

Impact-worthy WORK SURFACES

CHOOSE A COUNTERTOP THAT NOT ONLY SUITS THE LOOK AND STYLE OF YOUR KITCHEN OR BATHROOM SCHEME, BUT IS A PRACTICAL OPTION FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE TOO

Bespoke kitchen with brass worktop and splashback, Sustainable Kitchens



BOLD AS BRASS

For those who want to make a real statement, then a metallic worktop could be the way to go. While stainless steel designs are commonly found in industrial chef's kitchens, brass or copper are warmer, more stylish options to incorporate into the home. Naturally, these surfaces have antimicrobial properties, which make them a good option for a kitchen or a bathroom, though they are destined to acquire a patina over time and therefore will need regular polishing in order to maintain a gleaming appearance.

Cotswold prep kitchen finished in Pippy Oak, starting at £40,000, Humphrey Munson



“THERE ARE MANY OPTIONS TO ACHIEVE YOUR DREAM KITCHEN LOOK; HOWEVER, IT'S ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTAND THE PRACTICAL BENEFITS OF EACH SURFACE”

DOYEON KIM, MARKETING ASSOCIATE, STARON

RUSTIC WOOD

A firm favourite in farmhouse-style kitchens, solid oak worktops bring charm and warmth. 'We often specify a solid oak top for a prep table,' says Peter Humphrey, design director and founder of Humphrey Munson. Bear in mind that heat and humidity can impact wood. 'As a rule, wood and water do not mix, so always specify quartz or stone for a sink area,' he adds.

Antique worktop, from £970sq m, Lundhs



HARDY STONE

'When choosing a real stone surface do consider that each piece is unique and therefore can vary in its appearance,' says Hege Lundh, marketing director at Lundhs. This can bring an element of individuality to your space - they are highly heat-resistant and extremely durable too. These benefits are reflected in the price you'll need to pay.

Evolve worktop and matching upstand, price on request, Bushboard



LOW-KEY LAMINATE

Laminate work surfaces are more affordable and easier to install, but less robust than other materials. However, today's premium finishes can be a good solution, particularly for areas such as utility rooms. This 12.5mm marble-effect design by Bushboard showcases a wraparound finish on an undermounted sink and bespoke drainer grooves.

CREATIVE COMPOSITES

Thanks to modern technologies, engineered solid surfaces can mimic traditional materials and be made to fit your exact requirements with a seamless finish. These surfaces are usually made of a mixture of acrylics and natural stones - which make them extremely hard wearing, easy to clean and highly heat- and scratch-resistant. You'll need a trained specialist to install a composite worktop, which can add to the cost.



Supreme Flux solid surface, from £350sq m, Staron

3 OF THE BEST SOAP DISPENSERS

Top your new work surface with a decorative reusable design



1 A by Amara ridged glass soap dispenser, £20, Amara 2 Grey stoneware soap dispenser and tumbler set, £47, Beaumonde 3 Faux shagreen soap dispenser, £95, Oka

FEATURE YVETTE MURRELL



QUALITY QUARTZ

Probably one of the most popular choices of worktops in kitchens and bathrooms, quartz is a non-porous, low-maintenance and long-lasting surface. You can find finishes that replicate the look of granite, marble and concretes, so the drawbacks are minimal. However, it is worth noting that quartz tends to have a more contemporary appearance, be more expensive than these types of material and will require specialist installation.

Need to know... Planning & fitting

■ **BUILD IT INTO YOUR BUDGET** Worktops can take up a significant amount of your total spend, so have a think about what you can afford early on in the planning process. It may be that you choose two types of surface - such as a practical quartz around the edges of your kitchen and a standout marble or wood for a central island, to balance your budget.

■ **SEE SAMPLES IN PERSON** It's important to see your chosen worktop material in person before committing. If opting for a natural marble or granite, try visiting a stone merchant. 'Not only will you be able to select the exact piece of stone, the expertise of the team will ensure you are selecting the best material and finish for your home,' says Hege Lundh.

■ **CALL IN THE EXPERTS** You'll most likely need to bring a specialist installer on board, who will be able to measure up, cut in tap holes or drainage grooves, then fit the worktop securely into place. 'Don't forget to consider upstands,' adds Peter Humphrey. 'If the sink is in front of a window, consider running the worktops up and into the sill to create a seamless finish.'



Edinburgh undermount open washstand, £1,435, Neptune

“WHEN CHOOSING A WORK SURFACE, IT'S VITAL THAT YOU USE REAL-LIFE SAMPLES OR BETTER YET, GO AND SEE THE EXACT SLAB OF STONE FOR YOURSELF”

HEGE LUNDH, MARKETING DIRECTOR, LUNDHS

Langton kitchen in Mink and Putty, from £18,000, Burbidge

LUXURIOUS MARBLE

Beautiful to look at and cool to touch, marble is highly desirable. 'It's one of our favourite countertop options,' says Claire Birkbeck, kitchen designer at Neptune Bath. 'Carrara marble, with its subtle grey veining, is always timeless.' In a kitchen, it is great for rolling out dough, and in bathrooms it can emulate the look of a luxury spa. However, take care maintaining an authentic marble worktop to prevent staining.