

Deep, wide drawers and over-counter pendants boost storage and light in this modern-rustic kitchen. >



KITCHENS :
**room
remedies**

Don't let an issue like lack of bench space or poor lighting stifle your culinary ambitions – discover how to conquer the five most common kitchen woes

WORDS LEESA MAHER



PROBLEM

LACK OF STORAGE

SOLUTION: The first step in making the most of your kitchen storage is good old-fashioned clear out. "There really is such a thing as too much storage – it allows you to hold on to unnecessary items," says professional organiser Robyn Amott of Bless This Mess. She advises removing any double-ups, out-of-date products or items you simply never use, before assessing what's left: "Ask yourself, 'Do I need it or use it? Does it have a purpose?'"

Create extra storage by inserting a freestanding shelf within cupboards to use empty vertical space, or opt for pull-out racks (pictured left). Check out Howards Storage World's 'Cabinet Organiser' range, from \$79.95/30cm rack. Drawers can also be fitted into existing cupboards; Inadrawer retrofits the hardy Blum Metabox and Tandembox systems into base cabinetry, from \$315/drawer for a 300mm-wide cabinet.

If you're renovating, work out how much space you currently use and then add 20 per cent. Deep, wide drawers are pricier than cupboards but offer up to a third more storage space. Take cupboards to the ceiling, using the highest shelves for necessary but little-used items.

"DRAWERS UNDER THE SINK AND OVEN WILL maximise THESE OFTEN UNDER-UTILISED SPACES" ~ ZAC DODD, THE GOOD GUYS KITCHENS

Above: In this cupboard by Provincial Kitchens, pull-out drawers ensure every inch of space is utilised. **Below:** Drawer inserts can turn clutter and chaos into blissful order. **Right:** A dish rack eliminates dead vertical storage space.



PHOTOGRAPHY (BOTTOM LEFT) LLUIS SANS/RBA, (RIGHT) WARREN HEATH/FRANK FEATURES/PRODUCTION LUANNE TOMS.



PROBLEM 2

SMALL SPACE

PHOTOGRAPHY (TOP LEFT) JOHN DOWNS, (TOP RIGHT) TY COLE/OTTO RAVEN&SNOW, (BOTTOM RIGHT) RICHARD POWERS/THEINCUCONTEXT.COM, (BOTTOM LEFT) JOHN PAUL URZAR

SOLUTION: Snug spaces call for equally streamlined designs. Interior designer Janet Bailey of Bailey Retail Design recommends an integrated rangehood, which will take up less room than a feature model and also allow for cupboards above the range. For smaller households, consider a single drawer dishwasher, instead of a full-sized model. A built-in microwave oven will free up bench space, as will a dedicated appliance cupboard for a coffee machine and toaster (pictured right). "These are great for keeping benchtops clear of clutter," says Zac Dodd of The Good Guys Kitchens. Open shelves are often touted as a plus in small spaces, but could introduce visual clutter and a closed-in feeling. Shallow, handle-free wall cabinets may be a better option. Paint them the same colour as the walls to help them visually disappear and feel less imposing. For extra bench space, invest in a kitchen trolley such as Ikea's 'Förhöja', \$179, which has two drawers, open storage beneath and will add a bonus prep zone. >



THINK *outside* THE BOX - A NARROW WALL RECESS FITTED WITH *shelves* CAN SUPPLEMENT A PETITE PANTRY





PROBLEM 3

POOR LIGHTING

SOLUTION: If your kitchen is a bit dim, a quick fix could be a brighter bulb for your overhead light. "Change the existing globe to a new LED globe," says Denise Hammond of Beacon Lighting. "LEDs perform at a cooler temperature than incandescent or halogen lights, meaning a higher wattage can be used." Fixed above cabinets or hidden inside or under them, LED strip lighting will further boost functionality and atmosphere. Many strips are DIY, needing just a nearby power point, while hard-wired versions must be installed by an electrician. "If you need more light, particularly around your workspace, consider a swing arm task lamp or adjustable wall bracket," adds Denise.

A kitchen located in the centre of a home may lack access to any natural light. Engaging a lighting designer will ensure that ambient, task and accent lighting are layered to create a scheme that works. Downlights, pendants and spotlights are vital in prep areas where you'll be chopping, slicing and reading recipes, while entertaining areas will love a lower level of light to create atmosphere. If you're renovating, consider large framed skylights that work like windows, or a toughened-glass splashback that reflects light from adjacent rooms or the exterior.

PROBLEM 4

PAINT CABINETRY DOORS WHITE TO INSTANTLY BRIGHTEN A LIGHT-STARVED KITCHEN

DATED FINISHES

SOLUTION: If the heart of your home looks worse for wear but is structurally sound, try repainting timber cabinets or updating them with new cupboard doors and drawer fronts. Companies like Granite Transformations specialise in benchtop makeovers, wrapping an existing bench in an engineered stone overlay, from \$695/sqm. "Opting for a makeover rather than a complete kitchen overhaul means minimal mess and a considerably lower cost," says Jessie Harvey of Granite Transformations. Updating your benchtop also presents the opportunity to choose a new sink.

In terms of colours and materials, classic designs and finishes are your best bet for a timeless scheme. "Finishes that are loud in colour or pattern will date faster than a plainer, more neutral style," advises Verity Zegarac of Laminex Australia. If all-white isn't your thing, add natural materials like timber. "A row of timber cabinetry instantly transforms a plain kitchen into a dual-toned space with visual appeal," says Zac Dodd of The Good Guys Kitchens. Open shelving also invites you to introduce colour through crockery and collectables.



PHOTOGRAPHY (TOP LEFT) ALISON DAVIN/JUTEHOME.COM; (DREW KELLY); (BOTTOM RIGHT) ARPELLE HABIB/TAVERNE AGENCY; (BOTTOM LEFT) HELEN CATHCART/WICKENDENHUTLEY.COM; (OPPOSITE) GAP INTERIORS/JULIEN FERNANDEZ/PIGMEE.COM



PROBLEM 5

AWKWARD LAYOUT

SOLUTION: No place to put hot pots? Traffic jams in the morning? Streamlining operations in the kitchen – without making any structural changes – will make a huge difference, advises professional organiser Robyn Amott. Store pots and pans in the drawer or cupboard closest to the oven and cooktop, annex the bench nearest the cooktop as a prep zone and dedicate the cupboards underneath to chopping boards, graters and mixing bowls. Incorporate a bin in an existing cupboard near the sink and, adds Robyn, "create a coffee and tea station in the cupboard nearest your kettle". **hb**