

Love your home, Hate your kitchen?

By Leah Parks

Have you been dreaming of remodeling your kitchen, but don't know where to begin? Use your present kitchen to help you plan for your new kitchen.

- **Take a good look at your present kitchen.** Do you have enough countertop area, cabinet storage, and floor space? Pay attention to the location of your appliances. Do their locations provide adequate prep areas or do they leave you wanting more?
- **Study the efficiency of your current appliances.** Do you have outdated appliances? Technological advances can save you money due to lower energy usage and less water consumption. This is also a plus for the environment. Look for Energy Star ratings.
- **Is the traffic flow efficient in your present kitchen?** Is there more than one cook in your household? Do the walkways in your work area feel cramped? If you enjoy entertaining, you may want to consider opening up the kitchen area to include other areas of your home.
- **What is your family size and lifestyle?** If you have children, what are their ages? If your family is growing, you may want to focus on how your family uses your current kitchen's space and if there are other activities that you might want to do there. Safety is another concern. Are there any "problem" areas that might be a hazard? If so, these should be addressed.
- **Think about the current layout or design of your kitchen.** Maybe the current size no longer fits your needs? Have you thought about an addition to the home to make the kitchen bigger? Adding doors and/or windows to the current space can change the feel of the space. Doors could provide access to that new deck you have always wanted to for outside entertaining. The addition of windows can make your kitchen brighter and more welcoming.
- **Now comes the fun part. Let your imagination run free.** Put yourself in your new kitchen and picture how you will feel with you beautiful new room filled with family and friends. See the rich colors of your new cabinets, the beautiful luxurious tile and swirling patterns in the granite countertops. Touch the gleaming stainless steel of your new appliances as they silently go about their tasks. Remember these images and write them down quickly. Browse through magazines and the internet in search of pictures and ideas that give your dreams reality. Save these in your kitchen dream book.

Now that you have gathered your information, it is now time to seek professional advice. The National Kitchen and Bath Association recommends choosing a firm that has certified designers on staff. Certification provides consumers confidence that their designer's professional skills have been independently evaluated and that they are committed to improving skills through ongoing education and professional development.

For more information visit Distinctive Kitchens and Baths on Highway 105 South in Boone, North Carolina or contact them by phone at 828-963-9633 or www.distinctivekitchendesigners.com



Before



After