# Where should sockets and switches go in a redesigned room?

When you redesign a room, the position of sockets and switches often gets overlooked until the walls are closed up. That is a mistake. Getting the placement right early saves inconvenience and extra cost later. The goal is a layout that feels natural to use, meets modern electrical needs, and avoids trailing cables or inaccessible controls.

The first step is to think about how the room will be used. A living room with a home cinema setup needs different socket placement than a home office or a kitchen. Sketch the furniture layout and mark where large appliances, desks, sofas and beds will sit. This gives you a clear picture of where power points and switches are genuinely needed, not just where they ended up in the old room.

For general rooms, the standard height for sockets is around 450 millimetres from the floor to the bottom of the socket. Switches are usually at 1200 millimetres. These heights work well for most people and keep a consistent look. But if the room is for someone in a wheelchair or a child, you may want to adjust. In a kitchen, sockets above worktops are typically 200 millimetres above the worktop surface. For appliances like a fridge or washing machine, put the socket behind the unit but make sure it is accessible without pulling the appliance out.

## Think about cable routes and first fix

Socket and switch positions are decided during the first fix stage of an electrical installation. This is when cables are run through walls and ceilings before plastering. It is the time to plan cable routes carefully. A lighting circuit, for example, needs a switch at each entrance to the room if the room has two doors. You can also add a dimmer switch or a smart switch at this stage. Smart switches let you control lights from a phone or voice assistant, but they need a neutral wire at the switch position. Make sure the electrician knows this before the cables go in.

Socket spacing is another detail that matters. In a long wall, do not put one socket at one end and leave the rest of the wall bare. Space sockets every two metres or so, and consider double sockets rather than singles. Double sockets cost little more and give you twice the flexibility. In a home office, you might want a row of sockets at desk height to avoid crawling under the desk. A desk grommet or a floor box can keep cables tidy. For a media wall, put sockets behind the TV so that cables are hidden. But leave a gap between the back of the TV and the wall to plug in a bulky power supply.

Load calculation matters too. A modern room may have multiple gadgets charging at once. A socket ring with a USB-C port is handy for phones and tablets. But do not overload a single circuit. If the room is part of a building extension, the electrical load may need a new circuit from the consumer unit. This is where planning with a qualified electrician is essential. A professional can calculate the total load and advise on the right cable size and circuit breaker rating.

## Second fix and finishing touches

Once the walls are plastered and decorated, the second fix begins. This is when sockets, switches and faceplates are fitted. The choice of finish is personal, but white plastic is standard. Brushed steel or matte black can look smarter in a modern room. Whatever you choose, make sure all sockets and switches in the same room match. It looks more professional.

For a room that is part of a building extension, the wiring must comply with current regulations. In the UK, this means following the 18th Edition Wiring Regulations. All circuits must be certified and tested. A building control inspector may need to see the work. For most people, the safest route is to hire a registered electrician. They will handle the paperwork and ensure the installation is safe.

One common mistake is putting switches on the wrong side of a door. A switch should be on the side where the door opens into the room, not behind the door. If the door opens to the right, the switch should be on the right-hand wall. This way you can reach it as you enter. Another mistake is forgetting about outdoor sockets. If the redesigned room has a door to a garden or a balcony, fit an outdoor socket nearby. It is useful for garden lights, lawnmowers or outdoor furniture.

When planning the layout, also think about future needs. Adding a few extra sockets now costs very little compared with chasing out walls later. If you think you might want electric blinds, a wall-mounted TV or a heated towel rail, run a cable for it now and leave it capped behind the wall. This is called a provision. It saves major disruption later.

Another area that benefits from careful planning is the kitchen. In a kitchen, sockets should be placed above worktops for small appliances, but also below for dishwashers and fridges. A new kitchen often needs several dedicated circuits: one for the cooker, one for the hob, one for the dishwasher, and a general one for lights and sockets. The same principle applies to a utility room. Think about where the washing machine, tumble dryer and ironing board will go. Put sockets close to each appliance, but not directly behind them where the plug can push the appliance out of position.

For bedrooms, sockets near the bed are essential for phone chargers and bedside lamps. A double socket on each side of the bed is usually enough. But if you use a CPAP machine or a smart speaker, you might need more. Switches for the main light should be at the door and next to the bed. A two-way switch system, also called a two-way switching, lets you turn the light on or off from either position. It is simple to wire and makes a big difference in comfort.

The topic of extension wiring Brentwood often comes up when people are adding a room or converting a loft. In such projects, the wiring from the main house must be extended to the new space. This is not a DIY job. It requires careful planning of cable routes, load calculations and compliance with building regulations. A local electrician can advise on the best way to run cables from the consumer unit to the new room, and how many sockets and switches the new room needs. The key is to plan before the walls go up, so that the finished room works exactly as you want.

Finally, do not forget about the lighting circuit. The position of light switches affects how you use the room. A dimmer switch in a dining room can create a softer mood. A motion sensor switch in a hallway or utility room saves fumbling in the dark. A smart switch can be programmed to turn lights on at sunset or off at a set time. All of these require the right wiring at the first fix stage.

In summary, the best time to decide where sockets and switches go is before any work starts. Sketch the room, mark the furniture, think about how you live in the space, and talk to an electrician. They will help you avoid common mistakes and ensure the finished room is safe, practical and pleasant to use. A little planning now saves a lot of hassle later.