



Hints & advice
for a **successful**
countertop project

We install thousands of countertops each year, yet this will probably be a distinct, unfamiliar and unique experience for you. With this in mind, we have assembled some helpful information below to help you to set expectations for your countertops and to ensure you make the right investment.

NOT ALL WALLS ARE STRAIGHT

Hard to believe, but walls can be bowed while backsplashes are straight. While we can make up a certain degree of the difference with caulking and alteration, we can't always compensate for wall imperfections.



Bowing wall



Bow corrected with caulk

CAULKING MAY SINK

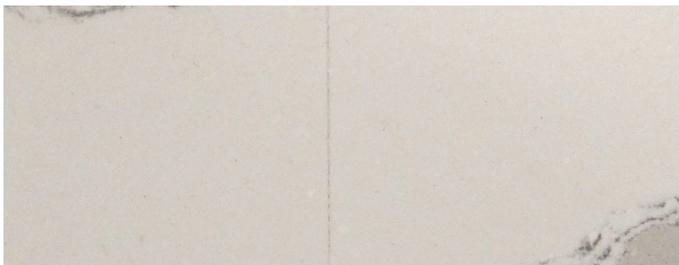
Gravity affects everything. Including caulk. When we are caulking in edges we are basically filling in a trench. During the drying process, there is a chance that gravity will pull the caulk into the trench (no matter how tight) and it may sink. Our technicians will be happy to leave behind a partial tube of caulk that was used on your countertop so you can easily re-caulk the gap if necessary.



Sunken caulk

SEAM STANDARDS

Industry standards for stone seams are 1/8th of an inch. We try to attain 1/16th of an inch seams for our customers. Aesthetically, this means that it may be visible to the eye and you will be able to feel it. To make sure that you are satisfied with your final product, we make seam layouts available to you. Ask your design professional to preview yours to see where the seams will be located on your countertops.



Acceptable seam



Superior seam

WHY WE OFFSET THE BACKSPLASH

Often edge profiles like rounded, bullnose and even slightly beveled extend out from the surface. In these cases, we offset the backsplash from the edge to eliminate any gaps that might occur should we go out further. If you prefer to have your backsplash flush with the edge profile, ask your templater about our Stop Edge Treatment options.



BIG PATTERNS MEAN TOUGH MATCHING

Large veins and big patterns running through a surface can provide a dramatic visual effect. Just be aware that these large patterns mean matching the design with backsplashes of the same design is almost impossible. While we do our best and can provide a preview of how the pieces will line up through our SlabSmith imaging system, a lot of it has to do with subjective look and what we can accomplish without using multiple slabs and making your project three times more expensive. Request a SlabSmith layout from your designer for an idea of how the pattern will flow in your project. While we are not able to make all patterns line up perfectly, we will do our very best to get final results that you will be happy with.



As you can see with even a small veined product, we can match up one vein, but the others will be off. It is the nature of the product.

TOPS REMOVED NEAR TILE BACKSPLASH

Typically, when tile backsplash is installed, it is meant as a permanent solution. While the countertops can still be replaced, it is not a small job and there may be an additional charge that will need to be quoted. We take every precaution with removal, unfortunately, there is no guarantee that we will be able to remove the existing top without causing some damage to the existing tile. Our teams will take care to make that damage as minimal as possible or at least let you know what you might expect when it is finished.



TEXTURED FINISHES

Textured finishes offer a beautiful and unique alternative to polished finishes. Due to the fact that these products are made from natural materials, they are subject to variations in color, shade and grain structure. No two installations are exactly the same, as each slab can contain a range of inconsistencies that are not present in samples, such as channels, dips, ridges, depressions and indentations.



SURFACES AT A GLANCE

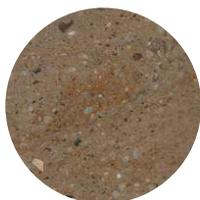
Match the product to your needs

Invariably, we install organic materials like marble and granite, and customers were never informed about the characteristics of natural stone. They have imperfections. They have fissures. They do stain. If you look at these as “character” in the surface, then you have a match. If you are looking for a more uniform and durable surface, you might consider quartz. Regardless, never make a selection from a small sample! Whenever possible, you should view a larger piece or slab of your selection.



LAMINATE Developed in 1912, laminate quickly became known for its durability and economical price point for home usage in the 60’s housing boom.

- Plastic impregnated paper in nature
- Durable to a degree
- Can be cut / chipped
- Susceptible to hot surfaces - can melt
- Can be perceived as old fashioned



SOLID SURFACE Corian is the best known name in this category of acrylic polymer surfaces.

- Color and consistency throughout the surface
- Durable to a degree, although heat sensitive
- Can be cut / chipped, but can also be sanded out and repaired



WOOD TOPS Nothing adds warmth and natural beauty to a kitchen quite like wood countertops.

- Natural product, so color consistency can vary widely
- Has to be maintained
- Can weather
- Caribou technology prevents staining, warping and intensive maintenance



GRANITE The look of luxury for decades.

- Natural product, so color and consistency can vary widely; including color, fissures, and imperfections
- Has to be maintained and sealed
- Susceptible to wine and oil staining



MARBLE While a natural stone, marble is a softer material and may not be suitable for all applications.

- Extremely soft surfaces and will scratch and stain
- Natural product, so color and consistency can vary widely; including color, fissures and imperfections
- Has to be maintained and sealed
- Susceptible to staining
- Best suited for low traffic areas or non-countertop applications



QUARTZ The new look of luxury, surfaces made of quartz can represent natural stone with more durability.

- Harder than granite
- Non-porous
- Color and pattern has less variance than natural stone
- Virtually stain proof
- No sealing
- As heat resistant as granite



PORCELAIN These ultra-compact materials are at the leading edge of technology.

- Waterproof
- Larger slab sizes
- Exterior & flooring applications
- Harder than granite & non-porous
- Color and pattern has less variance than natural stone
- Virtually stain proof
- No sealing
- As heat resistant as granite

	Scratch Resistance	Stain Resistance	Heat Resistance	Easy to Maintain	Pricing
Laminate	*	*	*	*	\$
Solid Surface	*	**	**	**	\$\$
Caribou Wood Tops	*	***	**	***	\$\$\$
Granite	**	*	**	*	\$\$-\$\$\$\$
Marble	*	*	*	**	\$\$-\$\$\$\$
Quartz	***	***	**	***	\$\$-\$\$\$
Porcelain	***	***	***	***	\$\$-\$\$\$