

How to Design Your Perfect Kitchen in Just 15 Minutes Using Microsoft® Word



A Simple Guide to Planning the
Most Important Room in Your House!

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PART 1

Professional Kitchen Design for Beginners

In this section, we'll deal with the various components of the kitchen and how to arrange them on your plan then in **Section 2** I'll show you exactly how to set-up MS Word to create detailed, accurate drawings to work from.

INTRODUCTION

Most of us consider the kitchen to be the 'heart of the home'. The room where you'll spend a lot of your time and where everyone usually ends up at parties! More importantly though, the kitchen is often one of the biggest selling points of a house if you ever decide to sell it.

A well thought out kitchen plan is essential then if it is to be functional, effective and most of all - safe.

This quick and easy guide will help you to ensure that your plan makes maximum use of the space available and best suits your circumstances. A little time spent at this stage will save you from making potentially expensive mistakes later.

PLANNING

Kitchen design is relatively straightforward in most cases and really just relies on accurate measuring and knowing what cabinets & appliances are available to fit in the space you have.

In any kitchen there are 3 main 'zones' which professional planners try to tie together to create a working triangle.

1. **Food storage & preparation** - fridge and worktop area
2. **Cooking** - oven, hob, microwave
3. **Washing up** - sink and dishwasher

Before putting pencil to paper (or finger to keyboard in our case) you have to give some thought to your circumstances.

Things to consider:

- What's your budget?
- What's your timescale?
- Who's going to install it - you, or professional fitters?

- Do you have alternative means of cooking - microwave, take-away?
- Do you want to retain the same basic layout or completely change it?
- If you're changing layout, can the services be moved easily (is there access under the floor for example?)

Your circumstances will affect not only the style of the kitchen but the type of units you use, the appliances you specify and the kind of accessories you want to incorporate. So...

Who's going to use it? - are you:

- a single person living on your own,
- a couple,
- or a family with one or more children

What are you going to use it for:-

- will you just cook in it,
- do you have a utility room where you do your laundry,
- will you entertain in it,
- will your kids watch TV in it

Are you just looking to give it a quick makeover or do you want to completely redesign it?

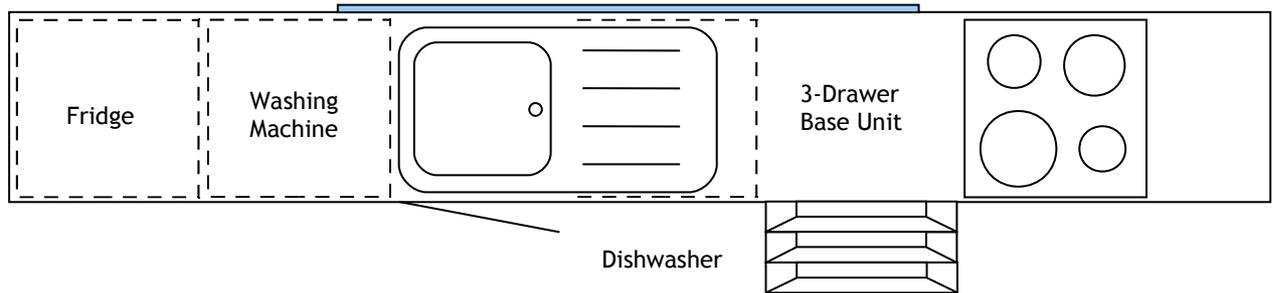


Tip: if you live in a relatively modern home, before you decide to completely change everything around, remember that at some point a highly qualified architect has used his experience to design an efficient and effective layout for the space you have available. In this situation, I would recommend sticking with this basic layout unless you plan to enlarge your kitchen with an extension or by knocking-through into another room.

LAYOUTS

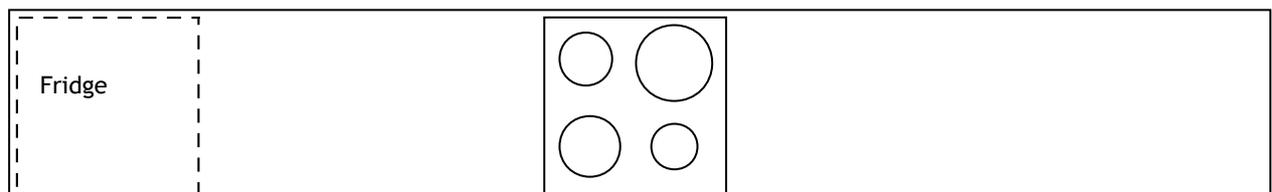
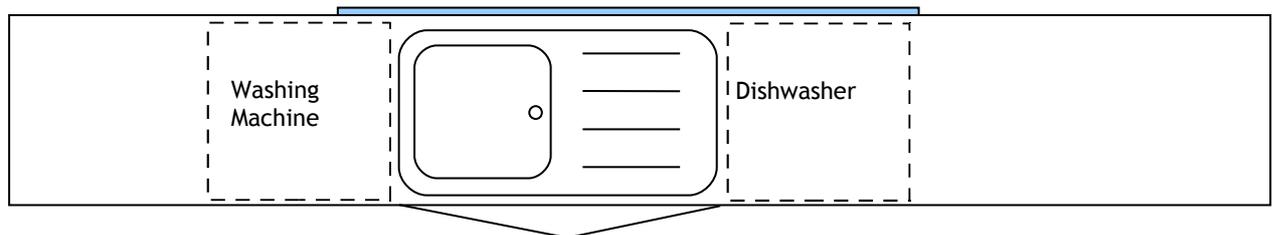
The shape of your room will dictate, to a large extent, the basic layout of your kitchen. Most kitchens fall into one of the following configurations:

