

Ten top tips for open plan living:



Lifestyle matters EEN

- **Draw a scale room plan:** Mark out all the unmovable fixtures first and then play around with scale size cut outs of furniture to achieve the optimum layout, less back breaking too! Consider the direction of natural daylight, and the way people will move around the room.
- **Function:** Carefully consider the functions of this space and the activities that will take place within it. This is crucial to a design that ultimately works well for you, and a good designer will always strive to achieve this goal.
- **Electrical:** Analyse any additional sockets for multimedia, and lighting that will be required. Trailing sockets and leads are both unsightly and dangerous.
- **Storage:** Open plan living needs to be storage efficient to achieve a scheme that works cohesively. List all storage requirements and plan ahead for them. Look for multi-functional pieces of furniture that contain concealed storage to achieve a streamlined look.
- **Flooring:** If possible use continuous flooring across the entire open plan area. Then, to define a separate zone such as a seating area, use a large rug.
- **Edit:** If you have knocked through two or more rooms, the chances are you have a selection of furniture that is totally uncoordinated. Edit out and de-clutter any pieces that are not functional or fabulous, this can be both cathartic and rewarding!
- **Materials & Finishes:** To 'visually link' the different functional areas, carefully ensure that the materials used complement and harmonise each other. Particularly important if you are

linking a kitchen with a living area. Analyse the fixtures, like the worktops, and the doors and the cooker, and echo this theme throughout, either in colour or material.

- **Colour:** Keep the colour palette constant across all 'zones', for a sophisticated and coordinated effect. Keep the palette limited, even though you are working across a larger space.
 - **Furniture:** Search out furniture that works hard for its place in your home. Ensure that it is fit for function! Personally, I don't go for the safe option of 'everything matching', I feel it is much nicer to create a personal environment that reflects your individual taste, by mixing a few new quality designer pieces with much loved older pieces with a patina of age! Look for a common element that links them together; this could be style, shape, material or colour.
 - **Lighting:** Different functions require different levels of lighting. By layering a number of different types of lighting you can create an interesting and functional space that will accentuate the mood of the room. For example the kitchen will require strong bright overhead 'task' lighting, in contrast to the living/seating area, which will require softer low level ambient lighting in which to relax.
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