



## STONE COUNTERTOPS. 10 MUST KNOW FACTS.

**Stone has become one of the most popular choices for a surfacing material. But how can you ensure that you don't get caught out because you don't know everything about the material. We identified 10 little known, yet important facts about choosing stone for your countertops.**

**1** Although both granite and engineered stone can withstand fairly high temperatures it is not advised to place hot objects directly onto the stone. Exposure to excessive heat or cold can cause discolouration or give the stone thermal shock which can cause the stone to crack.

**2** All stone is porous. With granite, the lighter the stone the higher the porosity. This means ALL stone is vulnerable to staining to some degree. Granite must be sealed before use decreasing the

vulnerability of the stone to stains and moisture penetration. The application of such a sealant can change the appearance of the stone altering the colour slightly. To maintain the original lustre of the surface this sealant should be reapplied every few years. Engineered stone on the other hand should normally not be sealed. In fact most suppliers specify that should you apply a sealant your guarantee will be void.

**3** When it comes to engineered stone there are a variety of brands available. Ensure your stone is from a reputable source and manufacturer and offers a good guarantee in order to safeguard yourself from cheap brands that are not supported locally by a reputable company, or that is not manufactured to a reputable formula.

**4** It is a good idea to visit both the fabricator and the stone supplier before installation. This will allow the fabricator to answer any questions you may have about the job and will give you an opportunity to personally select your slabs of stone ensuring you are getting the aesthetic you want.

**5** It is possible to specifically design the kitchen worktop sizes in order to maximize the slab usage and minimize wastage. This should be discussed with your kitchen designer and fabricator and will allow your budget to stretch further.



**6** The thickness of the stone and the profile you choose can affect your cost. The thicker the top the more expensive it usually is. With the profile, the more intricate it is, the more it is likely to cost.



**7** Do not expect an exact colour and pattern match to the sample you may have seen. Stone varies from slab to slab and the sample will only be an identical match to the slab it was cut from. The colour of a sample can also change over time if exposed to the elements. There is also a vast difference to how a colour and pattern look on the small scale of a sample and how it will appear on a large run of countertop. It is always best to see the slab yourself before making a final choice.



**8** In order for the fabricator to do a good job, the top surfaces of the cabinets must be within 3mm of flat and level when measured across a distance of 3m. Wall surfaces to receive stone splash-backs must be plumb and within 3mm of a true plane when measured across a distance of 3m. Don't be surprised if your fabricator refuses to proceed with the job should he find the tops or walls are not level.



**9** When the fabricator is doing your templates it is vital that any sinks, appliances and hardware that need to be fitted into the counter top are available for measurement (including pop-up plugs). When making these cut outs it is important, particularly with engineered stone that holes are drilled at the four corners of the cut-out, then the cutting should link the drill holes. This protects the corners of the stone from cracking.

**10** It is impossible to make a joint with stone that is not visible to the eye. There is an acceptable tolerance of up to 3mm for such a joint.

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