

# A satisfying sectional experience



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**Y**ou did it. You went out and bought a sectional because, you said: a) 'This will suit the whole family;' b) 'We can all fit on it;' c) 'It'll be perfect in the rec. room/den/living room/any corner.' Bonus points if you said, 'It will be our one major purchase for the room.'

Now there's a distinct possibility that you're now feeling a little frustrated or disillusioned with the whole furniture-buying experience because you have this large piece of furniture you just can't seem to make work. Saying 'I told you so' is not part of the designer lexicon, so let's just leave it at, 'Did you do

your homework, first?'

The answer to having a satisfying sectional experience is not rocket science, but there is a tiny bit of math and homework involved. Stay with me, here, it's just a tiny bit.

First you need to learn about the different configurations. Sectionals are basically a sofa frame and one or more extensions in various shapes and sizes.

Some form an "L" shape like a sofa with a chaise extension (sometimes reversible) and some, larger ones are "U" shaped, connected with a corner seat. Most important to understand is if it's left-hand facing or right-hand facing.

When you stand facing the sectional, if the arm is on the left, it's left hand facing and vice versa.

Second, think about where you want the sectional to go. You want to make sure it won't disrupt traffic flow. There should be a minimum of two feet between the furniture and all doors and foot paths.

If you plan on placing it into the room like a room divider, I suggest you have a minimum of 18"-24" of walking space around the whole sectional.

If it's in a corner you'll need to add a corner piece, usually a 41" square to connect the two long pieces. Keep in mind a corner seat is rarely used so if you're trying to increase seating you may need to add more at the ends. More smaller pieces, mean more configurations, but at greater expense.

Sectionals are large. The average cushion depth is 36", that number will increase with the seat back and arms. When configured, the average sectional can be 10' or longer.

That piece you like may not seem so big in a cavernous, warehouse-sized showroom but once you get it home it could dominate the space. So how do you know what size you need? Here's the math.

Measure the room: length, width and height. Let's say it's 10' X 14'. You want to leave two feet on both ends of a sectional for end tables or walking around, so a 14' wall will accommodate a 10' sofa length.  $14' - (2' + 2') = 10'$ .

Chaise extensions are generally 5' - 6' so that will fit a 10' wall comfortably. Some people will tape off the proposed area on the floor to show how it will fit in the space, others map it out with boxes.

It's a good idea to visually show how the pieces will sit in a room. If you don't have enough room, do NOT buy a sectional, buy a sofa.

The math isn't over, yet. Bring your tape measure to the furniture showroom and if you see something you like, measure it! Measure the length, width and height from the outsides. I can't



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tell you the number of people who complain after they purchase a sectional.

Maybe the salesperson was persistent, maybe you "eyeballed" the piece and "felt" it would work. Whatever you did, it wasn't the correct homework. Don't get talked into something you know won't fit.

Finally, if you live in a condo, measure the elevator! Is there enough height to fit the pieces in? If you're in

a house, measure doorways. A measuring tape is your best friend for this purchase. Follow these rules and you should have a satisfying sectional experience.

**— Jane Lockhart is an award-winning designer and TV personality and is considered one of Canada's leading experts in the world of design. Visit [www.janelockhart.com](http://www.janelockhart.com).**

# A dream kitchen without the big bucks



CHRIS PALMER  
**SWEAT  
VS SPEND**

**W**e've all heard how much value a kitchen renovation adds to your home. Still, taking the plunge — or sledgehammer — to an overhaul can be intimidating because it can cost upwards of \$20,000 on average.

The good news is that knowing where to sweat and where to spend is half the budget battle. As I renovate my blah builders' kitchen into a thing of beauty and functionality for my family, I cut costs where I can. Most trades charge anywhere from \$75 to \$125 an hour.

Here are my recommendations on where to sweat and where to spend.

## Sweat

- **Flooring.** Flooring can be one of the most expensive jobs in the kitchen. It can be challenging if you've never installed one before but tearing it out doesn't require much skill. If you have a friend who has installed floors before ask them for their help and utilize the limitless number of 'how to' videos on social media. Remember, a floor can make or break your kitchen, so try not to skim out on this area.

- **Backsplash.** In my opinion, tiling floors is best left to skilled trades, as it is a bit of an art form.

However, tiling the backsplash is a lot easier to do yourself. Just be sure to start any patterned tile from the centre and work your way outwards. Symmetry is a must when it comes to tiling.

- **Cabinetry.** Cabinets are like making boxes and therefore in theory aren't really that difficult to build, especially if you have a comprehensive cabinet making system from Veritas Tools. It's calculating the offsets that requires skill and care, and of course a using the right saw blade for the job. If time (or patience!) doesn't allow you to make them yourself, outsource the job and try your hand at installing the cabinets.

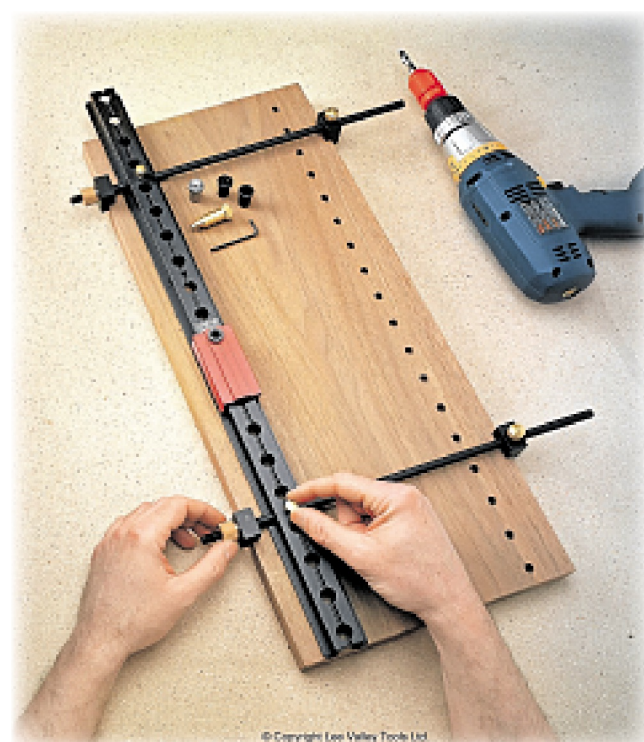
## Spend

- **Hardware.** Don't just pick out cheap hardware. It's the jewellery of the room and finishes off the kitchen while elevating its overall look. Without the right hardware all your hard work can go to waste. I recommend specialty

stores like Lee Valley as they have one of the most comprehensive, quality selections of hardware in the country. If you're not sure what style to choose, start a 'dream kitchen' Pinterest board or take a page (literally) from the design professionals and start a folder of 'tear sheets' from magazines.

- **Sink and appliances.** A double farmhouse style sink plays a major role in increasing work efficiency in the kitchen as you can wash, chop and clean in an organized manner. Quality appliances are another area I will invest because they translate to less costs in repairs and energy bills in the long run.

**— Chris Palmer is founder and owner of Hand Crafted by Chris Palmer which produces one-of-a-kind pieces for a wide range of clients. Watch for him on Global TV's The Morning Show, The Marilyn Denis Show and Cityline.**



**Kitchen cabinets are like making boxes and therefore aren't really that difficult to build, especially if you have a complete cabinet making system.**