

1. Target Keyword: replacing kitchen countertops

Page Title: Replacing Kitchen Countertops - 5 Things to Keep in Mind

Replacing kitchen countertops is a fun endeavor - at least at first. If you begin with a clear idea of the features you want in a countertop, or better yet the exact countertop you want, you'll find that replacing kitchen countertops is a relatively easy endeavor. It can help to start by asking yourself why you're replacing your current countertops - is it the dated look, or are they in bad shape? Then, consider the following 5 countertop features as you shop around:

1. **Appearance.** This is a no-brainer - no matter how useful a countertop is, if you don't like its appearance it's a non-starter. When choosing based on appearance, be sure to consider not just what the rough material looks like, but also how it will coordinate with the rest of your home, especially the kitchen. Unless you have a very specific look in mind (such as stainless steel countertops), try to choose a material or brand with plenty of style options. [HanStone Quartz](#) can create unique looks for every kitchen.
2. **Functionality.** Spills, drops, hot pots, and wet surfaces are a fact of cooking, especially if you have kids in the kitchen. Some countertops, like wood, stain easily, while others, like linoleum, warp in response to high temperatures. If you use your kitchen a lot, be sure to pick a countertop that can keep up with your heavy usage.
3. **Upkeep.** Let's face it; you probably don't want to install countertops that will require frequent upkeep. Annually re-sealing granite countertops can get annoying, as can polishing or re-finishing wood countertops, or cleaning the grout in tile.
4. **Add-ons and details.** Once you've chosen a material and model for your new kitchen countertops, you can decide on the finishing touches like edge styles and thickness. Add-ons are usually dependent upon budget - you'll have to pay more to get a unique look, but many people find that trade-off worthwhile.
5. **Budget and value.** While you want to avoid countertops that are out of your budget, adding a countertop that's in demand can help you recoup the costs down the road. Additionally, durable materials help you save money in the long run thanks to the fact that they won't need to be replaced as often as less hardy countertops. Materials like granite and quartz are highly valued by homeowners, and because of their classic look and durability, that will continue to be true into the foreseeable future.

What's your biggest concern when replacing kitchen countertops? Share in the comments.

2. Target Keyword: Outdoor countertops, outdoor kitchen countertops

Page Title: Outdoor Countertops: Things to Keep in Mind

Oh, the weather outside is frightful, but that doesn't mean you can't sit around the fire and dream of summer on your lovely deck. As you dream, consider what you'll need in 2014 to make the season extra special, like awesome outdoor countertops for all your cooking and entertaining needs. Here's what to keep in mind as you shop around.

How Will It Be Used?

A countertop isn't just a tool for preparing food. It can become the center of an outdoor event, allowing your family or guests to mingle comfortably while having access to food, drinks, toys, games, and much more. If you have a full kitchen on your deck, your needs will be different than if you just use the countertop to pour drinks or hold food at potlucks. Of course, you never know what home improvement adventures you might embark on in a few years, so it's best to err on the side of getting something that does more than what you think you'll need.

Durability

Durability is an important feature for anything you use in your house, but it's doubly important for anything that stays outside. The following features are key:

- *Easy to clean* - Outdoor countertops face lots of dirt, leaves, and water on top of normal kitchen messes. Anything with lots of grooves, like concrete or mosaic countertops, can be a challenge to keep clean.
- *Weather-resistant* - Between storms, temperature changes, and humidity, outdoor kitchen countertops need to be able to stand up to the elements. Choose a countertop that is resistant to mold and mildew that can grow after a storm, or to collecting morning dew on a regular basis. In addition, make sure to choose a countertop that retains its form in the case of temperature changes - wood can shrink or expand depending on the temperature and humidity levels.

Some Design Ideas

A deck countertop can be home to some very useful features as well as unique designs. Possibilities include:

- An outdoor sink for hand- and dish-washing
- A bar so that the counter can be used for seating and dining in addition to food preparation
- Cupboards under the countertop to hold outdoor dishes and cutlery, towels, aprons, and grilling supplies

- Different shapes geared for different uses - an L-shaped countertop can be great for serving guests food and drinks straight from the grill or stovetop, while a smaller, square counter might be useful for just a bit of extra space when grilling.

What's your favorite summertime backyard activity? Share in the comments.

3. Target Keyword: cleaning stainless steel sinks

Page Title: Cleaning Stainless Steel Sinks: 6 Tips 'n Tricks

The kitchen sink can easily become one of the ickiest places in your house, especially if you let dishes sit in it for long periods of time. The moist, warm environment can easily facilitate the growth of bacteria and just look plain gross. It's important to clean your sink often to keep it sanitary, and to clean it correctly to keep it aesthetically pleasing. Here are 6 tips 'n tricks to keep in mind as you clean your sink, courtesy of [Apartment Therapy](#):

