

The Work Triangle – What Is It and Why Does It Matter?

September 22, 2019

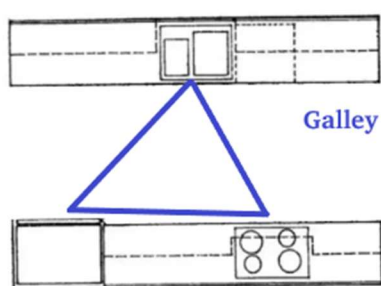
If you are just beginning to research kitchen designs and are considering a kitchen remodel or new construction, you will hear the phrase “Work Triangle” thrown around in conversation but you may not know what it is. The work triangle is a time-tested guideline of kitchen design that helps plan efficient kitchen workspaces (i.e., work centers) with clear traffic patterns in the kitchen. The triangle is created when drawing a line from the sink to the cooktop, then to the refrigerator and back to the sink.

The work triangle delineates the area where most things happen in a functional kitchen – whether it’s cooking, prepping or cleaning, this is where most homeowners will spend their time while preparing a meal.

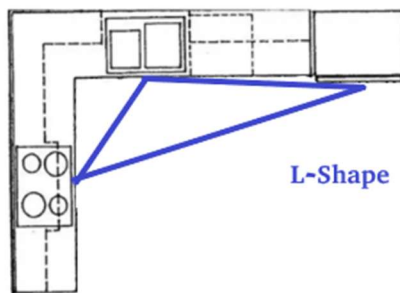
Therefore, to keep that path open and workflow efficient for the chef, no significant traffic patterns should cross through the work triangle AND the distances should be minimized to a comfortable working space.

Think about Thanksgiving dinner. If the chef is preparing eight dishes and there are fifteen guests but the refrigerator is on the other side of the peninsula or just around the corner in the family room, each time the chef needs to grab something out of the fridge, another guest will likely cross their path and there will be delays. To say nothing of the additional inconvenience of carrying something hot or cold a further distance.

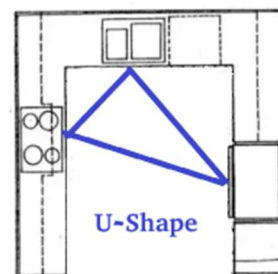
We would also recommend that a waste bin (or two!) be closely adjacent to the work triangle since this will likely be the area where cleanups will be most needed.



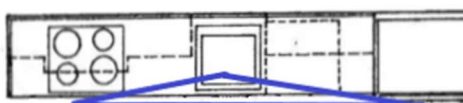
Galley



L-Shape



U-Shape



Straight

But what about islands? Ideally the work triangle doesn’t intersect the island by more than 12” but in many kitchens, it’s unrealistic to force those guidelines on a particular design. And, at the end of the day, these are just guidelines – only the homeowner has the best idea of how they use the space and what will or will not be an inconvenience to them. And an experienced Designer will be able to gather that information and best incorporate it into the design.

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