Straight Line - if you have a very narrow room, you may be limited to just a single run of worktop. Although you can't really achieve a 'working triangle' as such, it's still possible to group your appliances together to make the best use of the space available. In this case, most of your storage will probably be in wall units.

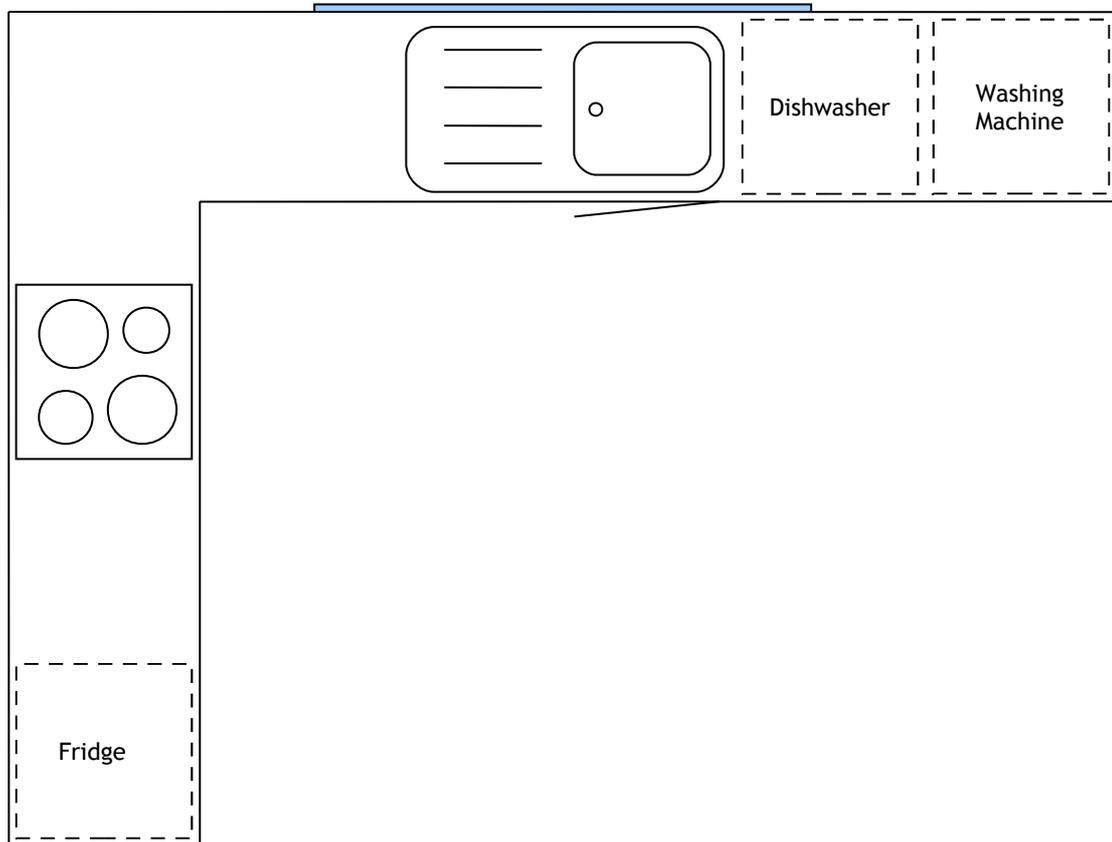


In this example, notice the washing machine and dishwasher are either side of the sink for ease of plumbing. In most properties you will tend to find the sink beneath the window if there is one. There's also adequate space between the hob and sink - which needs to be at least 600mm for current building regulations.

Galley - if you have a square or rectangular shaped room with a door at each end then a galley layout is probably the most effective for you. To use this layout your room will need to be at least 2.4m wide to allow a 600mm worktop on either side and a 1200mm gap between them for walking space when cupboard doors and drawers are opened.

