

Stock your kitchen for life



KARL LOHNES
CREATING SPACES

Early fall often signifies new beginnings for fledglings flying the nest.

Whether you're a student with your first apartment or a recent graduate with a new job, setting up a space to live — often in a new city — is exciting.

This week, I'm focused on the kitchen and all the special equipment required to set up a young homeowner for success. Drawing from my own experience, I'm a strong believer in buying the best you can afford.

Spending a bit extra on quality items pays off in the long run. And now I present the key items that will serve you well in your current kitchen and for the many moves you'll make throughout your lifetime.

THE EVERYDAY

Good knives are essential for daily food preparation. Store them in a block or magnetic wall strip so they are readily available and safely out of reach from rummaging hands in a drawer — and doing so means no banging sounds every time you open a drawer.

A toaster oven or microwave are other must-haves, especially if you're prone to heating up a snack after work or before bed. Each appliance performs very different duties, so choose wisely.

Using either one saves you from turning on the oven to warm one lone slice of pizza or dirtying a pot to heat soup. And, bonus, both toaster ovens and microwaves come with convection-cooking options. This excellent method cooks faster and results in crispy food.

And let's not forget about our morning cup-of-coffee ritual. I'm a fan of multipurpose machines, so I can enjoy my latte in the morning — or regular coffee if I'm not feeling so

fancy.

In the afternoon, I'm all about an iced coffee and after dinner, an espresso. A quality coffee machine is worth the investment. Once you master your brewing techniques, you'll have them for life.

FRIDAY-NIGHT SPECIAL

Not all kitchen items have to be in view 24/7 stealing counter space, even though they're invaluable in the kitchen. For instance, measuring cups and utensils are essential when a recipe involved. Measure, measure, measure! Unbreakable stainless steel is best because it lasts a lifetime.

For cooking, I recommend a good universal pot. You know, those millennial pink or green viral sensations that are oven proof, stovetop friendly and non-stick. The only thing they seemingly can't do is cook for you.

Another superb kitchen companion is a wand hand-stick blender. It saves space and performs many magic tricks. It's great for pureeing soups, making smoothies and nearly



Larger than a whisk, smaller than a blender, an immersion blender saves space and performs a multitude of culinary tasks. **Braun MultiQuick Immersion Hand Blender (2-Cup Food Processor, Whisk, Beaker), \$130, walmart.ca**

any job that a blender or food processor can do. When shopping choose a stainless wand, so that it can go directly into a hot pot to puree a soup.

THE NEVER-THOUGHT-YOU-NEEDED-IT STUFF

As an avid home baker and cook, I rely on certain tucked-away items I

may only use once or twice a month. Though they make rare appearances, they truly bring me pleasure when baking and cooking.

One of my favourites is a set of stainless steel mixing bowls. I bought them at a discount chain store, and I'm never afraid of breaking them.

They're easy to clean and emerge from the dishwasher sparkling. They can hold hot or cold ingredients and I can't imagine using any other style of mixing bowls.

Another saviour in the junk drawer is a one-ounce ice cream scoop. I use this small scoop to get even-sized cookies and to portion muffin batter. Uniform dessert every time!

I also love churning my own ice cream, so the scoop comes in handy when I pull out my ice cream maker. I've owned a fancy version for 25 years. I don't need to keep its parts in the freezer.

Simply place it on the counter, plug it in and the freezing starts. Devising inventive flavours is exciting. Roasted peach and brown sugar ice cream, anyone? Or how about banana gelato?

Do you have a decor dilemma or want to give feedback? Follow and contact Karl on Instagram, Karl_Lohnes

My beautiful laundrette

A few key design changes can help banish the drudgery of this everyday chore

MARTHA UNIACKE BREEN
Special to Postmedia Network

Just as kitchens evolved away from strictly utilitarian spaces over the course of the twentieth century, laundry rooms have gradually gone upscale as well. We all do laundry, just as we all cook dinner.

So why not design a space where it's pleasant — or at least not pure drudgery — to accomplish this regular chore?

"In the 'olden days,' laundry rooms were pretty much always located in the basement, but nowadays people are putting them back upstairs, on an upper floor, off the kitchen or even in a mudroom, anywhere that makes sense for a family," says interior designer Frankie Castro, creative director of Square Footage Custom Kitchens and Bath Inc.

One increasingly popular place clients are relocating the laundry, says Castro, is the mudroom (or pan-

try), between the kitchen and garage or back door. It's close to the action of the household without interfering with traffic flow. If it's next to an outside door, it's convenient for shedding muddy clothes or offloading smelly gym gear. And because it's on the main floor, she says, it's an improvement over having to run up and down the basement stairs to switch a load or add fabric softener.

For LG Canada spokesperson Melissa Maker, a number of practical elements will help make the modern laundry room more pleasant, not to mention more efficient. Topmost is light — in itself, a good argument against the traditional windowless basement laundry.

"I recently saw one in a magazine that had a skylight, which is a good alternative if it's located in an inside room, a mudroom, or anywhere else that doesn't get natural light," she says, adding if all else fails, ensure there is adequate room lighting.

Other elements she recommends include a good-sized sink, deep enough to wash or soak sweaters and other delicates with ease, but not so deep it hurts your back to bend over and wash clothes in it. If there's enough room, Castro recommends installing a good counter for folding and sorting.

"I always design laundry room counters to be extra deep, at least 26 inches minimum," she says. "The reason is you can hide clothes hampers under there when not in use; standard-depth cupboards are never deep enough."

Storage is a plus in any room, says Jessica Cinnamon of Jessica Cinnamon Design, but in a small space like a laundry room, you might need to think creatively to find opportunities to add storage capacity.

"Pullout trays or drawers under the sink are great for cleaning supplies, or for detergent, dryer balls and other essentials. Another option



In this serene room by Jessica Cinnamon Design, a sink, extra storage and a surface for folding are ideal, and there's even room for a handy dog wash station. **STEPHANI BUCHMAN**

is to put a Magic revolving tray or a Lazy Susan in corner cupboards — you want to make use of every inch of space you can."

Cinnamon is also a great advocate of built-ins. "Everyone needs to hang things up to dry, so we like to put in hanging rods for that. Pull-out drying racks give you a place to lay out sweaters; and if you have enough room, it's also great to have a space for steaming or ironing clothes."

In tight spaces, consider a pull-down ironing board that folds out of the way when not in use.

From a design standpoint, a clean, fresh and bright look will banish weekday laundry doldrums. Don't be afraid to show some personality — unlike more "serious" rooms in your house, it's perfectly all right to have some fun.

"If your appliances are white, paint the walls a bright colour. Or put in colourful wallpaper or artwork," says Castro. "People tend to be afraid to put their personality into a room like this, but it's actually the perfect place — it should reflect you."