



Guidance for Selecting Countertops

Countertops play two critical roles in the kitchen. The first is functional. We understand that countertops are used for preparing meals, baking and as spaces for storing kitchen equipment and utensils. Equally important is the aesthetic role that countertops play.

When working with a designer or selecting a countertop on your own, here are several key factors to consider to help assure that the product you choose makes you smile every time you walk into and use your kitchen.

- Take a holistic view of the kitchen. Countertops, cabinets, appliances, faucets, sinks and hardware need to be in tune with one another. No one component of the kitchen should stand alone. The components need to connect with one another.
- How countertops make a kitchen look and feel is determined by the material, texture, color, style, form and shape. The way that countertops contrast or compliment other elements has an impact too. We always ask clients, "What message do you want your countertops to convey, and what emotions do you want the space to evoke?"
- Material will impact how easy the surface is to clean and maintain. The most popular materials that we specify for clients are:
 - **Granite:** It's versatile, tough and offers an almost infinite palate of colors and styles. Granite is easy to maintain and it will last a lifetime.
 - **Engineered Stone:** Products such as Zodiaq and Silestone function and perform in a similar fashion to granite. They are heat and scratch resistant and easy to maintain. The materials will last a lifetime, don't stain and offer an almost unlimited spectrum of colors, textures and styles.

- **Stainless Steel:** Professional chefs gravitate to stainless steel, in part, because it is impervious to bacteria and heat. Stainless steel requires more maintenance because of its propensity to scratch and show water spots and fingerprints. We often specify stainless steel countertops for clients that want commercial-styled appliances and plumbing fixtures.
- **Butcher Block:** This is a surface that represents good value if you like the aesthetic. It's versatile and can work in both traditional and contemporary kitchens. Butcher block can scratch and regularly needs to be treated. Also, it is not impervious to heat.
- **Soapstone:** This material also has a broad range of stylistic options from contemporary to traditional like butcher block it also requires regular oil applications. Soapstone also is resistant to stains, but it can be more difficult and costly to maintain because fixing cracks can be expensive.
- **Solid Surface:** Materials such as Corian, Formica and Staron are examples of solid surface countertops. They offer great ranges for colors and finishes and require minimal maintenance.
- **Concrete:** There are no limitations on concrete countertops. You can create custom textures, colors, shapes and surfaces. They are environmentally friendly and heat resistant. They typically require more maintenance because they need to be sealed to protect the surface from stains, water and heat damage. The cost ranges from moderate to luxury depending on the amount of customization.

If you have questions about the countertops that will be perfect for your kitchen, please give our showroom a call at 734-426-3852 or email us at kbarthauer@dexterbuilders.com