



LIVE
OPTIMISE
HOME

Top 5 things to consider when planning the layout of an open plan space



1. PLAN THE SPACE TO SUIT YOUR LIFESTYLE

Do you need to build some flexibility into the layout? Will you need to be able to close the space off at certain times?

Think about how you want to feel when you are in the space, do you want it to be calming and relaxing or an Energizing pace.

This is where your needs, the stage of life your at and your personality all come into play. Really spend some time thinking about all of this to create the feeling that you want to evoke. you'll be surprised how having their clear in your mind will help you to make much more informed decisions as you go through the process. From choosing flooring to designing the layout this is what underpins a successful outcome.

2. PLAN YOUR STORAGE FOR A CLUTTER FREE EASY TO KEEP SPACE

Think carefully about what your storage requirements are. For example are the items that you need to store being used every day? Things that need to be accessed frequently should be stored in a way that allows you to get to them easily. The following is a list of things you might want to consider storage solutions for:

- Cookery books
- Large appliances - used infrequently, these tend to be heavy so should be easy to access
- Ironing board
- Hoover
- Sweeping brush and mop
- Clothes horse and area for drying clothes
- Everyday appliances - these should be as easy to put away as they are to locate.
- Paper for filing
- Mobile devices - a great tip is to have a socket put in a drawer or cupboard where all of the devices can live when charging keeping them out of the way.
- Space to display things like photos, books and ornaments

Let what you need to store dictate the kind of storage that you select and opt for designated storage solutions rather than a one size fits all approach. Designated storage is far more efficient and useful than general store cupboards where everything gets thrown into and it is impossible to find anything in. The old saying 'a place for everything and everything in its place' for this scheme really was the key to success.

3. CONSIDER UNDERFLOOR HEATING

Finding a place to locate radiators in a lovely new open-plan space can be a challenge - not to mention the fact that they are not the most attractive feature in a room.

Most floor finishes are compatible with underfloor heating. Stone ceramic and porcelain tiles are ideal, as are most timber finishes. When it comes to timber flooring, however, you should check with your supplier to ensure you have the correct specification for your system as there can be issues with boards cracking or buckling if the temperature gets too high. Investing in insulation will reduce this kind of heat build-up and keep running costs to a minimum.



4. TAKE THE GARDEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN PLANNING THE SPACE

The key to success is to create as unified a space as possible between inside and outside, blurring the lines by continuing floor finishes, wall treatments and roof structures between the two areas so that you can't easily define where the one space ends and the other begins.

When you extend your living space outside, you gain additional living space and by carrying the internal finishes outside you create the illusion of both your internal and external spaces feeling larger. Custom built furniture such as benches will feel more integrated than more traditional patio furniture. This is a particularly good idea for smaller gardens and the space under a bench can be used for storage. Integrate planters and lighting to complete the look.

Working your garden into your home improvement and linking your ground floor living space with the garden is another great investment. The key is making the transition between inside and out as seamless as possible. Your choice of finish will have a big part to play in how successful this transition is. Choosing a floor finish that can be used internally as well as externally works wonderfully well. Floor-to-ceiling glass doors are another successful way to link inside and out. Whether the doors are left open or closed, the boundary between the two areas is blurred.

5. DON'T FORGET ABOUT LIGHTING

When planning your lighting scheme for an open-plan living space you should do so with the location of your furniture in mind rather than simply focusing on the ceiling. By doing this you will be able to light the different zones more effectively. Don't rely solely on ambient and overhead lighting - this kind of lighting is purely functional and gives an overall illumination for a space. It is generally achieved either by overhead pendants or spotlights. Make sure you include some secondary lighting such as floor and table lamps. Not only will they help to dress a room but they will also create atmosphere.

Avoid the temptation to over light the space with too many fixed downlights - the result will be harsh and will tend to create glare. Instead, position directional fittings so they light the walls to reflect light back into the room.

Have separate circuits so you can control the mood of the space and make sure that you can dim the lights. If you are considering smart or automated lighting controls this is the area to go for it. In a large open plan area you will find that you have multiple light switches. By opting for an automated system these would be replaced with one switch plate on which you would have each setting programmed giving you effortless control to create the perfect atmosphere whatever the occasion.



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