needs to a family of eight," says Michael, who also takes into account whether a client is left- or right-handed. "A left-handed person will have plates stored right to left, and vice versa." >

RULE 6 *Bench heights should always be 900mm*

A height of 900mm may be a good starting point, but the latest kitchens are tailored for an exact fit. "The benchtop should be at hip height and you should be able to reach the bottom of the sink without bending; if it's too low or high, it's bad ergonomics," says Marianna. What if you're short and he's tall? "Most couples have allocated roles in the kitchen. You might be more likely to prep and clean, while he cooks. When you have two work planes – the island and a bench along the wall – you can tailor the height of each benchtop to the person who uses it."



RULE 8 *Benchtops need to be man-made*

The slick industrial kitchens of the past decade were dominated by stainless-steel and reconstituted stone benchtops. Natural stone was considered too porous for kitchens. These days, designers are encouraging us to break from the pack. "Honed marble isn't that porous," says Tim. "When you see a glass ring on a marble benchtop, that's just the marble losing its polish; the marble itself isn't marked. Australia is one of the only countries that hones its marble for a natural finish, which means you won't get those marks."



"WHEN A KITCHEN IS DESIGNED WITH A 'DYNAMIC SPACE' APPROACH, AS OPPOSED TO THE 'WORKING TRIANGLE,' 25 PER CENT OF MOVEMENT IN THE KITCHEN IS SAVED" ~ MICHAEL KITCHENER OF KITCHENERS KITCHENS





RULE
7

Play it safe with white

"Don't shy away from colour – it will add to the kitchen space as a whole," says Marianna, who also warns that colour should be led by functionality (to separate or unite zones) rather than fashion. Just because colour is 'in' doesn't mean white is 'out', but it is more likely to be mixed up with other surface materials. "White is still the mainstay, but we're now also seeing the rise of the two-tone kitchen, where timber is used on the base cabinets, with white polyurethane on the wall cabinets, or vice versa," says Michael. "Laminex and New Age Veneers both have amazing ranges of man-made exotic veneers." **16**

