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The Efficient Kitchen

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What is a Kitchen? A place for the preparation of food. The housewife spends about 70 percent of her working day in and about the kitchen. It is always much more satisfactory if equipment for other types of work can be kept out of the kitchen. If possible, members of the family should have some place other than the kitchen in which to wash and to hang wraps. The use of the kitchen as a passageway to other parts of the house causes much extra work for the housewife.

Windows. Every kitchen should have window space which will give adequate light and air. The total window area for a kitchen should be about one-fourth of the floor area. In order to get best results from windows they should be placed as far apart as possible. The broad, short window built high from the floor is more efficient than other types. The common custom of placing a window above a sink is not always a good practice. Other locations may throw better light upon working surfaces and still not require the worker to face a glare of light.

Floors. Wood and linoleum are the two most common materials used for floors. Linoleum is generally preferred because of ease in keeping clean and the comfort of the worker. It should be properly laid, with seams cemented. A composition floor is rapidly coming into favor in some sections.

Walls and Woodwork. The walls and woodwork should be plain, with a minimum of grooves and molding to catch dust. Nothing is so practical for both walls and woodwork as a clean, light-colored paint such as warm grays, buffs, or other soft, neutral tints.

Kitchen and Dining-room. Much time and effort are eliminated if the relation of the kitchen and dining-room is such that the passageway from one to the other is direct and not circuitous or narrow. The custom of constructing the kitchen so that one end may be used as a dining-room or with a dining alcove not only saves expense but also saves the housewife as well. This is often desirable in a moderate climate.

An efficient kitchen is one so equipped and arranged that the best results may be obtained with the least expenditure of time and effort and therefore the least fatigue for the housewife.

How to Reduce Time Spent in Kitchen.

1. Have the kitchen as small and compact as possible. Reasons:
   a. A small kitchen costs less to build.
   b. A small kitchen concentrates working processes.
   c. A small kitchen saves steps.
2. A kitchen should be oblong. Such a shape makes step-saving arrangements easier.
3. Have materials and equipment grouped close to the place where they are to be used. Built-in equipment makes this possible. Detached pantries often do not.
4. The route between the kitchen and dining-room should be direct.
5. Have all working surfaces of the proper height for the worker.
6. Storage spaces should not have such wide shelves that it is necessary to store some supplies behind other articles.
7. Shelves which require climbing or stooping waste time and energy.
8. A separate surface for each type of work will save much time in handling of supplies.
9. Group equipment so it will meet the actual order of work.
10. It saves steps so to arrange the kitchen that one may work from storage, preparing, and service surface toward dining-room.
11. Paring knives may be kept on a rack in front of the preparing surface, hand towel near sink, cooking utensils near stove.
12. Open shelves for covered food containers and for utensils most frequently used often save time.
13. Dishes which are to be heated or filled in kitchen should be stored in kitchen. It requires much unnecessary time to take them to the dining-room after washing and to go after them before filling.
14. A lift from cellar storage saves many steps.

Arrangement According to Processes.

1. *Preparing processes.*
   a. Storage center: pantry, refrigerator, ice-box, etc.
   b. Preparation center: table or kitchen cabinet.
   c. Cooking center: stove or other cooking equipment.
   d. Serving and transporting centers: table, tray on wheels, or other serving surface.
2. *Clearing away processes.*
   a. Stack surface to right of sink.
   b. Sink for washing.
   c. Drain surface to left of sink.
   d. Closet and shelves to left of drain.

   If the foregoing equipment is arranged in this fundamental order, the work will be done with a saving of many steps, as shown by Fig. 1.

   If this order is not observed there will be cross-tracking, extra steps, and waste of energy as is shown by Fig. 2.

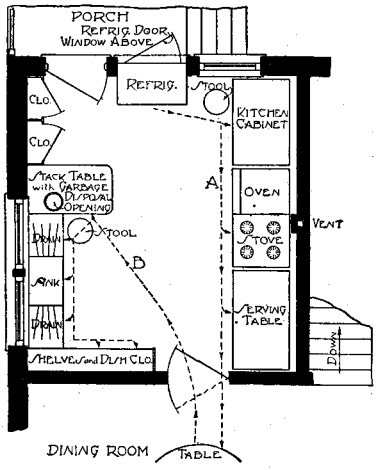


Fig. 1.

