

## Sunday Independent

# ARCHITECT'S CLINIC

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## Should I go for wall-hung units?

**Q** I am planning to redesign my kitchen and have a question on storage cupboards. Should I plan for lower and wall-hung cupboards or is this not popular anymore? If I am using wall-hung cupboards how tall should they be?

**A** RE-DESIGNING your kitchen is a great opportunity to assess not just the 'look' of your kitchen but also its layout and how this interacts with the room as a whole. There are three key decisions to be made in determining the optimal layout for your kitchen. Firstly, whether you can remove the units from the windows to allow the space and light to flow better in the space. Secondly, whether you can eliminate corner units, always a compromised form of kitchen storage. Thirdly, whether it is appropriate to incorporate an island unit, which can add greatly to the social experience of cooking and entertaining. In addition, there is the matter of full height units like fridge-freezers, double ovens and larder units, all of which need to find their place.

If wall cupboards are needed to provide storage, making them full-height will maximise their storage potential and eliminate that dust-gathering surface between the top of the cupboards and the ceiling. Items rarely used can be accommodated on the upper shelves. In general, the shelves should be adjustable, with the support pins at 6cm intervals for maximum flexibility. Inserts like stepped shelves will allow items at the back of the cupboard to be easily seen and reached.

The material you choose for the wall-hung

units will influence the extent to which they dominate the room. Cabinets with lighter colours, opaque glass or metallic finishes will help the cupboards recede and lessen their impact. Handleless cabinets will likewise diminish their presence.

If you have sufficient storage without wall cupboards, consider your wall space carefully. A smartly designed splashback will create a feature of this wall in its own right. A simple shelf with carefully edited contents will also provide a pleasing focal point. If the wall is external, extra windows could provide welcome light. If not, the wall could be used to display art, framed with glass to protect it from the normal cooking splashes and vapours.

If you don't want wall-hung cupboards, you may need to find alternative storage space. You might sneak some overflow crockery and china storage into the dining area or carve out a simple pantry under the stairs. You will also need to make sure that your kitchen storage works as hard as possible.

Consult a registered architect when considering any changes to your home on [riaai.ie](http://riaai.ie). The **RIA** is the registration body for architects in Ireland.

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**Do you have a design dilemma we can help you with? Email your problem to [designclinic@independent.ie](mailto:designclinic@independent.ie). Advice provided is for guidance only and readers are advised to seek professional assistance for any proposed project.**

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Things to consider with wall-hung units are whether to add an island and the use of corner units