

# Universal Design in the Kitchen

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- Kitchen that can accommodate all
  - from little ones baking their first batch of cookies to baby boomers beginning to deal with joint issues
  - those already dealing with physical limitations



# Universal design is simple and intuitive

- Design with features and products that allow people of all ages and physical abilities to live comfortably and safely



# How to adapt some basic areas in the kitchen using universal design principles

- **Doors**

- If your kitchen has a door, ensure it is at least 36 inches wide
  - for those using an assisted device
- Double doors are more than sufficient

- <http://www.houzz.com/ideabooks/4580854/list/optimal-space-planning-for-universal-design-in-the-kitchen>



- If you can get rid of the door entirely, even better
  - eliminates a common obstacle of getting to the kitchen
    - having to push open or operate any kind of door hardware while balancing armloads of groceries



# Basic areas in the kitchen using universal design principles

- **Traffic**

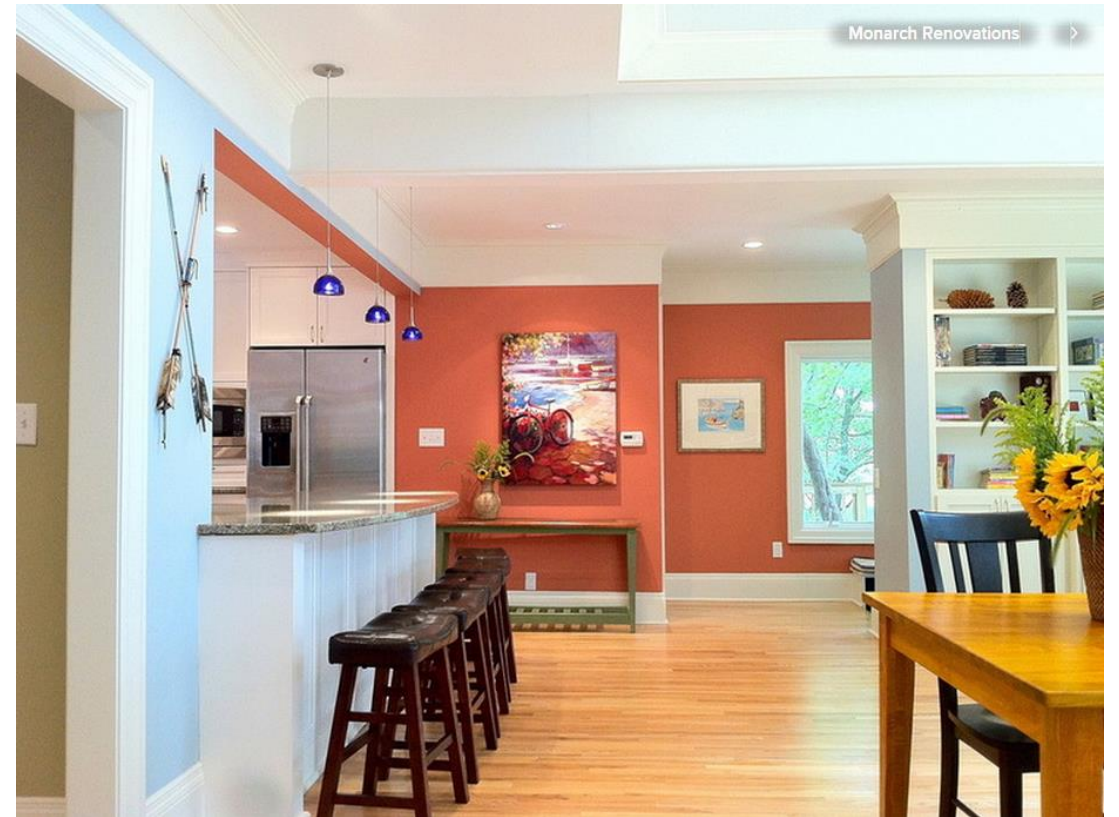
- When planning a kitchen, plan for 48" between counters
  - allows for more than one cook in the kitchen
  - also lets anyone in a wheelchair or walker easily function without banging into cabinets
- In a U-shape kitchen, plan for 60" of clearance minimum between opposing counters
  - allows a wheelchair to have a comfortable turning radius



- Larger open kitchens and spaces seem to function best when obstacles are completely eliminated



- If traffic passes behind a seated diner at a peninsula or island
  - plan for at least 60 inches of space behind to allow passage for a person in a wheelchair





# Basic areas in the kitchen using universal design principles

- **Raised toe kicks**
  - allow greater foot and toe clearance for anyone in a wheelchair, and let them get closer to the countertop or workstation
  - toe kicks should be a minimum of 9 inches high



Shown contemporary furniture legs for support

- **Another alternative to freeing up toe space**
  - have wall-mounted base cabinets, eliminating the toe kick altogether
  - This option allows for complete customization of countertop height and toe space



# Basic areas in the kitchen using universal design principles

- **Workstations**

- If someone is in a wheelchair, plan workstations that have clear space below
  - to allow for easy reach to fixtures
  - knee space should be a minimum of 30 inches wide
    - Ensure that any exposed plumbing is insulated, covered or behind door panels to prevent any burns from hot pipes
    - also have retractable doors closing off the space below the workstation when it's not in use



- Cooktop also has clear space below for easy access



# Basic areas in the kitchen using universal design principles

- **Adjustable countertops and cabinets**

- are another great feature to consider when planning your universal kitchen
- height-adjustable lifting units enable you to create an optimal and ergonomically correct working environment
  - heights can be adjusted manually, with a hand crank, or at the push of a button



[independent4life.co.uk](https://www.independent4life.co.uk)  
[Pressalit Care Indivo Electric Lift Worktop Frame - GBP 1,919.77](#)

# Adjustable cabinets



## Accessible cabinets and appliances



# Basic areas in the kitchen using universal design principles

- **Counters**

- room for an island or a peninsula that accommodates seating
  - make the counter 30 inches high
    - optimal seating for everyone, regardless of age or mobility
    - a wheelchair can just glide on in





- Include at least one workspace countertop at a height of 30 inches or less
  - to accommodate someone sitting while doing tasks
  - On the other hand, if the person using this space is very tall, consider raising the countertop to a height that will keep things ergonomic



- Extended lowered counter
  - With open underneath and accessible from both sides
    - inviting little ones or those in chairs to take part in the daily cooking activities
    - chairs or stools can also slide under the counter, turning it into a improvised snack bar

