



DINING TABLE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Individual Place Setting on Tabletop

A typical placemat might be 16" x 12" and has room for a dining plate and silverware, maybe a small glass, but nothing more.

The minimum recommended tabletop space for an individual is 24" x 16" but is appropriate only for breakfast and casual dining. A much more comfortable tabletop space for each individual is 30" x 18".

Chairs, Benches, Booths

The top of a typical seat is 17-18" above the floor. Seat depth is 16-18". The standard allowance for upper leg thickness when seated is 6-7", so there needs to be a minimum clear space of 23-25" between the floor and the underside of the table apron or tabletop. If cushions are used on the seats, the minimum clear space should be increased accordingly.

A typical dining chair might be 20" wide; a typical arm dining chair will be 3-6" wider. Allow 4" between chairs.

In use, the front edge of the seat is approximately even with the edge of the table.

Table Surface

The center "aisle" of the dining table is used for condiments, bowls, platters, candles, etc. The minimum center aisle width is 5" but will not comfortably accommodate much more than condiments and salad bowls; the recommended minimum center aisle width is 9".

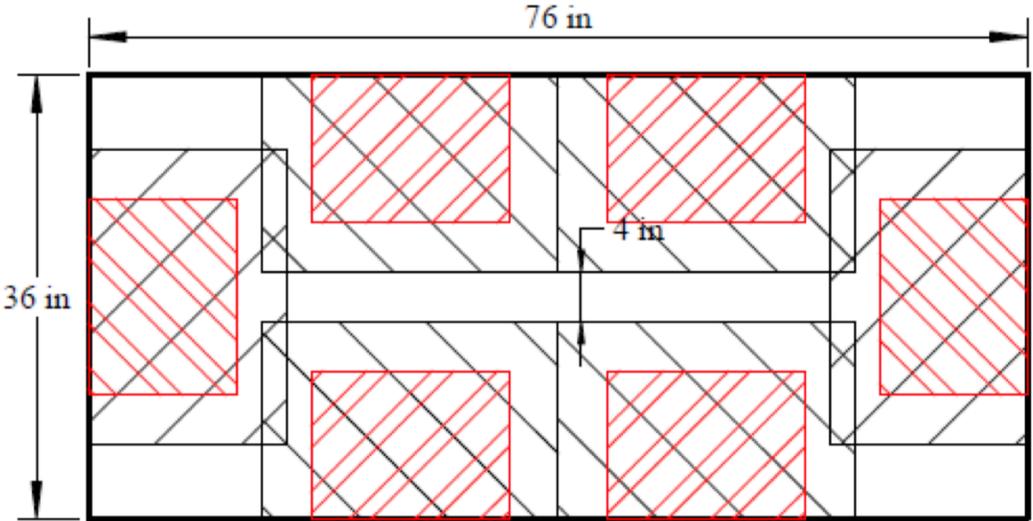
A typical seated adult can reach and pick up items at most about 28" from the edge of the table.

Rectangular Tabletop

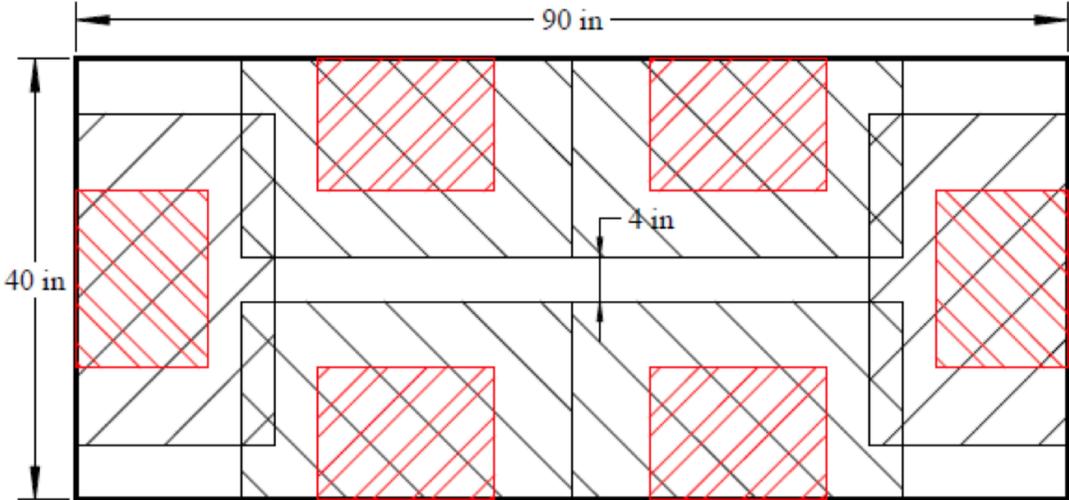
The typical overall table width is 36" but leaves little center aisle space. The minimum recommended overall width is 38-40". Note: A table width exceeding 40" begins to feel less intimate and more formal.