1. Let's start with **what not to do** when cleaning stainless steel sinks: Never use chlorine bleach, steel wool, or abrasive sponges. Abrasives can cause unsightly scratching, while bleach can cause corrosion. Instead, use soft cloths or sponges and a dedicated stainless steel cleaner.
2. **Work with the grain.** Your sink will naturally accumulate some scratches over time, which will eventually give the sink a unique look. However, there's no reason to intentionally interrupt the finish when cleaning stainless steel sinks. Work with the grain as you clean and you'll go a long way towards preserving the finish.
3. **Use a toothbrush.** When cleaning stainless steel sinks, you'll need something more precise than a cloth or sponge to reach areas like the caulk seal and the grooves around the drain. A toothbrush dipped in your cleaning material is the easiest way to achieve this.
4. **Clean the garbage disposal.** What's the point of having a clean sink if the disposal underneath is dirty? To keep your garbage disposal working well and smelling fresh, you can put cleaner or vinegar and baking soda down the garbage disposal, accompanied by hot water. For a fresh smell, add half a lemon or lime to the garbage disposal, then run it with the water on.
5. **Polish after cleaning.** Using a soft cloth and rubbing gently, you can restore your sink to its original shine.
6. **Keep it clean and dry.** The best way to keep sink cleaning manageable is to perform regular maintenance. To avoid the accumulation of water spots, dab the sink dry after use. To keep it clean on a day-to-day basis, make sure it's clear of

dishes and food each night. Salt and acid from food can be corrosive to the sink. Additionally, messes like food spills and dishes are much easier to clean as soon as they occur rather than later down the road!

Do you have a unique kitchen cleaning tip? Share in the comments.

4. Target Keyword: quartz countertop

Page Title: Sprucing Up Your Quartz Countertop for the Holidays: 4 Ideas

Ah, the holidays. Great food, warm nights by the fireside, and plenty of time with family and friends... plus spending most of your time indoors in a house crowded with more decorations and people than usual. No matter what size your kitchen is, you'll probably find yourself spending a lot of time in the kitchen over the holidays, whether it's baking cookies or getting holiday meals together. To make those long holiday days more manageable, start off the season with these 4 tips for sprucing up your quartz countertop:

1. **Get it cleaned and organized** - More than any other time, kitchens can get crowded during the holidays, especially if you have decorations intruding on valuable kitchen space. We suggest that you take some time before the holiday season even starts to get your kitchen in order. Use key organizational tools like spice racks, pot and pan hangers, and in-cupboard organizers to create more space in your kitchen. The beginning of the holidays is also a good time to do a deep kitchen cleaning, but since quartz countertops are so low-maintenance, you won't have to focus too much on cleaning the counters themselves.
2. **Make a centerpiece** - The beautiful hues of a quartz countertop go very well with the deep greens, vibrant reds, and catchy metallic colors associated with the holiday season. With either fresh branches and berries or artificial ones, try putting together a lovely holiday centerpiece. When choosing between holiday colors and plants, try to choose shades that will go well with your counter. You can use a holiday centerpiece on your countertop just as you would flowers during other times of the year.
3. **Add functional accents** - Instead of putting up decorations that merely catch the eye, you can use functional countertop decorations. Seasonal candy trays and cookie jars allow you to put all your holiday treats in a themed container. In addition, consider swapping out normal kitchen accents for holiday ones - serving trays, towels, placemats, and even plates can all be changed seasonally to great effect.

4. **Get crafty** - A HanStone Quartz countertop is the perfect place for holiday creativity, which can in turn be used for decoration. If you have children at home, spend an afternoon painting, gluing, and glittering some decorations for use in the kitchen, tree, and house. For easy clean-up, just tape some butcher paper to the counter prior to starting your activities.

What are your holiday decorating traditions? Share in the comments!

5. Target Keyword: kitchen countertop

Page Title: Chicken & Egg Conundrum: At What Point in a Renovation Should You Think About a Kitchen Countertop?

If you're blessed with an unusual visual imagination, you might start out a renovation with an exact picture in your mind's eye of what the end product will look like. If you're like most people, though, a renovation is an ongoing creative process involving a large amount of research and shopping.

The kitchen countertop is the most visible and frequently used item in the kitchen, so it's important that it be attractive and high-quality. But how do you decide exactly which countertop is right for your kitchen? It's a classic "Chicken and Egg" dilemma: Should the countertop you have in mind for your kitchen inform the rest of the layout and design, or should the kitchen design help you decide what sort of countertop to get?

Our Verdict

After seeing many clients go through the process of choosing a kitchen countertop, we'd have to say that it all depends on where you're starting from. Some people start out knowing they want a certain type of countertop - maybe you've been frustrated with your grout lines for years, and want something like quartz that will be easy to clean. On the other hand, maybe you've been dreaming about new floors, islands, and appliances without giving any thought to the specific kitchen countertop.

If you already have something in mind for your kitchen, start wherever that is and work from there. But if you have no idea where to begin, we'd recommend starting with the countertop as an inspiration.

When & How to Shop

We've all had that friend who charges head-first into a home renovation, thinking to

hammer out the details later, only to stall once the initial excitement wears off. Maybe you've even been that person. To stave off stagnation, you need a clear plan for what's going to happen. So start shopping for your countertop before you start the actual renovation, but after you've made an overarching plan for the kitchen.

As you shop, keep these three important things in mind:

- *Price and value* - It's common for newer homeowners to make the mistake of choosing a lower-cost option at the cost of quality, only to find they soon need to replace the entire thing. When it comes to home renovations, always err on the side of value.
- *Upkeep* - It's easy to be attracted to a beautiful counter without considering what the upkeep will be like.
- *Scale* - Sometimes what looks great on a small sample can be overwhelming over a larger amount of space; this is especially true of bold colors.

If you don't know where to start with a kitchen countertop or a renovation in general, it may be time to ask for the opinion of an expert. [Click here](#) to schedule a consultation.

