

Comparing Kitchen Tops

What is what when it comes to selecting tops?



When it comes to choosing the finishes in your kitchen it is often hard to know what to choose and how different finishes compare. Below are some helpful guidelines for selecting counter top finishes.

| Type of top | Advantages |
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| <p>High pressure laminate A sheet that consists of thin layers of fibrous material that are impregnated with resin and bonded together by means of heat and pressure. The sheet is bonded with special adhesive to particle board.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inexpensive • Available in a large range of colours and finishes. • Hard wearing and durable and can withstand high impact, heat, scratching, scuffing, staining, boiling water and steam |
| <p>Natural stone (granite / marble) As this is a natural product consistency of colour and pattern cannot be guaranteed.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Granite is a hardwearing surface which is impervious to water, heat and staining and will retain its polished finish for years. Scratches and chips can be sanded away and repolished. • Marble is softer than granite and comes in lighter colours. |
| <p>Solid Surfacing A decorative, renewable surfacing material for virtually any application. Manufactured using an Acrylic Modified Polyester resin as a binder thereby ensuring higher chemical and heat resistant properties as well as adding ductility through the acrylic modification.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serviceable and repairable. • The product will be undamaged by most household staining agents and laboratory chemicals. • Grease leaves no after trace because of its non-porous properties. • Seamless – no visible joints • The seamless nature of the product allows basins and sinks to be molded as part of the continuous work surface. • Colour and pattern are consistent. |
| <p>Engineered stone Engineered stone is a man made product comprising of natural materials (crystal quartz, siliceous sands, and crushed granite), resin, pigments and accessory fractions such as coloured glass and mirror chips. It is manufactured in slab form by a process that heats and vibro-compacts the materials, pigments and resins together forming a uniform, impervious surface.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly resistant to scratches, chipping and acids in normal domestic use • Non-porous making them hygienic for kitchen and bathroom use. No bacteria can breed or penetrate the surface. The non-porosity also assists in rendering the surface stain resistant and therefore no oil or watermarks will occur. • Uniformity in colour. • Has a notable heat resistance. • Available in a wide range of colours. |
| <p>Wood Solid worktops consist of solid wood, glued, laminated and machined to form an even smooth surface finished with a water resistant polyurethane paint, or oiled.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A resilient surface • Can be finished, unfinished or periodically finished • Can be sealed for stain-proofing |

| Disadvantages | Care & Maintenance |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to repair • Extremely hot items may scorch it • Not suitable as a cutting board. • Susceptible to damage if unsealed joints, edges and cut-outs are exposed to excess moisture. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wipe clean with a damp cloth and non-abrasive cleaner. • Avoid excess water at seams and joints. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy • Grease can stain granite • Acidic foods can etch marble and it stains quite easily as it is a porous stone. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wipe clean • Seal marble in food preparation areas with salad oil. In all other areas use commercial sealer. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The product may scratch, however, the material can be polished to a perfectly new surface finish. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean with soap & water. • For stubborn stains use bleach based cleaner and rinse with water. • Never cut directly onto your surface. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineered stone is a premium product and therefore the only drawback to purchasing an engineered stone countertop for the home is the price. • There are varying standards of engineered stone. Ensure that the product you are quoted on is produced to the highest international standards through a proven technique like Bretton Technology. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean with mild detergent soap and water and then wipe the surface with a dry cloth. • After prolonged or heavy exposure to oils, acidic or deeply coloured fruits/vegetables it may be necessary to clean the surface with warm water and a small amount of standard non-abrasive household cleaner. • Substances such as hard water spots, food colouring or dried food particles may accumulate on the surface. These are surface blemishes and can be removed gently with a soft abrasive cleaner and a white Scotch-Brite® pad. For the toughest blemishes use a white Scotch-Brite® pad and acetone then rinse the surface well with soap and water. • Avoid prolonged exposure to excessive heat • Do not cut directly on the surface. • Avoid contact with drain cleaners, oven cleaners, paint removers/ strippers etc. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susceptible to stains and water damage (can warp and crack) • Can burn • If not disinfected can have bacteria build up • When treated with a polyurethane paint small scratches can appear on the work surface. These can be reduced by the use of a wax based furniture polish. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If unfinished – apply mineral oil weekly. Use sandpaper on scratches and scorches • If finished – clean with a damp cloth and mild cleanser • It is important to note that the installation of solid worktops must allow for movement of the timber. • As a natural product consistency of grain and colour cannot always be guaranteed. |