Diners seated at the ends of a dining table need an absolute minimum of 12" of table surface in front of the edge, but 15" is more realistic. Diners seated along the sides of a table, as stated earlier, need an absolute minimum of 24" of width along the table, but 30" is more functional. Therefore, a rectangular table seating six needs an absolute minimum length of 76", with 90" much more comfortable.

When larger groups are seated only a couple times a year, it may be more practical to add a leaf to one or both ends of a dining table to accommodate extra people.



Minimum Spacing for Six, Informal Dining
Placemats (in red) 16" x 12", "Personal Zones" 24" x 16"



Recommended Spacing for Six, Informal Dining
Placemats (in red) 16" x 12", "Personal Zones" 30" x 18"

Table Placement in Room

There should be room around the dining table for a "seating zone" so that diners can pull out a chair and sit down as well as push back from the table and stand up. The minimum width of this seating zone is 36" but the recommended width is 42".

If there is normal traffic flow around the table during meals, there should be an additional "circulation zone" outside the seating zone of 24-36".

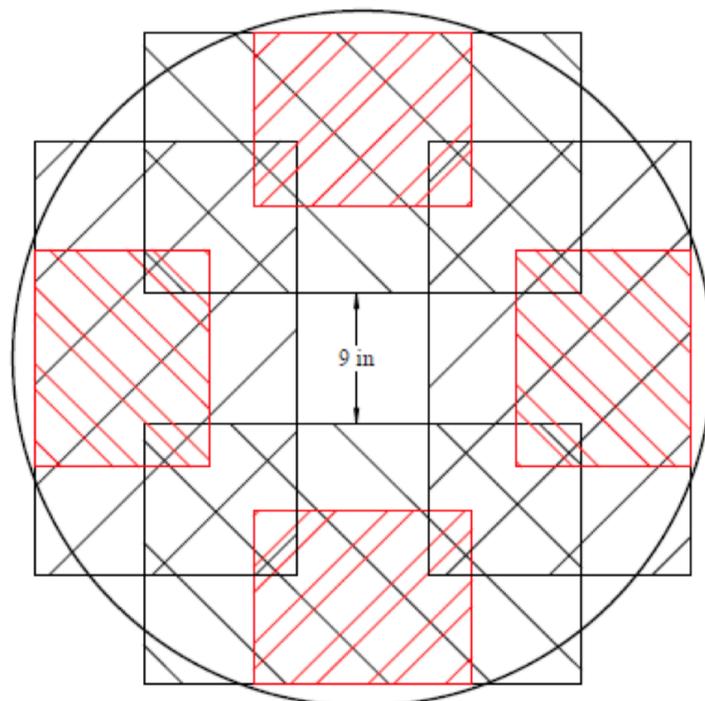
Table Height

The typical dining table surface is 30" above the floor.