6. Target Keyword: what is quartz

Page Title: What is Quartz? A Little History

Quartz countertops are rapidly gaining popularity, but most people who buy them have no idea what they really are. At Leeza, we think that the composition and story of quartz is quite fascinating and never miss an opportunity to share, so without further ado we bring you.... Quartz!

The Mineral

Before we get into the history of quartz countertops, let's discuss what it's made of in a little more detail:

- For you chemistry geeks out there, it is composed of silicone and oxygen, with the chemical formula SiO_2
- Quartz is the second most abundant mineral in the earth's crust
- It is the third-hardest material on Earth, which gives countertops their unparalleled strength and durability
- Pure quartz is white and translucent, but some varieties are colored, and a few forms of quartz are actually semi-precious stones (amethyst and rose quartz are both quartz varieties)

The Countertop

It's technically possible to make quartz countertops by quarrying whole slabs of the mineral, as is done for granite countertops. However, what most people want is an engineered quartz countertop. While granite countertops are limited to what occurs in nature, quartz countertops can be made to have almost any appearance, so there's a lot of variation in terms of color, consistency, and luster. Engineered quartz countertops are made by combining:

- Crushed quartz
- About 5% polymer resin
- Dye
- Reflective material like glass (optional) to create a sparkle

This process creates the durable, non-porous surface that quartz is known for. The end product requires very little upkeep. In addition, because the process is industrial and uniform, there are no inconsistencies across large swabs of countertop.

The History

The mineral itself has an interesting history. It is thought that English inherited the word "quartz" from German. The mineral is significant in the folklore and material culture of many areas worldwide, including Aboriginal Australia, Ireland, and East Asia. Like jade, quartz can be carved into jewelry and delicate vessels. On the other end of the spectrum, it can be used as a stone tool.

As you can see from knowing about the production process, engineered quartz countertops couldn't be made until long after industrialism had really taken off. Modern engineered quartz countertops [originated](#) in Italy in the 1960s, where the company Breton kicked off the whole industry. It wasn't until the 1990s, though, that quartz really began to take hold, first in Europe and then in North America.

7. Target Keyword: countertop materials, granite vs. quartz

Page Title: Countertop Materials: The Truth Behind Imported Chinese Granite

Of all the countertop materials in the world, granite looms large in the public consciousness. It's seen as a beautiful luxury material that is also functional. Granite countertops can add value to a home, and their unique appearance adds beauty. Because granite forms naturally over a long period of time, each slab of granite varies

slightly based on its exact composition.

Most granite comes from other parts of the world, including Brazil, India, and Africa. Chinese granite imports are especially common, and granite from China has the advantage of being less expensive than granite from most other areas of the world.

Features of Chinese Granite

An expert can tell what part of the world a slab of granite is from just by examining it. While there will of course be variation within regions, white granite with gray specks is normally found in China.

Social and Environmental Impact

In the developed world, workers' rights, mining regulations, and environmental standards have been won in response to problems that have arisen. For example, practices like strip mining are more heavily regulated than they once were, as workers are entitled to safe workplace environments even in typically dangerous industries such as mining.

In the debate of granite vs. quartz, it's not possible to say whether either stone inherently has a bigger social and environmental impact than the other - but it is possible to say that quartz is usually supplied from countries with better regulations than China, such as Brazil and the United States.

Quality

Imported Chinese granite has the same downsides that any type of granite has:

- Porous material
- Needs annual sealing
- Cannot place hot pots and pans on it
- Cannot be easily replaced if damaged

While granite may be imported from China, it will generally be cut and finished closer to where it's ultimately sold. This is the part of the process where the quality of work matters, so consumers don't need to worry much about potential problems with the product itself.

The Bottom Line

Many people are satisfied with their Chinese imported granite counters, and see these countertops as a lower-cost way to get a great kitchen. However, given the potential impacts associated with this type of granite, you may or may not want to source your granite from another country.

The other option is to move away from granite altogether. Quartz has a very similar appearance to granite, but it doesn't have most of granite's downsides. While both materials have the downside of being quite heavy, quartz is lower-maintenance, heat-resistant, and can be easily replaced.

Where do you stand in the granite vs. quartz debate? Share in the comments!

8. Target Keyword: solid surface vs. quartz

Page Title: Solid Surface vs. Quartz: What You Need to Know

When you get beyond the most basic countertop materials, it's easy to become unclear on what everything refers to. Take solid surface vs. quartz - neither name fully describes what the countertop is made of, and if you look at samples you'll find that the appearance of both countertops is quite similar. We're here to clear up the confusion. Below, we'll explore the basic characteristics of each countertop, and point out the key ways in which they differ.

Solid Surface

Solid surface countertops are made of plastic polymer mixed with aluminum. With the use of dyes and the many types of plastic polymers available, there are endless design possibilities. Unlike other synthetic countertops, such as linoleum, solid surface has no chance of peeling because it is several inches thick, just like a natural stone countertop. This also allows solid surface counters to be re-polished, thus regaining their original shine and smoothness.

Quartz

Quartz is made from ground quartz combined with polymer resin; dyes and glass can be added to give different colors and finishes. Quartz is an extremely hard material naturally, and the addition of the polymer resin gives it strength and durability. Unlike natural stone countertops, engineered quartz counters are uniform throughout, making it easy for them to be manufactured in large slabs. Like solid surface, quartz can be given just about any appearance imaginable.

