



In the kitchen

Flooding your home with natural light is an important way to regulate your body's circadian rhythm, get a dose of much-needed vitamin D, and boost mental wellbeing. "Combining roof windows with vertical ones or patio doors ensures daylight will travel as far as possible into a room," says Grant Sneddon, product manager at Velux. "I'd recommend that vertical and roof glazing covers up to 15-20% of a space's floor area to allow for maximum light and ventilation."

Bringing the outdoors in – otherwise known as biophilic design – can also have real health benefits. "Incorporating nature into your built environment has been demonstrated through research to reduce stress, blood pressure and heart rates, while increasing productivity, creativity, and self-reported rates of wellbeing," says biophilic designer Oliver Heath. So how do you bring this into your home? Where possible, create a direct link to your garden via patio doors – but if that's not an option, consider adding your very own herb garden into your kitchen or you could install a living wall to add greenery to your dining area.

Ergonomics is often a buzzword associated with office design, but it's important in a kitchen too, especially with more of us living in multi-generational households. "A good ergonomic kitchen minimises movement, so you spend less energy bending, stretching, lifting, and cleaning," says Adam Thomas, who led the design on Symphony's Freedom range of accessible kitchens. Instead of installing hard-to-reach cabinets, think about using drawers and extensive pull-out systems to bring items towards you. Uninterrupted, height-adjustable worktops with accessible areas provide greater functionality, while a surface with a raised waterfall edge helps prevent spillages onto the floor. "Position your appliances close together to avoid carrying heavy pots and pans across the room, and opt for a mid-height oven and innovative products such as AEG's ComfortLift dishwasher with a slide-and-lift basket to avoid unnecessary bending," says Adam. "It's also sensible to future proof your design, such as by planning electrics to allow for the installation of a rise-and-fall worktop without rewiring." >

left The garden addition to this Siematic Urban collection brings the inside in but also adds interest, colour, and nature into the room. Available in Stone or Lacquer finishes. The Siematic Urban kitchen costs from £30,000, available at The Myers Touch.

inset The Freedom Kitchen by Symphony and Adam Thomas can be designed to suit specific access requirements. Features include rise-and-fall worktops, innovative oven housings, and pull-out wire racks. Price on application.

