

Spaces That Connect: How Home Layouts Impact Lifestyles

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The man who said that the best things often come in small places surely wasn't referring to living spaces. One may get dreamy-eyed about 'cozy' spaces, but the fact is that there's a lot to be said, for the 'bigger is better' philosophy.

It doesn't matter if you have more space than you need: buying a home is a once-in-a-lifetime decision for most family. Extra space only means that congestion will not be in issue even in the future, either from the expanding family or from visiting guests. More space leaves you room to experiment with decors, to move furniture about and add some more of it when you feel the need, without blocking up your living spaces.

In a practical vein, however--especially with the exorbitantly high prices of real estate--real estate acreage comes at a premium not many can afford. The hottest topic nowadays, when it comes to residential spaces, is how to make the best of what you have.

In the times we live in, residential real estate is often defined in terms of number of bedrooms--the BHK nomenclature--or in terms of square footage, or often both. The truth of the matter is that these are woefully inadequate without understanding just how the total space has been utilized i.e. the layout. For the modern home-buyer, whether looking for an investment or a long-term family home, understanding the layout of a property prior to purchase is instrumental towards long-term satisfaction.

New layout trends are emerging to suit the lifestyles of the modern family. Kitchens used to be tiny walled rooms with little or no ventilation, with separate dining rooms; that is not a thing of the past. Modern homes are now modeled on the concept of open-plan living. With open-plan dining and living areas, the kitchen too has finally arrived as the central show-space: complete with designer woodwork, granite counter tops and brand-name steel chimney contraptions. New homes are particularly being designed with open-plan ideas at the core of the layout, as the design play into three key factors: energy, Eco-space and lifestyle.

Our homes may technically not be getting any larger, but we're fast learning to adapt by utilizing spaces better, with smarter layouts that create a perception of space.

The true assessment of space is more about how it is used and perceived rather than physical measurements, more so as a part of the fast-paced, digitally-driven way of life that has become a hallmark of the 21st century. Multi-tasking is the name of the game and we're living in what is literally a 24/7 culture.

To a large extent, however, extraneous factors also play into how you plan your home layout.

Factors such as your location--more importantly the topography of your location--along with the sun exposure, wind patterns and views, have a significant impact on your decision-making process.

What's of utmost significance to how you plan your home layout, however, is your family, their respective routines and their lifestyle. Here, an important aspect to take into consideration is the how your family's routines and lifestyle will evolve over the near and not-so-near future. If you have young children, this evolution is likely to be faster-paced than usual, as your kids grow up with rapidly changing needs. And then, of course, when you come right down to it, some aspects are merely a matter of preference.