Key Differences

In some parts of the solid surface vs. quartz debate, the two materials come out even. Both quartz and solid surface are attractive and solid all the way through (unlike linoleum, which can peel). They are both non-porous and sanitary, making them ideal

for food preparation settings. The two countertops are often made to mimic granite, but they can take on many other appearances. There are some key differences, though:

- Solid surface is more prone to scratching
- Solid surface will become dull over time, and require polishing
- Quartz has virtually no upkeep
- Quartz has a natural shine that solid surface can mimic but not quite replicate

The final, and for many people the most significant, difference is price. Solid surface tends to cost significantly less than quartz. While its life is also shorter, this is the type of trade-off that's often worthwhile.

When it comes to choosing between solid surface vs. quartz, there is really no bad choice - just choices with different benefits.

Which countertop material do you prefer? Let us know in the comments!



9. Target Keyword: bathroom countertop options

Page Title: 5 Things to Keep in Mind When Evaluating Bathroom Countertop Options

It's time to remodel your bathroom! In many cases, a bathroom can be a relatively inexpensive room to remodel because so much less material is needed - just a small amount of flooring, paint, and countertop is needed. This can make getting a high-quality countertop very feasible. Be sure to keep these 5 things in mind as you start shopping:

1. **Overall appearance.** What a waste to choose a beautiful countertop which clashes with the rest of the bathroom. The "feel" of the counter should match the rest of the bathroom. Similarly, the colors of the decorations, bathroom floor, and fixtures should all go well together.
2. **Budget.** It is the trumpeting elephant in the room of any home improvement project. Your bathroom countertop options may be constrained by budget, but there are high-quality, budget-friendly options such as Staron Solid Surface. As we mentioned above, the relatively small amount of space covered by bathroom counters helps keep the cost down.
3. **Stain Resistance and general maintenance.** Porous materials easily acquire stains and other damage - a definite downside in bathrooms, where care products such as nail polish, hairspray, hair dye, and acetone are used on a regular basis. Quartz and solid surface are two non-porous bathroom countertop

options. On the flip side, tile (with grout) and wood are very porous. As an added advantage, non-porous counters are more hygienic, and don't harbor bacteria. You'll also want to choose a material that's easy to clean and doesn't require much upkeep. On the other hand, if you have a low-traffic bathroom more delicate bathroom countertop options like marble might be appropriate.

4. **The little things.** Once you choose a countertop, you'll be faced with a variety of decisions about the finishing touches, especially if you've chosen a stone or solid surface countertop. You'll need to make decisions like the style of the finish, the style of the edges, and the thickness of the material.
5. **Making big changes.** Most people replacing their bathroom countertop just want to replace the counter with a new material, but bigger renovations can create a whole new bathroom. Changes can be relatively simple, such as a sink with a unique shape. If you're really ambitious, you could expand the size of the whole bathroom to make room for a full-size, two-sink vanity.

New bathroom countertops are a great example of how a relatively small change can make a big difference in the appearance of a room. The countertop is often the first thing that catches the eye in a bathroom, and it's one of the most frequently used bathroom fixtures, so take your time and choose wisely. Happy shopping!

10. Target Keyword: solid surface countertops

Page Title: 5 Things to Keep in Mind When Shopping for Solid Surface Countertops

Is it just us, or is shopping the most fun part of renovation? Sure, it's satisfying to see your house get more and more beautiful, but what can beat the endless possibilities that are ahead of you when you're still in the shopping and planning phase? Below, we'll explore some of the biggest things to keep in mind as you shop for solid surface countertops:

1. **Color.** Staron solid surface countertops come in [just about any color imaginable](#), from deep, luscious Eggplant to stark Aspen Lily to warm Copper. If you already have some key fixtures in mind, it's a good idea to choose a color that matches. If you're starting a full re-haul with the counters, then you can choose a counter you love and choose everything else to match it.
2. **Consistency.** Many solid surface countertops are designed to look like granite, with the characteristic particulate. While this is the most common consistency, varieties with no particulate are available, as are varieties with a great deal of large particulate, made to resemble a countertop with many embedded pebbles.

This is mostly a matter of personal preference. If you have a pattern elsewhere in the room, such as a patterned backsplash, then a countertop with large particulate may clash.

3. **Other solid surface uses.** If you're getting a solid surface countertop, why stop there? Solid surface is a durable, beautiful, hygienic material. Some varieties make great stair treads. You can also ask your installer for an extra piece or two of solid surface to use as a cutting board (bonus: you can display this board on your countertop without ever worrying whether it matches). Solid surface sinks and bowls are available for a durable, easy-to-clean kitchen or bathroom sink.
4. **How it will age.** Solid surface countertops will accumulate small scratches over the years. Thanks to their thick surface, any scratches or dullness can be polished away, leaving the surface looking like new. If you're installing your countertop in an area that you know will receive a lot of traffic, you might want to go for lighter colors and/or countertops with large particulate.
5. **The need for professional installation.** There are many home improvement projects you can perform on your own, and doing so can be fun and budget-friendly. Installing solid surface countertops is not one of those projects. To stay under warranty, you will need to have a licensed fabricator install your countertop.

What's your biggest concern when shopping for countertops? Share in the comments!