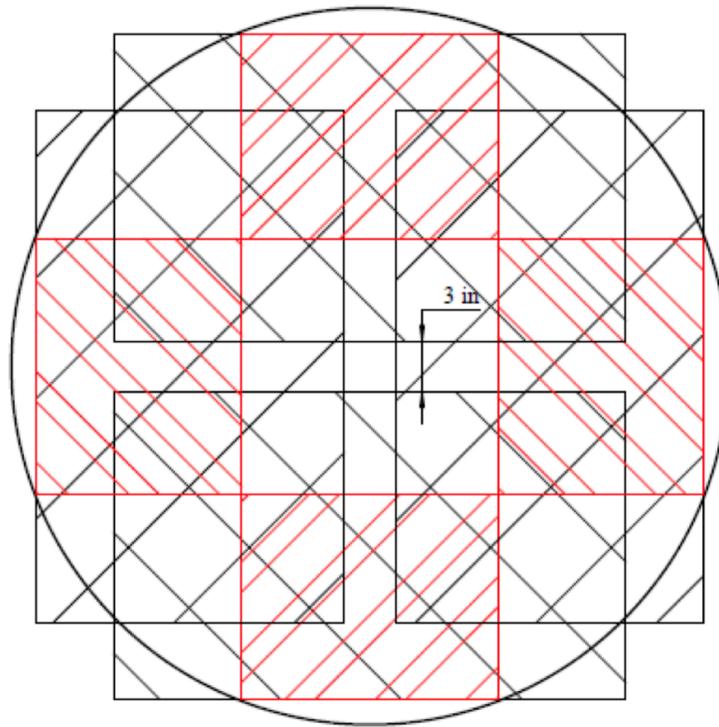
If the tabletop is supported by individual legs, there needs to be an apron to hold the legs upright. The typical height of the apron is 3-4".

Round Tabletop

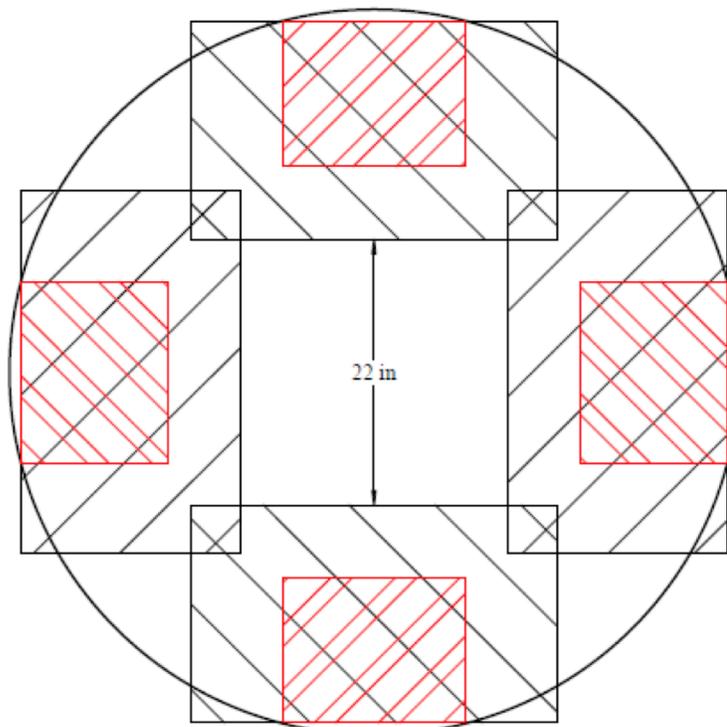
The absolute minimum tabletop space for a diner would be 30" of circumference, which theoretically would seat four at a 38" diameter table, but the useable minimum diameter is 48" and the recommended diameter 60". To seat six, the minimum diameter is 60" and the recommended diameter 72". For a sense of intimacy and informality the maximum diameter should be 54", which would seat at most five. This last seating arrangement would have one or more people straddling a table leg on a square base. A diameter of 54" is also the maximum recommended for a single pedestal, which would accommodate five chairs much better.



