

STORAGE HINTS FOR KITCHENS & BATHS
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HOUSE BEAUTIFUL HOME REMODELING & DECORATING

GREAT KITCHENS FOR COOKS!

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Home Remodeling & Decorating

Great Kitchens For Cooks

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Cool Kitchen Ideas

Tips and innovations from America's popular home-improvement radio team

Tom Kraeutler and Leslie Segrete host *The Money Pit*, a nationally syndicated radio show that fields hundred of calls each week from listeners seeking advice on everything from soup to nuts and floor boards to shingles. In this issue, Tom & Leslie respond to some of the most common questions they receive about kitchens.

Q:

We live in a New York City condo with a kitchen the size of most suburbanites' master bedroom closet. We are constantly battling a shortage of space. Can you suggest some ideas for freeing up some room in our overcrowded kitchen cabinets?

Leslie:

The way that cabinets are typically structured forces you to mix and match things of varying height and size which wastes lots of that space. The best tip we can give you is this: Look up! Expanding upward allows you to double your space by using it in areas where that empty space is available. If you are creative, you don't always need to go out and purchase things to make this happen. For example, use a pedestal plate to store two "floors" of spices. Use serving trays to do the same thing

with your glasses. Four tall glasses at the corners make it easy to store shorter cups or glasses between them. Repurpose that metal or plastic file organizer stand and use it to sort all of your pans. It also keeps things a lot less noisy while searching for the one you want.

There are also plenty of organizing solutions you can purchase that will help do the same thing. A multi-tiered "Lazy Susan" with one or two shelves, will allow you to build up and gives you full viewing of all of your items with just a spin. Another idea is to invest in a universal pot top. Not only does this save space, it also cuts down on your cleanup time.

Q:

I have a refrigerator that is older than time and I'm ready for a new one. With so many models to choose from, can you give me some tips on the features I should be most interested in?

Tom:

When it comes to buying a new fridge, there are two main considerations: space and energy efficiency. You might not realize that your old refrigerator could perhaps be the most inefficient energy-wasting appliance in your house. New, Energy Star-rated refrigerators use far less

energy. In fact, some can operate on less energy than it takes to power a 75 watt light bulb! When looking at new models, be sure to check that the unit is Energy Star-rated and compare its energy usage to other models you may be considering.

To find a refrigerator with the most useable space you really should look at bottom-mounts, where the freezer is mounted in the bottom and the refrigerator is on top. These were popular in the '50s and '60s and are making a comeback in a big way. In fact, according to experts from Sears, the largest retailer of appliances in the nation, the bottom-mount portion of the refrigeration industry grew 67 percent in units between 2001 and 2004. Bottom-mount refers to a refrigerator design where the bottom section of top-bottom units is used for refrigeration. That's one reason Sears introduced their very popular Kenmore Elite Trio refrigerator, a 3-door refrigerator that gives you the best of both the side-by-side and bottom-mount designs.

The interior layout of Trio type refrigerators is very appealing because they offer capacity for wide items like pizzas and party platters, making them very efficient. Also, slide-out, spill-proof shelves in the fresh food com-

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partment and glide-out baskets in the freezer make getting to your favorite foods that much easier.

Leslie:

Besides energy efficiency and space, many new models are now available with finishes that resist fingerprints and smudges. For example, stainless steel seems to be the belle of the ball these days but even she gets her frequent blemishes. LG Electronics offers what they call a Titanium color for their products which will resist all fingerprint marks and Jenn-Air just introduced a glass finish that coats the outside of the appliance with a glass-like fingerprint-resistant finish.

Q:

When shopping for a new appliance, how important is the Energy Star logo and what exactly does it mean?

Tom:

The Energy Star logo tells consumers that the model meets or exceeds the government's standard for energy efficiency. Started by the United States Environmental Protection Agency in 1992, this program establishes standards by which appliance and manufacturers of other of energy consuming products compete to meet model energy codes. When shopping for *any* new appliance in your house, buying one that is Energy Star rated makes perfect sense.

For example, Energy Star-rated washing machines use 50 percent less energy and 40 percent less water than conventional washers. That can add up to as much as a combined \$150 savings off your energy and water bill in just a single year. Plus, since high-efficiency washers take more water out of your clothes

through faster spin cycles, drying time is cut down, saving even more energy and reducing wear and tear on your clothes.

Q:

The lighting in our kitchen needs improving and I'm not sure where to begin. We have one overhead fluorescent fixture that seems to buzz and dim whenever the refrigerator kicks on. What kind of lighting do you recommend for a kitchen?

as under-cabinet lighting which focuses sharply on the countertops where you need it most. Next, use track lighting to control shadows and create moods within the kitchen area. Mount these lights on the soffit, for example, to illuminate walls and ceilings. Last, use overhead lighting, like incandescent or fluorescent fixtures to shine for utility purposes. Used together, these lights create a "light-scape" that is both attractive and useful for a wide variety of purposes. ■



Leslie:

Actually the answer is several types of lighting. Kitchens are the focal points of our home. We dine there, prepare food there and entertain there. As a result, we need to use several different types of lighting to create both the utility and atmosphere we need. To begin, you'll need task lighting. This can be lights that are installed directly above your work space. Choose Halogen for bright, crisp lights for this area. Task lighting can also be installed

Editors Note: Have your own home-improvement question?

Tom & Leslie can be reached 24/7 by e-mailing helpme@moneytip.com or by calling 1-888-MONEY PIT. To find a radio station in your area that carries the program, please visit the show's website at www.moneytip.com.



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