

Make the Most of Your Small Space

January 28, 2019

Though we all may dream of a sprawling kitchen with super-sized everything or a bathroom with a big soaking tub, the reality is that many of us are not able to expand our homes. Working within the confines of your current walls doesn't need to be a hardship. Even while working with the existing footprint, you can often still move things around to create better workflows or maximize space.

There are a few things to consider when upgrading a smaller kitchen:

1. Maximize **wall storage**.

The first and most common step to create more storage space involves removing the soffits above your cabinets. Rarely do soffits contain plumbing or venting but even if they do, this can often be relocated or reduced. Once your soffits are gone (or minimized), your cabinetry and crown mouldings can reach the ceiling. Typically, this will add 5-10+ square feet of pure storage space to your kitchen.

Perhaps you don't have soffits but you have a 12" deep cabinet over your refrigerator that you can't reach. Most remodels include 24" deep cabinets over the fridge, great for small appliances and large trays that are used less often – this doubles that storage space.

2. Size **appliances** appropriately.

In a small space, a full-depth refrigerator can be an unnecessary encumbrance – consider counter-depth refrigerators where only the door itself will extend beyond the countertop. This not only creates a "built-in" look but it also keeps traffic flow moving!

Adding a 48" range or built-in refrigerator in a small kitchen will not only appear visually unbalanced, but these large appliances will significantly reduce the amount of countertop space you have available. Limited counter tops reduce the amount of prep space as well as storage areas for small appliances and coffee makers. No one wants to have to "clear a space" with a hot baking dish in one hand!

Most standard size appliances are perfect for a small space but if not, there are apartment size units also available.

3. Add smart storage features to **base cabinets**.

Replacing an old Lazy Susan with a new wood **Super Susan**, which has individual shelf-mounted carousels and a bifold doors not only provides considerably better access (no pole!) but the shelf-mounted spinners have a much higher weight capacity. Using **pull-out base pantries** for spices and oils add convenience and better visibility. A **double waste bin** cabinet serves not only to eliminate that freestanding waste bin but it also provides a space for recycling AND is pet proof! **Roll trays** and **blind corner pullouts** also add another level of accessibility.



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4. Consider **frameless cabinetry** rather than framed.

In a small kitchen, every inch matters – and accessibility is critical as corner spaces can get really tight. When frameless (Euro/Full Access) cabinetry is incorporated into a design, there is an additional 1-1/2” of accessibility in each cabinet while the storage space remains the same as framed (American/Traditional) cabinetry.

And when you are renovating a full bathroom that feels completely full the minute you enter, there are other things you may want to consider:

1. Maximize **vanity storage**.

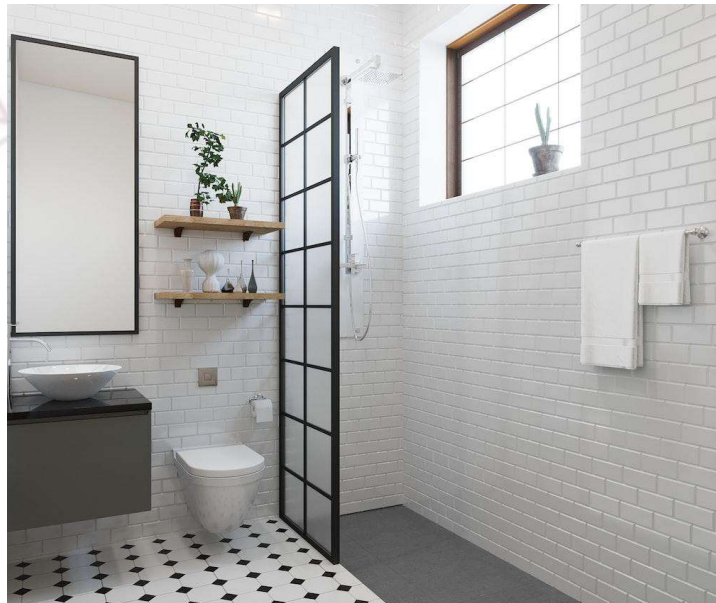
Most bathrooms are small. So whether it's drawers, pull-outs, floating shelves and/or a recessed wall cabinets, bathrooms need easy access, large volume storage solutions. Everyone needs space for toilet paper, extra towels, toiletries, medicines and first aid supplies. And you don't want to have to dig around – when you need them, you need them!

2. Consider **frameless glass shower enclosures** to make the room feel larger, brighter and more unified. Plus, it's a wonderful way to display the beautiful tiles you've had installed!

3. Use a vertical or horizontal **niche** in the shower/tub area to both de-clutter the area and provide an added design element when partnered with a varied tile selection.

4. Allow light into the space, whether it's natural or at the flip of a switch, light always helps.

5. Consider more contemporary, **slim profile fixtures** with smaller footprints – that includes wall hung sinks, floating vanities, and more European (less detailed) styles which creates the feel of space, even if there is limited.



Just because a space is physically small doesn't mean it has to feel that way too.

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