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FOCUS ON

Worktops

*Make kitchen surfaces a standout feature or a subtle presence.
Find a material and look you'll love with our guide*

BEST FOR DIYING ↓

Ideal for revamping your kitchen, this work surface can be cut to length and the edges covered with the strips included, so you can easily size it to fit. Its top layer of oak gives it interesting individual grain and colour variations. Particleboard beneath the timber makes the design less sensitive to kitchen humidity. Skogså oak worktop, £200 for L246cm, Ikea



← **BEST FOR A MARBLE LOOK**

This quartz design has the appearance of marble with the durability and minimal care requirements of a composite material. This version is exquisitely detailed, while the rest of the collection – inspired by the soft tones of sweeping clouds – offers alternative veining and details. Milan Macchiato, from £280 per m², Cirrus collection, Radianz



BEST FOR → **STONE FANS**

If you like individuality in your kitchen, natural granite delivers as each slab is different. Granite worktops stay looking good for years, so are a sound investment. The polished finish of this Spanish granite maximises light reflection. Azul Aran polished granite, £906 per m², 1909 Kitchens



THREE TOP TIPS

Think care requirements and durability as well as appearance to make the best choice

MATERIAL CONCERNS

Laminate is inexpensive and can look like other surfaces, while solid wood is characterful and can be affordable. Natural granite and marble are luxurious and each worktop is unique, but they're priced accordingly. Quartz – made from natural stone plus man-made materials – is easy to clean and durable. Man-made solid surfaces can be moulded seamlessly, but they're costly.

KEEP SMART

Laminate is easy to clean, but damage can't be repaired. Wood requires regular oiling but can be sanded and refinished if marked. Quartz is stain resistant and doesn't need sealing, while solid surfaces are non-porous and wipe clean. Stone should be sealed and can be damaged by acids in food or the wrong cleaner. A trivet will stop heat damaging your worktop.

DIY OR GSI?

If you're sufficiently handy and confident in your skills, you could fit a wood or laminate worktop yourself to save money. Stone, quartz and solid surfaces will require you to get someone in for a professional installation. Bear in mind that a stone like granite is heavy, so cabinets must offer sufficient support.



BEST FOR ← EASY CARE

A mild detergent is all that's required to keep this quartz worktop looking as good as new because the surface is non-porous. This pale shade will help keep a kitchen light and bright, but there's a choice of 38 colours in all as well as the option of 20 or 30mm depth. Regency White, from £250 per m², CRL Stone



BEST FOR SUBTLE SHEEN

This gloss laminate has the appearance of natural slate at a budget price, and will look smart when teamed with white units in a classic monochrome scheme. Combine it with the matching upstand or a simple black and white tiled splashback. Black slate-effect worktop, £83 for W60xL300cm, Wickes



↑ BEST FOR A CONCRETE LOOK

This understated worktop creates the contemporary style of concrete at a great price. It's available in lengths up to 5.2 metres, and thicknesses from 1.3 to 9.8cm, so you can choose from a super slim or more substantial-looking preparation surface. Concrete structure laminate worktop, from around £150 per metre, Rational



BEST FOR ← A NATURAL FINISH

An oak work surface will bring gentle warmth to a kitchen – and can be an attractive contrast to pale painted units or sleek man-made cabinetry. Properly cared for, it will age beautifully, too, and can be sanded and refinished if necessary. Deluxe oak (on island), from around £215; standard oak, £125, both for a W62xL200cm top, Worktop Express

FINISHING TOUCHES

Complement your worktop with a splashback in a different material, or continue it into an upstand



CLASSIC PATTERN

Metro tiles have a timeless style you'll stay in love with. Metro Aqua bevel-edged ceramic tiles, £15.99 per m², Tile Mountain



BLOCK COLOUR

Try a panel that's a breeze to wipe down in a stunning shade. Totally Teal, from £109 for a W60xL90cm panel, AluSplash



SEAMLESS STYLE

Match work and wall surface for a sleek look. Solid surface in Mist, £250 per m for 2.5cm worktop, £165 per m² for 12mm splashback option, Mistral