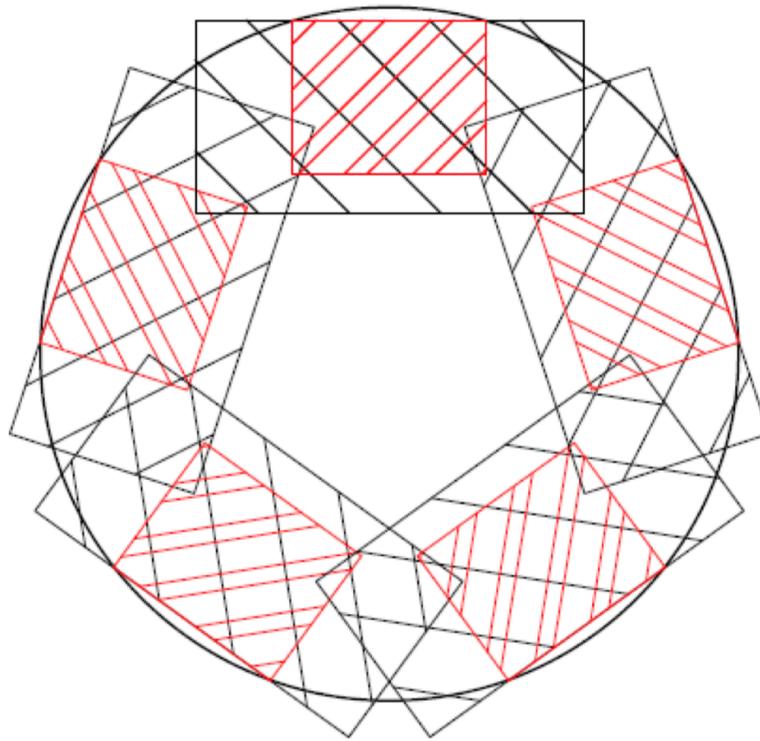
Suggested Minimum Spacing for Four, 48" Diameter Placemats (in red) 16" x 12", "Personal Zones" 30" x 18"



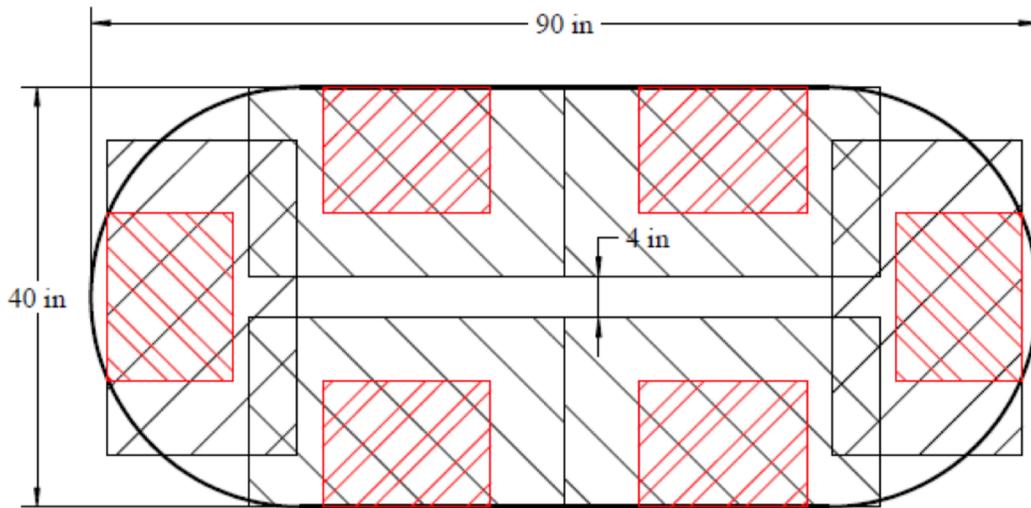
Spacing for Four, 42" Diameter
Placemats (in red) 16" x 12", "Personal Zones" 30" x 18"



Recommended Spacing for Four, 60" Diameter
Placemats (in red) 16" x 12", "Personal Zones" 30" x 18"



Spacing for Five, 54" Diameter
 Placemats (in red) 16" x 12", "Personal Zones" 30" x 18"
 (Max recommended diameter for single pedestal)



Spacing for Six, Informal Dining
 Placemats (in red) 16" x 12", "Personal Zones" 30" x 18"

Square Tabletop

A 32" square is about the smallest practical size to seat two people, and knees will bump. A 60" square tabletop is about the largest for functional dining, and could seat at most eight.

Expanding Tabletop

Wood or metal slides can be used to allow a table to expand at the center or ends so that additional leaves can be inserted, increasing the table's length.

To avoid potential problems with seasonal wood movement, there should be a 1/8" gap in the skirting at each extension area.

Table Base

The points of contact with the floor should be within 6" of the corners of a rectangular tabletop. This is to reduce the chance of a table tipping if a child climbs on it, or an adult diner pushes down on the edge. If the table is heavier than normal, these points of contact can be no more than 12" from the corners of the tabletop.

For a round, oval or elliptical table, the "north-south" and "east-west" distances between the table legs should be within 6" of the major and minor diameters of the tabletop.

To accommodate diners at the ends of a trestle table, the overhang should be 16-18".