

Overcoming
space
constraints in
your home's
hardest-
working room

NEED MORE SPACE? 8 most common problems solved

How do you turn lemons into lemonade when space is tight and your wish list is long? Gail and Jim Drury, co-owners of Drury Design (www.drurydesigns.com) in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, provide creative solutions to help their clients overcome the struggles of small spaces. Here, they offer ways to solve your toughest kitchen challenges, too.

Eric Hausman Photography



CHALLENGE #1: TOO LITTLE COUNTER SPACE

When you don't have enough counterspace, how your appliances are arranged is critical. In general, the major work area is between the sink and the cooking area; ideally, you would have 4' to 5' in your main work zone. As long as there's enough room in that area, other areas can be scaled back. For example, you might be able to get by with less counterspace between the range and refrigerator—just a bit for resting a hot pot or a bottle of milk. Or, you might include pull-out work areas placed strategically throughout your kitchen that are built into cabinets and drawers—one near a sink for cutting vegetables, for instance. Another solution is to have a rolling cart with a top that functions as another work surface, so you can bring it to where it's needed. Carefully think through how you work: where you like to unload groceries, how you cook and clean up, and how many others will be participating, which also affects the amount of counterspace needed.

Gridley + Graves



CHALLENGE #2: NOT ENOUGH STORAGE SPACE

Use areas that typically aren't thought of for storage: rows of drawers in the toe kick space for flat items, high-up areas at the ceiling line for seasonal items not frequently used and that can be accessed by using a pull-down rack from Hafele, extra roll-out shelves in a cabinet to maximize space. Carefully check your entire room with a professional for wasted space, including what's called "air space" between a cabinet and drawers. You often can fit thin items like lids and trays in rollouts in tight areas. Another way to maximize space is to use space-saving accessories for awkward areas. Use multitiered chrome pullouts that easily slide out of blind corner areas. Narrow pull-out units can be filled with utensil canisters or shelves that can be used as spice racks; they are a great way to utilize small spaces. Accessories like these are available from Hafele (www.hafele.com) and Richelieu (www.richelieu.com).



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CHALLENGE #4: TOO MANY APPLIANCES TO FIT THE SPACE—AND BUDGET

Consider a narrower and taller refrigerator measuring 24" or 30" wide by 84" high instead of a wider side-by-side model. Maybe a secondary refrigerator drawer can be placed nearby to make up for any lost refrigeration storage; the same goes for a freezer drawer. A range always takes up less space than a cooktop and wall oven, so rethink that decision. Some appliances are more compact than others, such as a dishwasher drawer instead of a full-size unit; the space saved will allow you to have a traditional drawer below. Check the dimensions to make sure you get the largest interior space available in all your standard-size appliance choices. Also reconsider if you really have the room for bells and whistles you thought you had to have, such as a warming drawer, second sink and wine cooler.

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CHALLENGE #3: PICKING A SPACE-STRETCHING PALETTE AND MATERIALS

Light colors always make a room look larger, and dark colors close up a space. If you want to mix materials, think about putting the lighter colors at eye level and the darker colors toward the floor. For example, use stained wood on the floor and possibly on an island rather than on wall cabinets. Glass doors on cabinets will make a room feel more airy, as will a few big windows. Open shelves also help open up a space, and, they are part of the "unfitted" look now becoming popular.