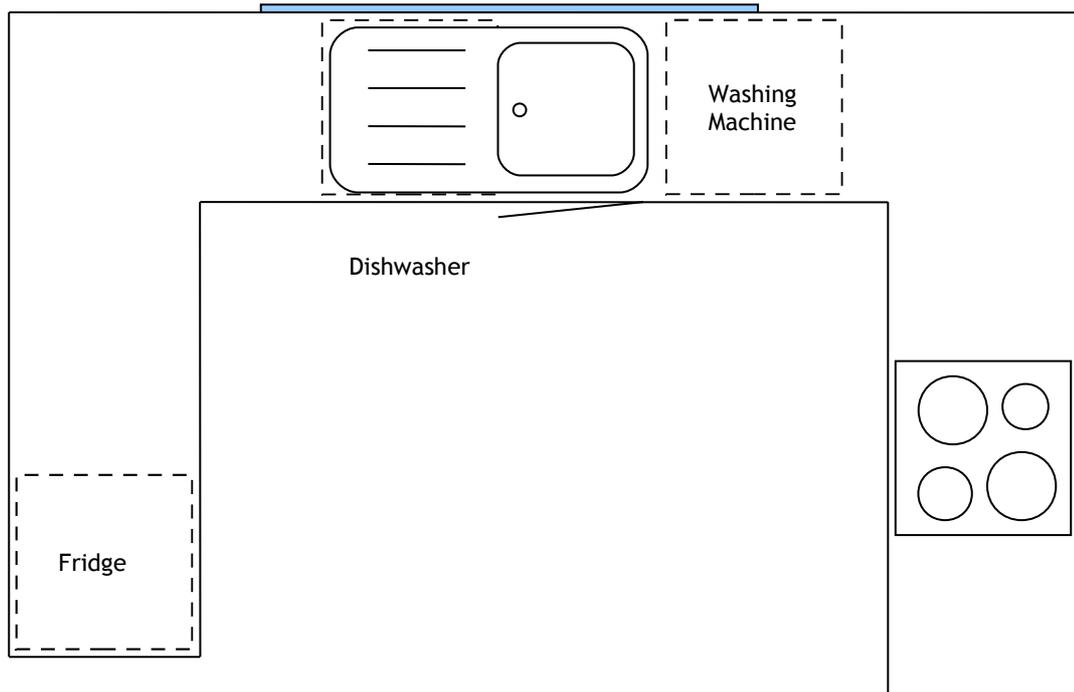


L-Shaped - this kitchen shape is ideal if you only have two useable walls to build out from. This configuration tends to leave a nice open space in the centre of the room - handy if you want to use a table and chairs or if you simply want a light and airy kitchen (just because you have available wall and floor space, it doesn't mean you *have* to fill it with units).



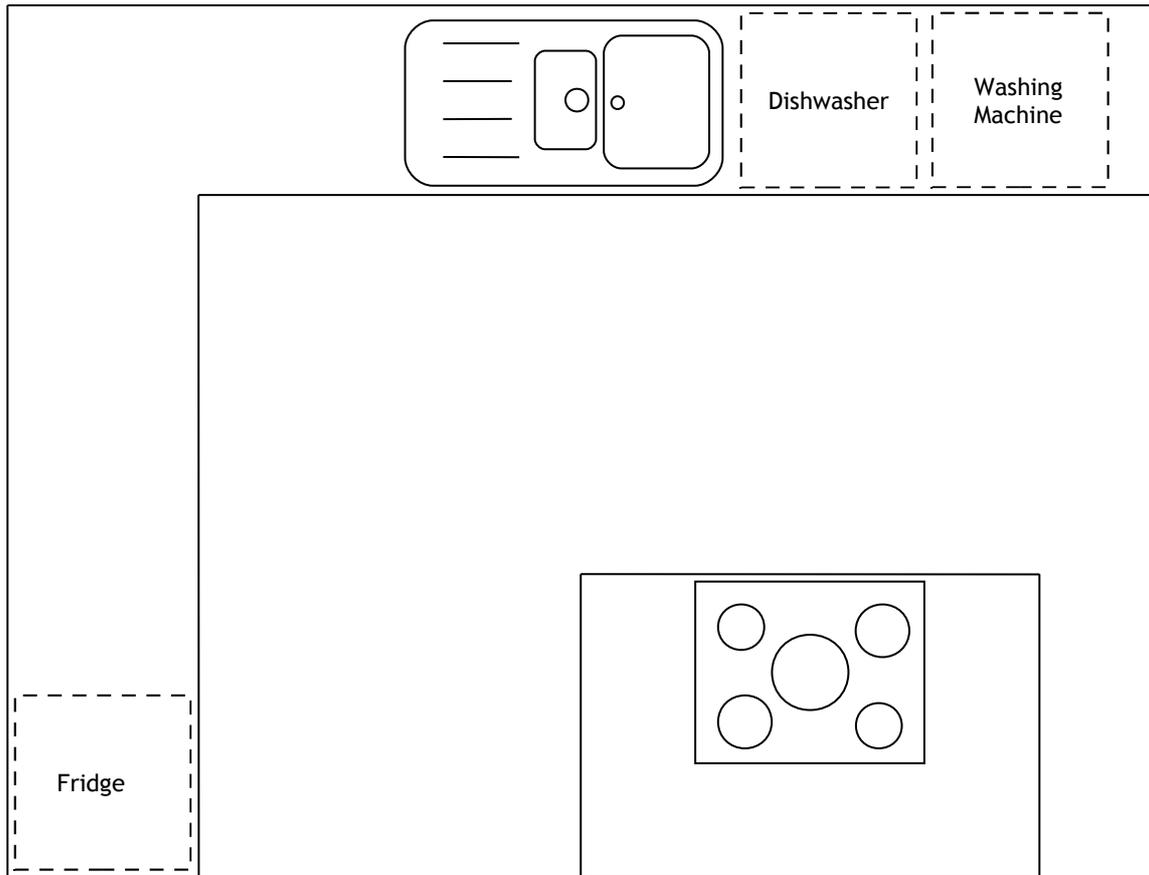
Tip: Avoid locating your fridge or freezer right next to your oven if you can, otherwise it's going to have to work much harder than normal to keep cool.

