



OOPS!

Remember the old saying “We learn from our mistakes”? What’s even better is learning from other people’s mistakes, especially when you’re remodeling or building, and here’s your chance!

Review the following scenarios to avoid making the same slipups in your home. These pictures also give you some ideas on what to look out for when reviewing model homes. For a complete, room-by-room “Model Home Review Checklist,” [click here](#).

Before construction begins on your home, know whether your washer belongs on the left or right. This is particularly important if you will be buying the new front-loading machines, because there are no industry standards governing on which side the doors hinge. You don’t want to end up like this poor homeowner, where the dryer door is in the way each time a load is transferred from the washer to the dryer. Some models allow the dryer door to be hinged on either side. That feature, if available on these models, will fix this problem. If this were a washer door in a pair of front-loaders, the homeowner would have to live with it.



Select a tub surround that is tall enough to include the showerhead.

This fiberglass tub surround is so short that the showerhead has been installed in the drywall. Even a painted wall will be a mess in no time, but can you imagine what's going to happen to this wallpaper, especially since this paper is, in fact, paper and not vinyl.

Another problem with this shower...it's missing a light. When the shower curtain is drawn, this little shower, with its dark wallpaper, will be like a cave.



Be aware of the space between an angled kitchen sink and the dishwasher. In this design, the homeowner is going to be squeezed between the sink and the open dishwasher



To avoid such tight quarters, include a narrow cookie sheet/platter storage cabinet between the dishwasher and the sink, as shown here with the door to the narrow cabinet open. Just this little extra space will make a world of difference.



Avoid locating the refrigerator next to a deep wall.

The wall next to this frig will prevent the door from opening all the way. The homeowner is going to have a hard time accessing the freezer portion of this side-by-side model. In addition, he or she won't be able to remove the bins to clean without pulling the refrigerator out. And the wall will be damaged as the door bumps into it over and over again.

If the refrigerator must be up against a wall, make sure the depth of that wall is short enough to allow the refrigerator door to swing open to its full extent.



Specify the door swing on built-in ironing boards and keep in mind whether you are left or right handed when determining the location.

The door to this board should hinge on the opposite side so it can open out of the way. Also, only left-handed people will feel comfortable using this board. By mounting it farther to the left of the base cabinet, it would have worked for either left- or right-handed people.



Avoid having the bedside table show through the window.

From the outside, the back of this chest is an eyesore. If the builder were flexible, the homeowner could have adjusted the window height or location to steer clear of this situation.

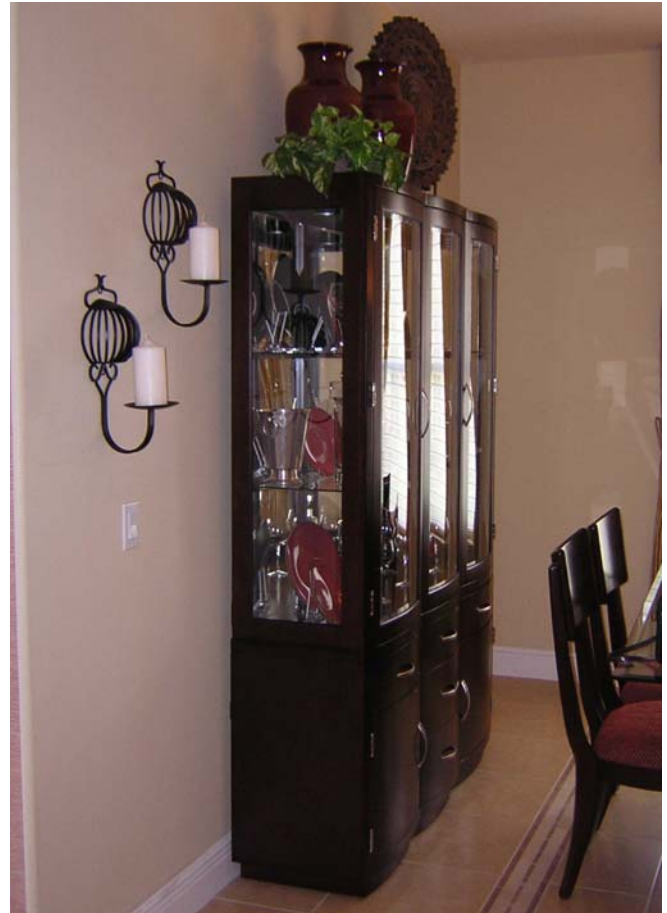


Consider the consequences of the direction of each door swing in your new home.

