

KITCHEN

design tips

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If you think the idea of universal design (UD) is only for the aging or those with limited mobility, think again. The principles of UD, especially in kitchen design, apply to people of every age and ability. And since a log home (usually the realization of a lifelong dream) is often the last home you intend to own, planning for today as well as the future just makes sense.

- 1** Organize the kitchen into work centers; it limits needless steps.
- 2** Use non-glare finishes and task lights, especially for older eyes.
- 3** Plan lower windows to allow more people to see outside, including children and people using wheelchairs.
- 4** Choose non-skid floors – check slip resistance and rating.
- 5** Choose drawers, roll-outs or corner swing-out shelves to provide greater base-cabinet access.
- 6** Install timers to ensure that any appliance that should not be running will be automatically shut off.
- 7** Use current switching technology, such as pressure pad-operated doors and voice or motion activated lights to free up hands.
- 8** Keep room and appliance controls, outlets and switches at the front of base cabinetry or low enough to be reachable, within the universal reach range [15-48 inches].
- 9** Provide a variety of countertop heights: 30-, 36- and 42-inch heights provide comfortable work surfaces for people of varied stature.
- 10** Store dishes/glasses in wall cabinets placed on the floor with an added toe kick, or in base cabinets fitted to facilitate their storage to make access easy and convenient for everyone.

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11 Consider clear floor space and traffic flow when planning island or peninsula (like in the photo above).

12 Incorporate specialized storage of all supplies and utensils for easy access.

13 Provide good, adaptable and adjustable lighting throughout the space to make area comfortable for younger and older eyes.

14 Use lower wall cabinets or pull down storage to bring more storage into the 15- to 48-inch universal reach range.

15 Choose lighter colors on cabinets, counters, floors and wallcoverings to benefit eyes that are aging or impaired.

16 Plan pull-out work counters placed at lower than the standard 36-inch counter height to accommodate people who are shorter or who sit to work.

17 Design contrasting or raised countertop edges to cue people with visual impairments.

18 Use vertical pull-outs in cabinets for better access.

19 Consider adjustable height cabinets to bring storage into the universal reach range (15-48 inches).

20 Place heavy objects at countertop height where they can be accessed easily and safely.

21 Use full extension drawer glides for maximum accessibility.

22 Design for long spans of continuous countertop so you can slide items along the counter as opposed to carrying them from work center to center.

23 Limit cabinet door sizes to 18 inches and consider bi-fold

or vertical bypass doors to lessen interference with clear floor space.

24 Use tilt down fronts or angled plug molding to access switches or plugs that would otherwise be difficult to reach.

25 Consider touch-latch cabinet doors to eliminate the need to grasp knobs or pulls.

26 Use wire or architectural pull in lieu of knobs.

27 Use adjustable (hydraulic) office type chair to create flexibility in the working height while seated.

28 Design a back or garage loading pantry and recycling center to eliminate the need to carry bulky items great distances.

29 Design a recycling center that has bins that are easy to remove without great lifting.

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30 Use rolling carts to transport many items at one time.

31 Use pneumatic legs on the table to raise and lower it to accommodate potential usage.

32 Use lighted interiors on cabinets to aid visibility.

33 Use drawers in lieu of doors to provide easier access.

34 Install a hot water dispenser within reach of seated or diminutive users.

35 Reinforce base-cabinet bottom drawers with solid platform and full extension locking drawer glides to create a step to reach upper cabinets or a microwave.

36 Install standard wall cabinets at a lower height when feasible.

37 Provide an easily-accessed step stool to reach upper cabinets.

38 Use shallow pantry cabinets or roll-out shelves to increase accessibility.

39 Store heavy objects at the safest and most convenient height.

40 Consider a built-in ironing board in base cabinet drawer or wall recess for easy access.

41 Design rooms with UD amenities that don't look institutional.

42 Use levers or touch controls and avoid smooth round control knobs.

43 For greatest ease, place control switches/levers close to the body at elbow height.

44 Choose controls that do not require sustained holding.

45 Be aware of simple assistive devices:

- A wall mounted holder to help open jar lids.
- A potato peeler with a clamp requires just one hand for use.
- Pan holders keep the pan from turning while stirring.
- A pan drainer allows one to drain off hot liquids with one hand.
- A gripper to add to silverware, small objects and handles.

46 Select small appliances on a basis of weight, balance and control.

47 Choose switches and controls that are audible, large print and easy to read.