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of TALC concepts
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talc

Now that you have CRAP concepts under your belt, let's level up and give some quality time to functionality on a bigger scale.

When my clients do the deep dive into HGTV shows and demand that I replicate the stunning open-concept, sleek finished, minimalist kitchen of their dreams featured so prominently on the remodeling shows, I take a deep breath and introduce them to TALC. No, not the powder; the second concept to help with kitchen design.

TALC is the acronym for four room-related sensory experiences: Texture, Acoustics, Lighting and Convection. While the goal of CRAP is visual, the purpose of TALC is physical. Feeling good and being safe in a space, especially a functional room like a kitchen, is critical to a successful design.

My clients who love the sleek open concept kitchens popular on HGTV are missing a key sensory experience when looking at those remodels. For example, kitchens of that style frequently have acoustical issues. The lack of walls in an open concept allows normal kitchen sounds to travel, meaning that a family member trying to watch tv in the adjoining room will be challenged while someone is clanking dishes. Another big issue is the convection pattern. Proper cooktop ventilation is based on the cubic footage of the entire room, meaning that a cute little hood vent will be ineffective in removing cooking odors. The adjoining living room furniture will smell like dinner for days after a big meal unless the convection is correctly sized.

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Let's take a look at each of the four TALC elements using my remodeled farm kitchen to see how impactful they are in the overall design

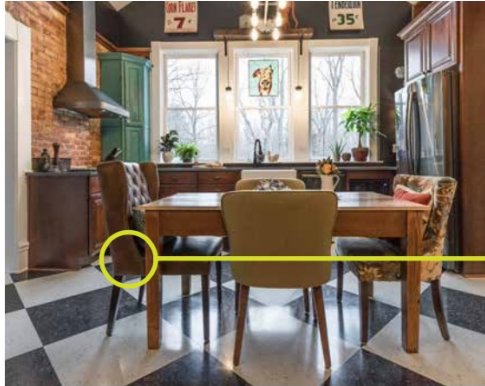
texture
acoustics
lighting
convection



TALC was first introduced in *It's Not Your Room, It's You*, an interior design book that reflects on peoples relationships with their spaces.

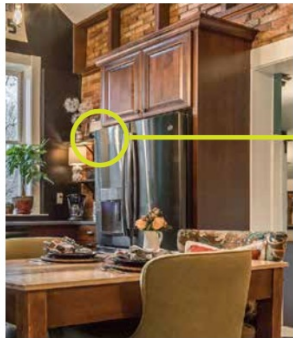
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wipe-ability

Leather seating at the island closest to the stove was a specific choice: its wipeable upholstery is easy to clean and maintain.



de-fingerprint

The black stainless finish on the appliances is mostly fingerprint-resistant. I only occasionally obsess over cleaning it.



easy-peasy clean up

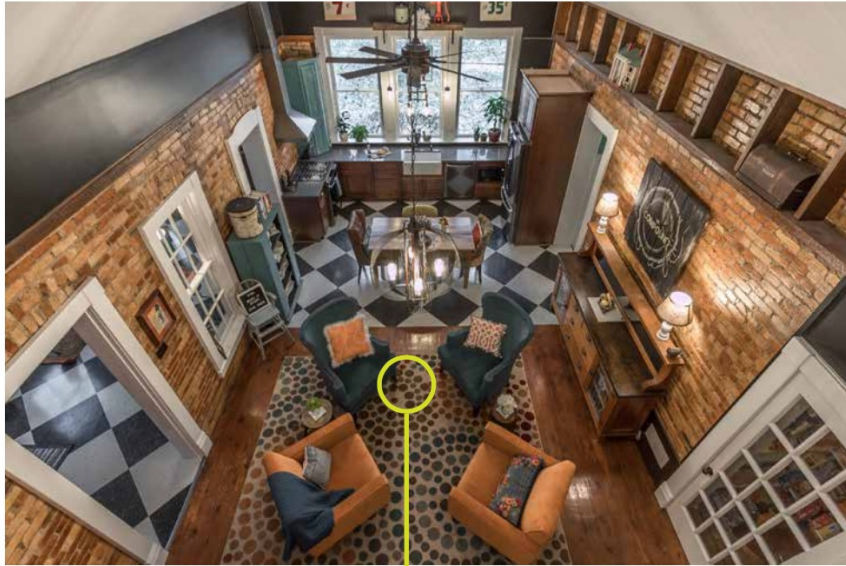
The bar area with prep sink features a vintage wood top with a marine varnish finish that's a breeze to maintain. The slick top is easily cleaned to remove wine spills.

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texture

Texture is the experience of your body bits (fingers, hands, feet), touching surfaces in your kitchen. Surfaces include countertops, flooring, cabinet knobs, appliance handles, seating— anything that your body comes in direct contact with as you navigate your kitchen space.

When evaluating the texture of a room, it's important to ask yourself this question: how does this surface make me feel, and how easy will it be to clean and maintain?



textile sound absorption

The volume of the combined kitchen and Starbucks area is massive, so sound would bounce like an endless game of Atari Pong without the help of textiles. The rug, upholstered furniture and mountain of toss pillows all absorb the sound like a champ so that Alexa will still respond from 20 feet away.

