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SPOTLIGHT

Working Hard



A light grey Corian worktop and a brushed steel cantilevered island create this contemporary kitchen decor. Prices start from £2,000 for the worktop. (enmasseinteriors.co.uk)

KITCHEN WORKTOPS

A kitchen worktop is a major investment which, hopefully, will serve you well for years to come. Consider your needs before you make a purchase. For example, how often will it be used and how simple is it to clean and maintain? Your choice of materials is important.

Measure up carefully. Ideally, the worktop should slightly overhang the units, as this will prevent any spillages running down cupboards. A thin profile will add a sense of sophistication, while a chunkier worktop suggests quality.

Timber is a classic choice and comes in many varieties, from maple and oak to beech and walnut. Naturally warm and attractive, it will last a long time and improve with age but requires regular maintenance. Laminate is popular and cost effective, simple to install and available in a wide range of colours, designs and finishes, from matt to gloss. Made from high-density chipboard and coated in plastic laminate, it can mimic other effects like wood and granite to fit any decor, but is not as heat resistant as other materials.

Stainless steel is a hygienic, durable and stain-resistant option. Although easy to clean, it can be noisy and will scratch over time. For anyone wanting to create a cosy atmosphere in their kitchen, this more clinical material may not be ideal.

Granite and quartz are strong and durable. Granite is natural and easy to clean but is porous so it will need to be sealed occasionally. Quartz is a man-made engineered stone formed by combining ground quartz (a natural hard mineral) with resins, polymers and pigments. This forms a hard non-porous surface that works particularly well in modern schemes, but can be expensive.

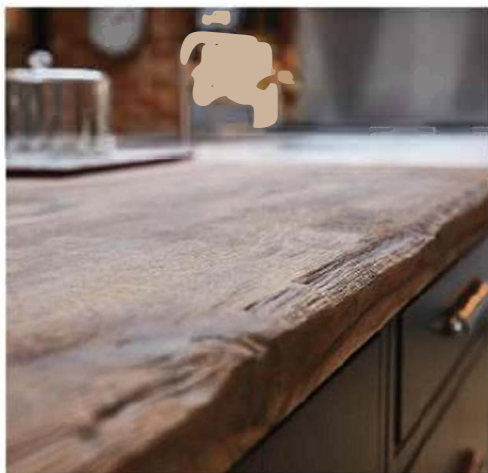
Alternative options include HI-MACS, a sustainable composition of acrylic, minerals and natural pigments which form a strong, smooth and seamless surface, available in a wide range of colours. Similarly, Corian is synthetic. Made from acrylic resins, it can be moulded to any shape and is sleek and hygienic. Although stain resistant, it can scratch over time, so bear this in mind if your worktop will be in constant use.



Above: The Fenix NTM worktop has a lacquered appearance; soft to touch and easy to clean. It is shown here in Bromine Grey as part of the Mood kitchen which is priced from £10,000. (scavolini.design)



Left: The Lundhs Antique worktop is made from Anorthosite. Naturally heat, scratch, water, UV and stain resistant, it is priced from £970 per sqm. (lundhsrealstone.com)



Above: Bespoke kitchens from the Main Company start from £25,000 and are available with a variety of worktop styles, including reclaimed oak and stainless steel, encaustic tiles, and zinc, as pictured here. (maincompany.com)

Right: These stainless steel surfaces from Franke are available in PureSteel and FineSteel, in thicknesses from the ultra-slim 4mm. Shown here is the PearlFinish worktop. Price on application. (franke.co.uk)

Below: Caesarstone quartz worktops are shown here in Excava, priced from £800 per sqm, and Topus Concrete, priced from £550 per sqm. Caesarstone is a durable surface, impervious to stains, scratches and cracks, and highly heat and cold resistant. (caesarstone.co.uk)



Below: Carboton laminate worktop contains an in-built Kaelo champagne cooler. Price on application. (kitchensinternational.co.uk)



Above: This worktop and splashback are made from Neolith, a sintered stone consisting of a mixture of minerals and natural oxides. Shown in Calatarao, featuring an intense dark grey colour and shiny golden veins, it is available in a Silk finish in a variety of sizes and thicknesses. Price on application. (neolith.com)



Above: The Bianco Macaubas Quartzite worktop is part of the Metallics Collection kitchen. Harder than granite with rich, marble-like veining, it works well here with a moulded sink. Price on application. (ledburystudio.com)