11. Target Keyword: bathroom countertop options: double sink vanity tops

Page Title: Bathroom Countertop Options: Double Sink Vanity Tops Pros & Cons

It's time to chat about the pros and cons of one of our most popular bathroom countertop options: double sink vanity tops. We've seen many customers quite satisfied with their decision to install a double vanity, but it's worth looking at the potential downsides and upsides of any decision:

- **Con:** The single biggest problem with double sink vanity tops is the space issue. Unless your bathroom is quite large, you might not be able to fit in a double vanity at all, or it may feel confined if you can fit it. In most cases, we recommend having plenty of room with a single sink than feeling cramped with a double sink.
- **Con:** Difficulty of installation and fabrication. Installing a double vanity may involve some changes to the plumbing, making it a more expensive and labor-intensive process than just replacing a preexisting sink. However, this is only a

one-time cost. Fabrication, or the process of cutting and finishing the countertop, is also much more complicated (and expensive) because the fabricator must cut out two specially shaped holes.

- **Con:** Extra cleaning. Okay, we're stretching for cons here, but if you're the one who cleans the bathroom sink and counter and you absolutely hate it, then you might not want to add a second sink. If you're married, you might make a deal to each keep your own sink clean; however, you know how easily a deal like that can backfire.
- **Pro:** No traffic jams in the morning or nighttime - you and your partner are both free to brush, scrub, and wash to your heart's content. This is especially useful for households with a hectic morning ritual.
- **Pro:** Personal space! If you have the room available, nothing beats being able to spread out your toiletries and have as much drawer space as you want. This can end quite a few marital feuds - toothpaste squeezed from the top or bottom? Solid or liquid soap? With your newfound space, you don't have to worry about these issues.
- **Pro:** Personalization. With all that extra space, you not only have room to squeeze your toothpaste the way you want - you can completely make your side of the bathroom your own while still styling it in a manner similar to the rest of the bathroom.

So, what's the verdict in your home when it comes to bathroom countertop options: double sink vanity tops? Share in the comments!



12. Target Keyword: engineered countertops

Page Title: What the Heck Are Engineered Countertops?

"Engineered countertops?" Sounds like some sort of countertop made in a factory with entirely synthetic materials, or possibly the creation of a mad scientist with very mundane aspirations. In fact, engineered quartz countertops are made of around 95% natural quartz stone, combined with some key manmade materials to improve their appearance and functionality.

Production Process

The main component of engineered countertops is ground quartz, which is abundant in the Earth's crust. Common sources of quartz include Brazil and the United States. Most quartz used in countertops is of a white-ish, opaque color. Polymer resin makes up about 5% of the mixture, and it serves to bond the quartz and create a strong, durable surface. Dye is added for color. If a shiny countertop is desired, then a reflective substance such as ground glass may be added.

After being manufactured, quartz countertops are fabricated into slabs of the correct size, thickness, and shape. In addition, the final touches, such as an edge design, will be performed during this part.

Because quartz countertops are engineered, they can be made into large slabs, known as Jumbo Slabs, suitable for kitchen and island counters. In contrast, quarried stone like granite is difficult to get in such large quantities, and tends to be very expensive.

Appearance

Most engineered countertops look similar to granite countertops, but have significant functional advantages over granite. Common colors include tones like blacks and grays, browns and tans, and creams and whites. However, quartz countertops can be dyed any conceivable color during the production process, ranging from naturally occurring granite colors like light pink and blue, to colors that are more imaginative. If you're set on a color you don't see offered, you can actually have it custom dyed to your specifications.

Depending on how much the quartz is ground, the consistency of the countertop will vary. Some types have very large chunks of stone, others tiny specks, while others are uniform throughout. Quartz countertops can have a shiny, glossy, or matte finish.

Key Features

Engineered countertops are:

- Non-porous, which means that they are resistant to mold, mildew, and bacteria
 - Easy to clean with just a soft cloth and a gentle cleaner
 - Easy to replace because they are produced in uniform batches
 - Very hard, thanks to quartz's natural features, and very durable thanks to the addition of polymer resin
 - Highly customizable in terms of color, finish, and size
 - Comparable in price to or less expensive than granite
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13. Target Keyword: engineered quartz

Page Title: The 411 on Engineered Quartz

At LEEZA, we're exceptionally proud of the beautiful Hanstone Quartz we sell - some people might even call us obsessed. Why are we so enthusiastic? Read on to find out!

Production & Fabrication

Quartz is the second-most abundant mineral in the Earth's crust. It can be found all over the world, although it is more common in some areas, such as Brazil, than others.

The concept behind engineered quartz is quite simple: ground quartz is combined with a polymer resin, and dyes are added to give it a color. In most cases, the end product resembles granite, but solid colors are also available. Quartz countertops are durable, non-porous, and scratch-resistant, making them ideal for any household need.

After you decide on a countertop, it will need to be fabricated to fit your exact space and needs. A licensed fabricator will cut it to size, shape it, and cut out any holes necessary for sinks and the like. Next comes giving the product an edge treatment. Finally, the quartz is installed, with careful attention paid to the seams.