The door to this water closet just barely misses the commode. In order to use this bathroom, the occupant must squeeze between the side of the commode and the wall in order to close the door. Hopefully this homeowner will be entertaining skinny guests only!



Notice the amount of room between the hutch and the table and chairs. There isn't enough space in this dining room for guests seated in front of the hutch to pull the chairs back and sit at the table. There are two design options for avoiding this scenario: The hutch can be recessed into the wall to help relieve the congestion, or the table and chairs can be moved off center to create adequate room. In some cases, the chandelier, and possibly the dining room window, be repositioned.



Make sure open appliance doors do not result in blocked walkways. Here are three examples of refrigerator doors opening into other doors and/or obstructing passageways in the kitchen. A certain amount of blockage may be OK with you, but beware of kitchen spacing so you can make any changes desired before your plans are complete.

1. This open door blocks the entrance to the kitchen.



2. The path between the island and the open refrigerator door is so narrow that no one can walk by if the door is open.



3. In addition to blocking the walkway, these pantry and refrigerator doors open directly into one another. The oven doors add only further congestion.



Be an active participant in the placement of electrical and mechanical boxes and control panels. Both the structured wiring panel and the security box are installed within the usable space of this closet. Although it is hard to tell from the picture, if these items were located elsewhere, there would be plenty of room for a shelf stack on this wall. (The ceiling in this closet is 10 feet tall, and as an alternative, both of these mechanical items could have been located either above the door or above the usable closet space.)



This wall would have been a great location for artwork had the thermostat not become the focal point. This control could easily have been placed on the column to the left.



Review the electrical, computer, cable, and phone needs for each of your rooms. This desk area designed into a breakfast nook is beautiful but it's missing the needed computer connections. Will you be using a laptop or a conventional computer? Where will the printer, PC, and keyboard be located? Do you need a cable and phone outlet? Do you need an electrical outlet under the desk, and should the countertop include a grommet hole for cables to pass through?



Beware of solid black countertops. Black countertops are beautiful, but they are a maintenance nightmare because they show every water spot and fingerprint. Black appliances and black porcelain sinks can cause the same cleaning issues.



Notice the depth of the countertop for the bar stool area. The countertop in this picture is too shallow. The countertop should be 18" deep, allowing people to eat at the bar without having to sit so close that their knees are smashed up against the wall underneath.



Notice the depth of the reach-in closets.

The coat closet is this model home is too shallow. The family that purchases this home is going to be in for a shock when they discover that coats protrude into the doorway, preventing the door from closing. Reach-in closets need to be a minimum of 24" in depth **after drywall**.



Beware of wire shelving in the pantry.

You'll notice that there are no bottles on the pantry shelves in this model home. The reason is that bottles will not sit properly on wire shelving. There are three other options. The first two: either use what is called "tight mesh" wire, which has much less space between the wire slats, or have the trim carpenters build in wood shelving.



The third and most versatile option is to have a closet company build an adjustable melamine shelving system into your pantry. The shelves can be of different depths; accessories such as vertical cookie sheet/platter storage, can drawers, and/or baskets can be included; and the adjustability of the shelving is worth its weight in gold. So much more room can be gained by being able to eliminate dead space between shelves via adjustability. Being able to move shelves to accommodate tall appliances or larger items purchased at a warehouse store is also a wonderful feature.



Make sure the exhaust over the stove is not recirculating and that it is deep enough to cover all the burners. The exhaust above this stove, located under the microwave, does not carry the steam out of the house. It simply pulls the steam through a filter and blows it back into the room; moisture, grease, and all. It won't be long before this homeowner will begin to notice a sticky deposit on the cabinets as well as on the A/C intake.

As our homes are being built much tighter, with better insulation, it becomes even more important to make sure exhausts have sufficient power to pull the steam out of living spaces. Notice that when the microwave is built in over the stove, the exhaust is only deep enough to work for the back two burners.



This picture shows a functional exhaust hood deep enough to cover all burners, with the power to pull the steam up and out of the house. Based on the distance steam will need to travel before being released through the roof and the type of cooktop chosen, your appliance subcontractor can determine the power required



Beware of windows in the shower.

Windows in the shower can be a nightmare to clean and a garden for mildew, not to mention the privacy issue. If the builder insists on leaving the window in the shower, ask if it can be changed to glass block. An even better solution is to reduce the size to a small, fixed glass window located above the tile. This second idea still allows light to enter the room, solves the privacy issue, and moves the window above the splash area.



Want more tips and product ideas for designing function into your new home? Order your copy of "Don't Forget the Linen Closets!" It's packed with over 240 ideas and reminders to help you incorporate function, organization, and efficiency into your home without breaking the bank. www.buildingtips.net