

Universal Design Tips

Inclusive Design in Kitchens Benefits Everyone

Understanding the principals of Universal Design is fundamental to creating kitchens (and baths) that ensure end users' well-being. It's inclusive and equitable, meeting the needs of a great number and variety of people that live in and visit a home, and it's not limited to medical solutions for access challenges.

The Center for Universal Design's current list of the Seven Principles of Universal Design includes:

- **Equitable Use:** Design useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities. Design applications in a kitchen include a rocker light switch, motion sensor lighting; ventilation or faucets; and a side-by-side refrigerator.
- **Flexibility in Use:** Design accommodating a wide range of individual preferences and abilities. Design applications in a kitchen include multiple counter heights; movable (portable) storage; and storage for an optional stool.
- **Simple and Intuitive Use:** Design that's easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills or current concentration level. Design applications in a kitchen include operation of single-lever faucet that moves left for hot and right for cold and one-step controls on a microwave for pre-programmed recipes.
- **Perceptible Information:** Design communicating necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities. Design applications in a kitchen include lighting controls that light up in the off position and go dark when the light is on and cooking controls that use numbers and pictures to indicate cooking mode.
- **Tolerance for Error:** Design minimizing hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions. Design applications in a kitchen include temperature-limiting faucets that prevent accidental scalding and induction cooktops.
- **Low Physical Effort:** Design that can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue. Design applications in a kitchen include remote controls for cooktop ventilation; motion-activated appliances and controls and D-pulls on cabinetry.
- **Size and Space:** Design featuring appropriate size and space for approach, reach, manipulation and use regardless of user's body size, posture or mobility. Design applications in a kitchen include split double ovens installed at comfort height and movable (portable) storage.