Options

One of the best things about quartz is how many options people have when installing it, including:

- *Color* - Dye is added during the production process. Quartz can be colored with any dye that's available - although wacky colors like neon pink will probably need to be commissioned!
- *Size* - Since engineered quartz isn't limited by the amount of stone that can be quarried, quartz can be produced in Jumbo Slabs, which helps reduce the number of grooves on large countertop surfaces such as kitchen islands and reception desks.
- *Edge style* - A unique edge treatment can make a countertop stand out from the crowd. Here at LEEZA, we offer a wide range of edge treatments, and are happy to work with you on an alternative edge design if you don't like what's available.
- *Option to expand or replace* - Granite countertops are exceptionally hard to replace in the future, because each slab of granite varies subtly. In the rare event that a quartz countertop is damaged, it can easily be replaced. What's more, you can add on a perfectly matching countertop if you ever decide to add new counter space.

Hanstone

Engineered quartz was invented in the 1960s, but it wasn't until the past decade or two that it really began to take hold in North America. Hanstone has been around since 1952, and stands out today as North America's leading manufacturer of engineered quartz. Hanstone's high-quality products and environmentally-friendly production process have helped propel them to the top of the market.

What do you think of engineered quartz? Share in the comments!

14. Target Keyword: countertops and sinks

Page Title: Countertops & Sinks: How They Work Together and What to Keep in Mind

Peanut butter and jelly... Salt and pepper... John and Yoko... Some matches are simply perfect. Like countertops and sinks. The right sink and countertop combination can create a perfect interplay of beauty and functionality. Not sure how to find the perfect sink for you? Below, we'll explore how to find the perfect combination.

Appearance

The single biggest factor in choosing a sink to go with your countertop is how the sink and countertop will look together. For example, a stainless steel sink can create a wonderfully edgy look in a kitchen with black countertops and stainless steel appliances. An acrylic sink comes in colors to match just about any kitchen. We particularly love the look of pure white countertops with a pure white sink, which creates sleek lines and an impossibly modern appearance.

Apart from how the colors will play together, the shape and style of the sink should be considered. Sinks are generally rectangular, oval, or circular. They can also have dividers or just a single basin.

Most sinks are under-mount, meaning that the basin is entirely underneath the countertop. However, over-mount sinks are becoming more popular, especially in bathrooms. They can create a look reminiscent of classical bathrooms, or a funkier modern look depending on the type of sink.

Acrylic Sinks

Acrylic sinks are one of the most popular types of sinks. They are affordable and attractive, with the following features:

- Many different colors to choose from
- Matte or polished finish
- Non-porous, so they don't harbor bacteria or stain easily
- Ability to be scratched, but it's easy to buff away minor scratches
- Not heat resistant
- Cleanable with gentle products

Staron acrylic sinks have one key advantage when they are combined with Staron solid surface: they can be fabricated as a continuous surface with no seams, which leaves no place for microbes to grow. Because of this, Staron countertops and sinks work very well together.

Stainless Steel Sinks

Stainless steel sinks go well in almost any type of kitchen. Their characteristic shine is modern and attractive, and the steely gray-silver color matches just about anything. Some key features of stainless steel sinks:

- Limited color choices
- Different finish options available
- Non-porous and bacteria-resistant
- Natural accumulation of scratches over time, but the scratches will eventually become part of the finish
- Sensitive to certain chemicals

What's your favorite type of sink? Share in the comments!

15. Target Keyword: redoing kitchen countertops

Page Title: Redoing Kitchen Countertops? 6 Tips

There's nothing quite like the excitement of renovating a major part of your home! If you've been stuck with outdated, damaged, or unattractive countertops, redoing kitchen countertops can add so much beauty and functionality to your kitchen. Here's what to consider as you start shopping:

1. **Choose an overarching design style.** It's best to start out with a clear vision of the feel you'd like your kitchen to have, rather than just choosing a countertop you like in an isolated setting. From modern to country chic to a natural feel, there's virtually no limit to your options.
2. **Consider the other kitchen fixtures.** If you're replacing other major appliances such as the sink, oven, or refrigerator, you'll want to coordinate your new choices with your countertop. If you're keeping your old fixtures and just redoing kitchen countertops, then you'll want to think about how each countertop will look with what's already in your kitchen.
3. **Set a budget.** You can't really go shopping for countertops until you've set a budget. This budget should take into account average prices, the look you're going for, and how much counter you have to replace.
4. **Know the pros and cons of different countertops.** There is so much more to countertops than just granite and tile. Linoleum, wood, cement, solid surface, marble, quartz, soapstone.... There are many possibilities, each with their own advantages and disadvantages. For example, linoleum is inexpensive but not durable, while wood is attractive but requires a lot of upkeep. In a kitchen, one of the biggest countertop considerations is hygiene, so look for non-porous materials that are resistant to microbes.
5. **Learn about countertop care.** Just as each type of countertop has its own pros and cons, each type requires different cleaning methods and upkeep. Solid surface and quartz can be cleaned with just a sponge and a light cleaner, but if you get tile you'll have to tackle the grout once in a while. Upkeep is also a part of care, and certain countertops, such as wood and porous stones, need to be sealed or re-finished on a regular basis.
6. **Plan your renovation.** We can't stress this enough - before you start redoing your kitchen, plan the entire process. It's very easy to get excited about starting, then find yourself inconvenienced by continual shopping, trips to the hardware store, and appointments with handymen. If you'll be making any other changes to the kitchen than redoing kitchen countertops, we recommend you plan out the entire process, complete with a timeline, before you start doing the actual renovation.

16. Target Keyword: Choosing Bar Countertops

Page Title: Choosing Bar Countertops - Don't Forget the Rest of Your Room's Decor (make sure it matches)

When choosing bar countertops, you can't just look at a single countertop on its own. Instead, you need to consider how the countertop will look with the rest of the kitchen.

