

# Time and Energy Management in the Camp Kitchen

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Camp kitchens are wonderful institutions. but they have to be kept going by a special sort of labor known as kitchen work— quantity kitchen work. Many of the dedicated Christian women who find themselves doing it have not been trained for it. but have had to pick it up by experience. But large quantity kitchen work, though it is so important to the well-being of the campers and staff, they have been expected to know by instinct. Therefore, their methods are often wasteful of their precious energy and time and the campers are given short measure (Luke 6:38) in their meals.

Ask yourself, “How do you think your camp kitchen work could be made easier?” Nine times out of ten you’ll say, “Well, if I could get some new equipment, or remodel—but our camp just can’t afford it.”

And there each of us sticks. Nine out of ten camps can’t afford to buy new equipment or remodel into a new layout. But there is a great deal we can and should do without spending a penny. Indeed the most important changes in our ways of working cost nothing; yet they are basic, and even if we are planning new purchases,, we shouldn’t do it without considering the principles of motion economy.

These four principles are:

- a. By eliminating all unnecessary work.
- b. By combining operations or elements.
- c. By changing the sequence of operations.
- d. B~ simplifying the necessary operations.

These things can be done in different ways:

- a. By developing better work methods.
- h. By changing the places where you keep your tools and supplies—better storage.
- c. By improving your work place.

You may want to do all these things at once and not know where to start. This is natural: they are all interrelated. As you look around the kitchen with a view to making some changes; your eye may light on a sink that is too low, on a knife that is never sharp enough, on a shelf you can’t reach on a drawer that sticks. You may keep cake or rolls off the menu because it means getting out so many utensils and putting them all back.

The most important work method is the proper use of your body. Consider your muscles as tools and use the right ones for the job you are doing. The reason why it is bad to wash dishes at a low sink is that in addition to the muscles needed to do the actual work of washing dishes, you are making other muscles work unnecessarily to hold your body in a strained position.

Often it is necessary to use all our muscles and work hard and fast. You are fatigued and this is reasonable. But unnecessary fatigue comes from bad posture. If you lean over a work table too

far while working your body will be out of balance and there will be a strain on the small muscles of your back.

May I summarize a few suggestions:

**First**, and most important—plan. Carefully thought-out time and activity plans are useful tools in saving time and energy and relieving the tensions of in decisions and uncertainties. Part of the usefulness of a plan lies in the fact that it leads one to think through many work problems in advance.

**Secondly**, apply a questioning attitude to every task. Why is it being done? How' is it being done? Can it be done with fewer motions and less time? Can any steps be left out? Can equipment and tools be rearranged so they will be handier to work with? Are the best tools being used for the job?

**Thirdly**, is the major equipment efficiently arranged? The basic rule for a step-saving plan is to arrange space and equipment so that the kitchen workers have a direct route from the storeroom to the food preparation sink, cook's table, range, and finally the serving counter. The preparation, cooking, serving and clean-up areas should be arranged to avoid cross traffic. It's also important to plan enough counter space or work surface at each area, with adequate and convenient storage space for each. Plan storage for all items where used first and most often. Consider carefully the work heights in each area for both sitting and standing for the average height of women— 5 feet 4 inches.

The work involved in preparing, serving a meal and cleaning up after it can be simplified if it is divided so work areas are established to accomplish each step. Food must be received, prepared, cooked and served, and dishes and cooking utensils washed. Work areas should be placed so that one can route food supplies progressively from right to left, from the receiving area to the serving counter, and thus prevent the lines of traffic from crossing.

The receiving area needs a table or counter near the outside entrance where food can be received as it is delivered by dealers or brought in by donors. This area should be easily reached without interfering with camp activities or without crossing the kitchen.

The preparation area should be near a sink and should have tables or counter of two heights for different jobs. The cook's table should be 34 to 36 inches high, and at least 3 feet by 6 feet 6 inches. If the kitchen is longer than 22 feet, this table can also be longer. A smaller, lower table or counter 32 inches high is convenient for mixing foods. A hard maple section or a cutting board is needed for cutting and chopping. Maple surfaces can be easily finished and kept in good condition with penetrating sealant.

It is also desirable to have a lower height to work at while sitting to prepare vegetables and fruits. This height can be provided by lap boards built into the tables or base cabinet at a height of 24 to 36 inches above the floor. Comfortable chairs and stools with backs should be provided. If large numbers are served regularly, and large quantities of several foods are prepared in the kitchen, an institution-type electric mixer may be desirable. A 12-to-20 quart bench model or a 20-to-30

quart pedestal model would be adequate for preparation for 100 to 200 persons. Mashed potatoes and meatloaf, as well as cakes, rolls and whipping cream, can be mixed or prepared with such machines.

The cooking area should include a range with at least 3 feet of counter on each side of it. If the kitchen is rectangular, it's usually possible to have more counter space which makes cooking and serving easier. If the range does not have enough surface for hot kettles, a section of stainless steel next to it will provide space for them. A pull-out board near the range is convenient for carving meat.

The refrigerator is often located near the serving area, especially if salads and desserts are stored in it. The counter next to it should be at least 6 feet long; a longer counter is better for dishing salads or desserts ahead of time.

Also, there are many excellent sources of information available by contacting the Bulletins Room of your State University (if land-grant.) Camp Kitchen Management by Dorothy Proud is an excellent bulletin published by Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.