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Open Floor Plans: Is this Design Right for You?



PAGE TOOLS

Compartmentalized homes with small, closed-off rooms aren't in vogue. But before you knock down walls and open up the square footage in your home, here are a few things to take into consideration.

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many renovations in which she opened up living spaces, Lord learned what the most common potential pitfalls are with these boundary-free [floor plans](#). "Unless you live alone, you really have to ask yourself, 'am I okay with sharing this space?'" she says. "Imagine somebody's clanging pots and pans in the kitchen while someone else is trying to watch something on one TV and maybe a child is trying to watch something on another TV...those are big considerations to think about."

Another consideration is that your old furniture might not work in the new space. When designing spaces, Lord works with clients to make sure they have the right furniture for the new look and feel of their [home](#).

And if you have children, consider that your space will now be their space and vice-versa. Kricken Yaker, principal at Portland, Ore.-based design-build firm [Vanillawood](#), creates open floor plan spaces for clients. A mother herself, she understands the need to come up with a space that works for the whole family. "Especially when you have younger children, you can still capture some sort of space within the [house](#) that is kind of the 'flop room,'" she says, noting that half-walls, screens and sliding wall barriers can be a good middle ground for families who love to be together but who still occasionally need to have separate spaces.



Many homeowners choose to open up the more "social" rooms—the kitchen, living and dining areas—rather than taking out all the walls in a home. Photo courtesy of Alyson McNutt English.

Designers say solutions like these will usually work for [homeowners](#) who want to live in open space floor plans. "Most of today's existing homes have an outdated layout with wasted spaces such as narrow hallways, cramped rooms and unused guest bedrooms that don't at all reflect today's changes in lifestyle or our



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