When choosing bar countertops, the goal is to end up with a bar that is distinct from the rest of the kitchen but blends perfectly in terms of style and color.

Popular Styles

- *Naturals and neutrals.* A combination of natural wood and stone with neutral colors like white and gray with splashes of black is extremely popular right now. The color will come in small bursts from decorations, towels, and the like.
- *Modern.* A sleek, modern kitchen is a desirable commodity. Clean lines, minimalism, and functionality are key. Modern kitchens often feature large swaths of white counters and cabinetry, with strategic bursts of color.
- *Rustic.* The rustic look is welcoming and homey. In this style, old-fashioned fixtures and decorations and treated wood and stone combine with all the amenities of a modern kitchen.

Reconciling Beauty and Function

In some cases, a countertop material might be beautiful but require a lot of upkeep. For example, wood and natural stone are lovely but their porosity makes them prone to staining, and they require frequent sealing. In such a case, there is almost always an option for a more functional but equally beautiful countertop. Staron Solid Surface and HanStone Quartz countertops are great options for counters that look like natural stone but are non-porous.

Examples

Now that you know the key things to look for, let's explore some of our favorite examples. Keep these in mind as you go through the process of choosing bar countertops:

- Black bar and white kitchen countertops (or vice versa) is a striking look. This style produces sharp, clean lines and a clear divide between the kitchen and countertops.
- [In this modern kitchen](#), a raised kitchen countertop and a sunken bar countertop are both in the same Staron Bright White. This creates clean lines and a minimalistic appearance, while still maintaining a clear divide between the kitchen and bar.
- [This combination](#) of Staron Coffee Bean kitchen countertops with a wood laminate bar countertop is right on trend, with natural wood and neutral colors blending. Notice that the wood bar countertop complements the kitchen's cabinetry.

- [HanStone Bavaria](#) covers all of the countertops in this kitchen, including the bar. The countertops are accompanied by rich coffee-colored cabinets and a more neutral floor for a sophisticated kitchen. The distinction between bar and kitchen is maintained by having the bar on a separate counter.
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17. Target Keyword: Kitchen splash-back ideas

Page Title: 3 design ideas for your new Kitchen splash-back

We love those little spaces in every home that are wide open for free-form design, such as kitchen splash-backs. Thanks to their prominent location, a little something "special" in a splash-back can serve to draw your whole kitchen together. And since relatively space is used by the splash-back, it's often the case that designs that would be impractical for a whole floor or counter are perfectly feasible. Here are some of our favorite kitchen splash-back ideas.

Mosaic Tiles

We love the way the lighter, varied hues of [this mosaic](#) play against the darker, more uniform HanStone Winter Riviera. [Here we see](#) checkered tan and brown glass tiles play against stark Bright White Staron countertops.

It's usually not budget-friendly or hygienic to install mosaic tiles over a large area, so the kitchen backsplash is the perfect place to put in a statement piece without breaking the bank. However, the grout means that the upkeep is relatively intensive.

We especially recommend this if you're going through the process of pulling up and replacing a beloved but damaged area of tile elsewhere in your home. A tile mosaic allows you to salvage old tile and turn it into a statement piece.

Continuous with the Counters

For a sleek look, you can just use the same material for the splash-back as for the counters. This creates a more continuous line for the eye. We're huge fans of the way HanStone Grigio climbs up the counters and around the appliances in [this modern, minimalist kitchen](#).

Our fabricators find that using the same material for the splash-back as for the counters is one of the most popular kitchen splash-back ideas. Why? It always looks amazing, the material will be just as easy to clean as the counter itself, and there's virtually no room for design error.

Use Unusual Materials

[In this kitchen](#), a light stone splash-back runs all the way up the kitchen wall, complementing the HanStone Sandcastle countertops as well as the hardwood floors. Splash-backs that are or seem to be made of unusual materials like wood, brick, or stone can create a unique, striking appearance, especially if they are used on a whole wall. If you choose such an unusual route, be sure that the overall design and style of your kitchen can support such a distinctive splash-back!

Which one is your favorite? Share in the comments!

18. Target Keyword: Bathroom design ideas

Page Title: 4 popular styles in bathroom design

Small changes can have such a huge effect on how a bathroom looks and feels. Because these rooms are typically much smaller than the rest of the house, everything is amplified in them. This gives you the chance to make a big impact with a small budget, but it also means that small missteps can bring the whole room down.

As you choose your bathroom design, think about how you will be using the bathroom. Is it a place where you prepare yourself at the beginning of the day, which you'll use to create a feeling of "Zen" as you get ready to face the world? Or perhaps it's a room where you love to indulge and pamper yourself at the end of a long day. Do you use the bathroom to recharge, or relax? As you read through these bathroom design ideas, think about how each one would play into those uses.

Romantic

The bathroom is one area of your house where you can use a little "girlier" tone (even if you're a man!). Pastels, opulent vanities, soft lighting, and flowers (fresh or silk) all make for a lovely romantic experience. With this style, it works well to display beautiful but functional bath products.

Classic

The classic bathroom style is still quite common. Wooden cupboards, a bathroom/shower combination, and sunken sinks all define this style. To keep it up-to-date, make sure that the details, like the handles of the cupboards, are as contemporary as possible. In addition, consider incorporating more modern fixtures, like stone

countertops and double sink vanities. Classic bathroom design is all about functionality, giving you somewhat of a neutral palette to add on details like towels and curtains.