U-Shaped - if you only have one door leading into or out of your kitchen and you have three useable walls, then a U-shaped configuration might be perfect for you. With this layout you'll get maximum space for units and appliances. The only thing to remember, as before, is that you need at least 1200mm between opposing rows of base units to allow you to open doors and still walk past.



Island - if you're lucky enough to have a large kitchen then you might want to consider an island layout. In the right setting they can look fantastic and be a real feature of the house. Normally you would create an L or U-shaped layout as above but with the addition of a central 'island'. This can be used simply for storage or, for the more adventurous, it's possible to have your hob located here with an island extractor above it. Obviously this depends on being able to run services to the island under the floor.

The other appeal of this kind of design is that, if large enough, the island can double as a breakfast bar. Although you could use 665mm breakfast bar worktop if space is tight, it's better to use 900mm wide worktop if you can so that you can place bar stools underneath it. The same regulations apply as before in that you will need to have at least 1200mm between the island and adjacent worktops/units to allow for easy passage when doors/drawers are opened.



SAFETY GUIDELINES

Before we get into how to layout the units and appliances, we need to quickly go over some safety issues so that your design is in keeping with current UK Building Regulations. This list is not exhaustive and if you are in any doubt about any aspect of your design and installation, please seek professional advice.

You will see that most recommendations concern the siting of the hob which makes sense given that it is potentially one of the more dangerous pieces of equipment in your kitchen.

Hob Do's & Don't's:

Do -

- Leave a minimum distance between the hob and the sink of 600mm (24") if they are on the same run of worktop.

- Leave at least 200mm on either side of a hob to ensure that surrounding walls or tall units aren't damaged by the heat and to allow easier pan handle movement.
- Allow at least 760mm (30") clear space above the hob (this includes extractors and wall units)

Don't -

- Position your hob and oven behind a door, in case the door is opened while you are at the hob or putting something in the oven.
- Locate the hob underneath a window. Draughts from an open window can blow out the flames of a gas hob and leaning across a lit hob to close a window is obviously dangerous.

General Guidelines

Worktops must be supported by a base unit or with a worktop support panel every 600mm (e.g. between two appliances).

Try to avoid short runs of worktop less than 1000mm in length.

As I've already mentioned above, you need to leave a gap of at least 1200mm between two parallel rows of units e.g. on an L or U shaped layout.

MEASURING

Although this guide is all about showing you how to design your kitchen using MS Word, initially you'll still need a pen and paper to make a rough sketch of your kitchen. This only needs to be a simple line drawing to mark your dimensions on.



Tip: Because very few houses actually have perfectly straight and square walls, measure the length and breadth of the room at floor level first, then again at a height of 900mm (approximate worktop height). Use the smaller of the two measurements for your plan.

Make a note of the location of doors, windows, central heating boilers and any other fixed features which you will have to work around. When measuring the position of doors and windows, measure from the edge of the wall to the outer edge of the door or window frame (i.e. to the edge of the decorative facing), to get the overall size. For windows, measure the height from the floor to the bottom of the sill too.

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