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acoustics

What? WHAT??? Acoustics is the experience of sound and how it bounces around in your space. Being able to hold a conversation without yelling (or on the flip side, without everyone hearing all that's said) is critical to the enjoyment and usability of the kitchen. When evaluating the acoustics of a room, it's important to ask yourself this T Mobile inspired question: "Can you hear me now?"

The danger of the insanely popular open concept layout is that the users of the space can hear everything from whispered conversations to pot clanking to spoons dropping in the sink. Fridge raiding at 3am just got a lot harder.

To combat the amplified echo from an open concept, it's important to layer as many textiles and art pieces as possible in the room. Upholstered seating, rugs, pillows, drapery, and canvas artwork will all minimize the sound bounce.

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ambient light

These sweet table lamps provide ambient lighting in the Starbucks area.



general light

This rectangular metal chandelier provides general lighting for the kitchen triangle.



task lighting

This funky llama lamp provides task lighting while chopping veggies next to the cooktop.

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lighting

Lighting is the experience of being able to see your room and function properly in it when natural sunlight isn't available. There are three key levels of lighting for your kitchen: *general* (the first switch-you-flip layer), *task* (to concentrate on what's right in front of you), and *ambient* (bonus mood lighting that's usually on a dimmer).

Lighting isn't just functional. It can completely alter the way you FEEL in a space based on the quantity of lumens and quality of light being used.

**GENERAL
AMBIENT
TASK**

QUANTITY

Too much lighting

An overabundance of high-lumen bulbs, especially in a downward configuration, can lead to uncomfortable feelings of interrogation. If innocuous questions at the dining table like “How was your day, dear?” make you feel like spewing a Colonel Jessup-style rant of “You want me on that wall! You need me on that wall!”, you likely have too much lighting in your room.

Too little lighting

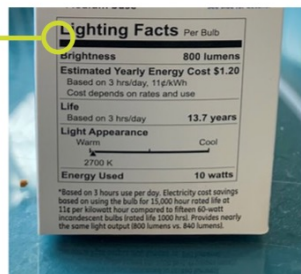
A lack of lighting in a kitchen can be depressing and dangerous. Poor task lighting can result in lost fingers while chopping broccoli (cue Dana Carvey). If you have already maxed out the lumens in your existing light fixtures, don't be afraid to add an actual table lamp to your kitchen counter. I promise you it's an enlightening experience. Heh.

QUALITY

Wrong type

A poorly chosen light bulb can leave you feeling depressed and looking cyanotic. If you're trying to rock a goth lifestyle, knock yourself out. If not, check out the detail on the side of each lightbulb package that looks shockingly similar to an FDA food label.

The Kelvin rating will help you choose the proper quality of bulb to fit your need.



table

lighting

Let's diagnose common lighting issues in a space by first learning about color temperature.

QUANTITY
QUALITY

Kelvin Scale

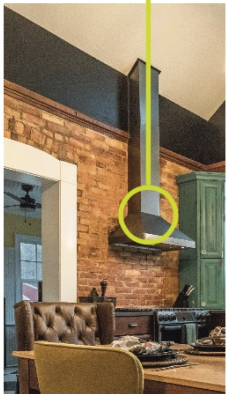
The “warm” side begins at 2700 K and the “cool” side ends at 6500 K. Warm lighting is like a candle or traditional incandescent bulb. It promotes a healthy skin glow and makes us feel warm and cozy. Cool lighting is like a clear, cloudless sky. The blueish cast to the light is terrible for makeup and can leave us feeling cold like a Dementor is floating nearby. Be mindful of what the package says when purchasing bulbs: Daylight=Dementor!



ceiling fan

This monster ceiling fan is the proper scale to redirect air for the volume of space. Bonus: cats love watching the giant blades spin.

Tip: There's a nifty little switch located on the motor of your ceiling fan that reverses the direction of the fan blades to push the warm air at the ceiling back down in winter. Placing the fan on the lowest setting with the blades turning clockwise in the colder months will help your vaulted room feel much more comfortable.



exhaust fan

This commercial grade Z Line exhaust fan can suck up small pets and children along with cooking odors. The larger the volume of the space, the more cfm (cubic feet per minute) the fan needs to be effective.

Tip: Crank the exhaust fan. One drawback to open concept kitchen and living spaces is scent related: cooking odors have no respect for boundaries and will infiltrate every single inch of your home. Installing and actually using the exhaust fan above your cooktop is the best way to keep those pesky odors contained while removing the moisture, heat and smoke from the kitchen. Recirculating fans filter the cooking odors and return them directly to the room through the same unit. Vented exhaust fans are preferable because they suck the cooking odors from the kitchen and send them outside where they belong.

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convection

Convection as it applies to TALC principles is the circulation of air through a room, contributing to the comfort of both temperature and scent. A room might look beautiful, but if the air is an inappropriate temperature or the fan is too powerful, it won't be comfortable to use the room for long.

With the invention of forced convection from furnaces and air conditioning units starting in the 1930's, the comfort of a room is far more controllable. Home styles of today tend to push the boundaries of convection with massive vaulted ceilings and open concept kitchens, so let's examine common convection issues and how to address them. Being smart about airflow can make the space comfortable as well as beautiful.

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