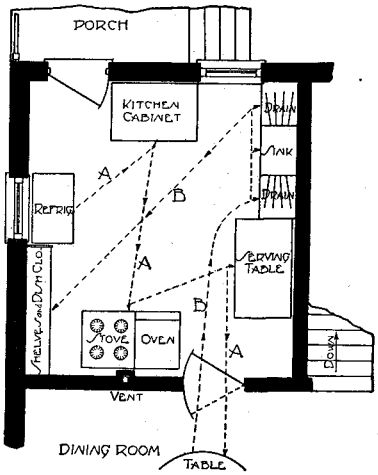


Fig. 2.

3. *Heights of working surfaces.*

Since no two women are of exactly the same proportions, it is impossible to give a standard height for any working surface. Practically all sinks, tables, and other working surfaces are built too low. A good standard is to have every surface (except the bottom of wash tubs) at least high enough so that the palms of the hands may rest on the surface when the worker is standing in a perfectly erect position. Some types of work are easier to do on still higher surfaces. All surfaces should be built to suit the tallest person who is to work at them. Short persons can use a platform for high equipment. If surfaces are built too low, a tall person will be compelled to stoop.

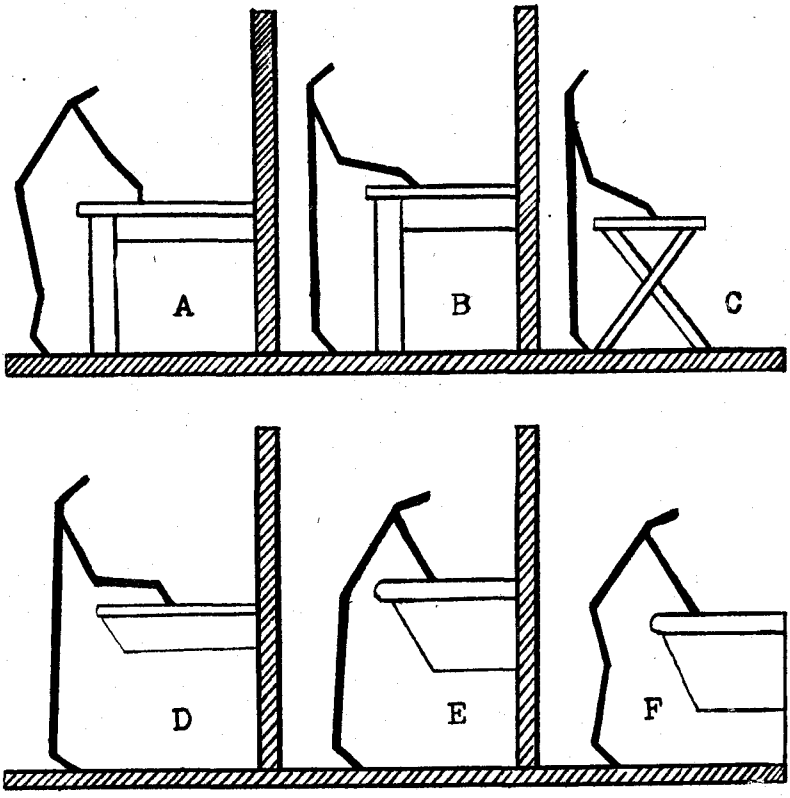
The following table may be of assistance.

Height of worker		*Height of working surfaces*
ft.	*in.*	*in.*
4	10	30¾
5		31¾
5	5	34½
5	7	35
5	10	37

4. *Helpful kitchen hints.*

1. Keep no unnecessary articles in the kitchen.
2. Keep articles most frequently used nearest at hand.
3. Keep things off the floor.
4. Laundry and fuel rooms on same level are great conveniences.
5. A wood cart saves much handling of wood as well as dirt in the kitchen.
6. Have all floor and working surfaces of non-absorbent material.
7. A space for the toes saves much fatigue when standing and working at equipment built to floor.

The illustration given above is from *Household Engineering*, by Christine Frederick, published by American School of Home Economics, Chicago, Ill.



A. Table too low. B. Table height good. C. Ironing board height good. D. Sink position good. E. Correct position at washtub. F. Incorrect position at washtub.

8. Keep the kitchen well ventilated.
9. Keep small equipment on hooks near place of use.
10. Keep all tools in good condition.
11. Stand erect.
12. Sit at work when possible. Be sure the stool is neither too high nor too low for comfort.
13. Use the right tool for the job.
14. A kitchen should look like a workshop, not like a collection of closed presses.

The illustration given above is from *Housewifery*, by L. Ray Balderston. published by J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, Pa.