Nº 3



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Nº 5



CHALLENGE #5: DOORS OR WINDOWS TAKE UP VALUABLE WALL SPACE

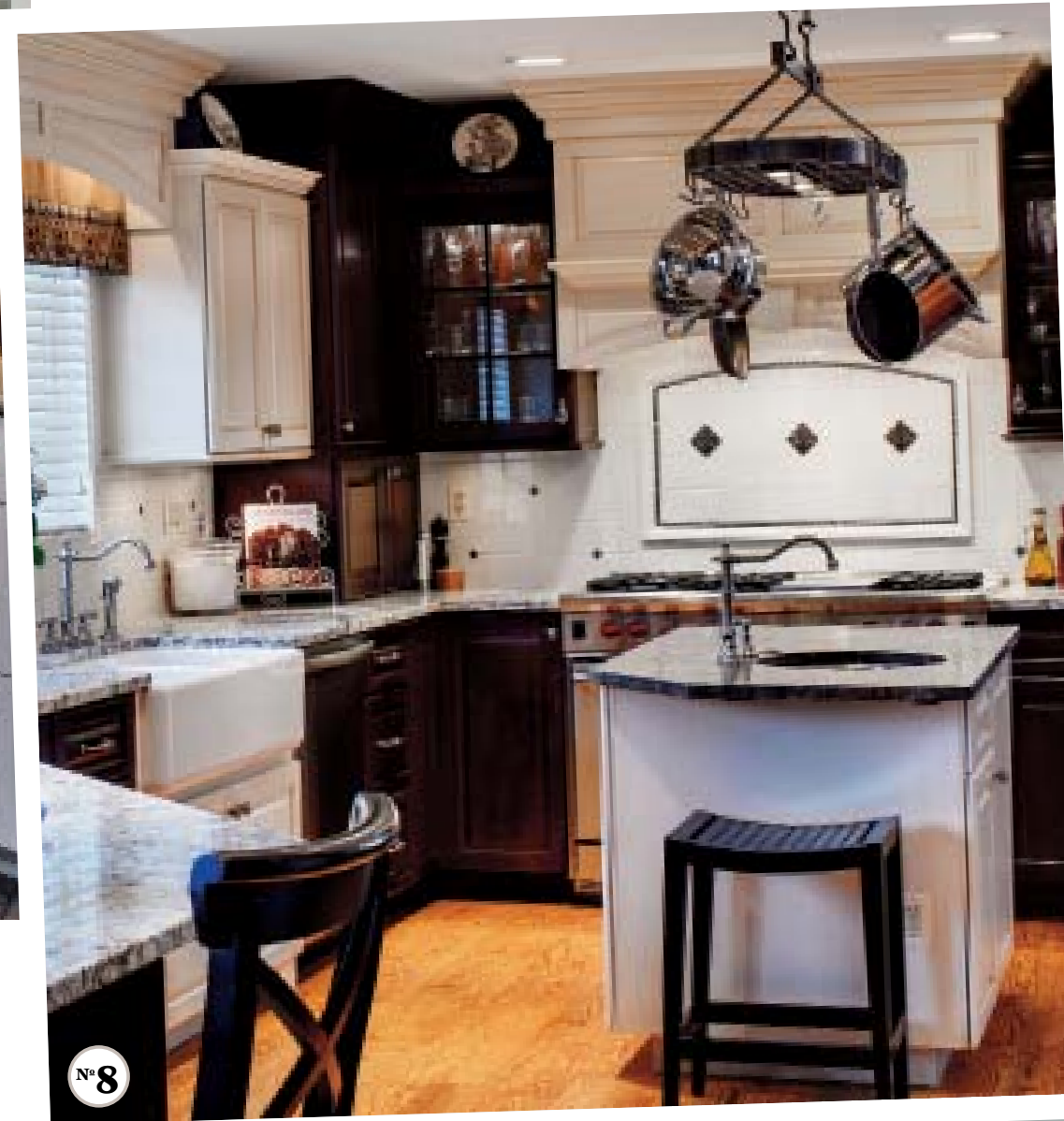
Multiple doors and windows can present big challenges when they can't be moved. Traffic flow may be disrupted and storage space sacrificed. If the windows or doors inhibit having upper cabinets, consider using dish pegs in lower drawers to store dishes. Or, maybe you can store dishes by a table instead of at the sink. Yet another idea: Try bumping out cabinet areas to keep traffic from flowing in a certain direction so that the cook will gain the space needed to keep guests out of the main work zone.



Nº 7

CHALLENGE #7: LIGHTING TO MAKE SPACE LOOK BIGGER AND WORK BETTER

Lots of lighting makes any small space look larger. The best kitchen lighting is layered and provides good illumination for work or tasks, overall lighting and ambience. Lights inside glass-fronted cabinets with glass shelves enlarge a space greatly. Indirect lighting shining up on the ceiling or down on the floor also can make a space look larger and will offer good overall lighting. Lots of hanging fixtures add appeal but can close in a space, so limit use. Undercabinet lighting comes in xenon, LED, halogen, incandescent and fluorescent fixtures. LED, xenon and fluorescents are the most energy-conscious fixtures, while halogen and xenon fixtures give off a crisp white light that will help open up a space.



Nº 8

CHALLENGE #8: NOT ENOUGH ROOM FOR AN ISLAND WHEN YOU REALLY WANT ONE

If your kitchen measures 12' wide or wider, you can fit an island with cabinets on both sides. If the area is smaller than 12', consider making cabinets on one side of the room 12" deep. Changing the shape of the island also helps. Maybe it can be narrow at one end and become wider at the opposite end. Peninsulas can be used in areas where an island cannot fit. Angle them out and add round areas at the ends.

CHALLENGE #6: NO ROOM TO SQUEEZE IN A SEATING AREA

Consider having a peninsula that flows into a small built-in table angle out from a wall. This can double as a work area. Or, take a small island and situate it so it flows into what was once a dining area, and then build a counter off the end and pull up a few seats. Simply by adding that minimal 3' to 4' of counterspace to the island, you also have increased your overall kitchen counterspace considerably.



Nº 6

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