Colorful

Just as the bathroom is more accommodating of romantic indulgence, it can also be home to bursts of color that wouldn't work anywhere else in the house. Bright walls, colorful towels and tile, and even colored tubs and toilets can create a striking appearance. If the color seems like too much, be sure to break it up with designs or with areas of white.

Modern

Sleek lines, minimalist decor, and stark colors define the modern style. Floating sinks, lifted basins, and a lack of embellishments are common in modern style bathrooms. Often, the modern style is mainly black or white, with a few bursts of color.

What are your favorite bathroom design ideas? Share in the comments!

19. Target Keyword: Staron countertops for your kitchen or bathroom

Page Title: Affordable & Trendy...Great looking Staron countertops for your kitchen or bathroom

It's commonly perceived that the only way to get a countertop that looks luxurious (i.e., granite, quartz, or marble) is to pay luxury prices. Solid surface countertops prove that conception wrong. Staron solid surface countertops can look like natural stone and have marked functional advantages over other low-cost countertops, allowing you to keep up with trends without breaking the bank.

Affordable

Countertops made from natural stone are expensive because natural stone must be mined, quarried, and transported long distances. In contrast, Staron solid surface countertops don't require this resource-intensive process. The result is countertops that are much more affordable than those made from natural stone, while still being similar in terms of function and appearance.

Why Staron?

At LEEZA, we'd never dream of straying from Staron countertops for your kitchen or

bathroom. Why? First and foremost, Staron offers the highest quality we've found, and they stand behind that quality with a 10 year warranty. They also offer an extensive collection of beautiful, trendy countertops. Whether you're looking to emulate granite, quartz, or a solid color, Staron offers countertops the right color and style for you.

Hey There, Good Lookin'

We'd love to wax poetic about each of the 70+ Staron countertops, but we suspect you'd stop reading at some point. Instead, let's take a moment to reflect on some of our very favorite Staron countertops for your kitchen or bathroom:

- *Starry countertops.* Maybe your childhood dream of being an astronaut didn't come true, but with designs like Aspen Sky and Dark Nebula, your counters can evoke a hint of the night sky while also emulating the striking appearance of blue or black granite countertops
- *Bright White.* It might be "just" a white countertop, but this perfectly toned, evenly hued countertop makes it possible for you to achieve a Zen or modern look in your kitchen or bathroom
- *Prairie.* This countertop from the Tempest collection is true to its name - its combination of yellows, gray-browns, and whites evokes the delicate beauty of the prairie. Perfect for a rustic room, this style resembles engineered quartz
- *The pebble collection.* With relatively large chunks of particulate and a relatively low density, this collection gives the appearance that the counter is filled with pebbles. Color options include blue, white, gold, and black

To see more or to purchase samples of any of these countertops, please [click here](#).

What's your favorite Staron countertop? Share in the comments below!

20. Target Keyword: Under-mount stainless steel sinks

Page Title: Getting the right under-mount stainless steel sink for your kitchen (beware...they aren't all made like they look)

What possible difference could there be between different under-mount stainless steel sinks? They're steel. They're stainless. They're under-mount sinks. Seems pretty straightforward, right? Unfortunately, even a decision as seemingly simple as stainless steel sinks requires some market research. Below, we'll explore what to look for in a

stainless steel sink.

Size, Shape, and Style

Let's start with the subjective part of the stainless steel shopping process, as it's the most fun. Everyone has different needs in a kitchen sink. If you do a lot of dishes by hand, a sink with 3 dividers can help streamline things. If you don't do much hand washing and prefer a simpler look, a sink with a single basin might be a better option. Other decisions include:

- Depth
- Size
- Shape
- Faucet style
- Hot & cold taps versus a single temperature adjuster

Gauge

Gauge refers to how thick the steel is. The thicker, the better. Thickness is indicated by number, and a lower number means a better gauge. 18 is the ideal stainless steel gauge. All of our Accolade Stainless Steel Sinks are 18 gauge.

Grade

You want your kitchen to be as clean as possible, and that starts with the sink. Anything you're washing dishes in needs to be resistant to bacteria, especially since you might use the same sink for everything from defrosting meat (yuck!) to hand washing clothes (where cleanliness is a necessity). We think everyone deserves their kitchen to be as clean as possible, and that means medical grade steel, or steel with a series grade of 304.

Metallic Content

Stainless steel is an alloy of chromium and nickel. Chromium is responsible for the characteristic shine of stainless steel, but it's nickel that provides the structural strength. The ideal nickel/chromium ratio is 18/10, and that is the standard that LEEZA's Accolade Stainless Steel Sinks adhere to.

Consequences of a Poor Purchase

If you see a sink that costs less than what average under-mount stainless steel sinks cost, it's probably because it's deficient in one or all of the above categories. So, what's the harm? A substandard sink will scratch and dent much more easily, and it will be more prone to water spots. The overall life of the sink will be shorter, and it will require more upkeep during that time. A low-grade sink may even promote the proliferation of bacteria. For all these reasons, it's important to stick to sinks that are 18 gauge, grade

304, with 18/10 nickel/chromium content.

What are your experiences with under-mount stainless steel sinks? Let us know in the comments!