

What is Man-Made Stone?

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Although natural stone such as granite and marble receives a lot of attention from homeowners choosing new countertops, man-made stone has significantly risen in popularity throughout the past few years. Engineered stone surfaces offer many benefits, from a range of different colors to choose from to the low maintenance properties of the material. This guide will help you learn what man-made stone is, as well as its various qualities and how the surfaces compare to natural stone options.

What Exactly is Man-Made Stone?

When you hear the term “man-made stone”, it refers to engineered stone countertops and other surfaces. To narrow it down more, “engineered stone” countertops are often labeled as quartz countertops. This material is not to be confused with quartzite, which is a natural stone.

How Does Man-Made Stone Compare to Other Options?

Quartz has become one of the most popular choices for kitchen countertop building materials. Quartz surfaces are stylish, durable and easy to care for – all qualities that homeowners desire. In addition to countertops, you can use quartz for backsplashes, kitchen island tops, bathroom vanity tops and more.

Compared to natural materials, quartz is also a great choice for your home. Since it is engineered, the material can often be made to replicate the look of granite countertops, marble countertops or other natural stone surfaces. Quartz can match, or in some cases, surpass the durability of natural stone.

As for comparisons to other common countertop materials, such as laminate and solid surface materials (often associated with the brand Corian), quartz is regarded as both more attractive and more durable than each. Quartz countertops are also able to withstand more wear and tear than materials like stainless steel and wood.

What Are the Best Brands of Man-Made Stone?

There are many brands that produce man-made stone surfaces. Some of the best and well-known include Caesarstone, Silestone and Cambria.

Why is Man-Made Stone a Good Choice for Countertops?

When it comes to countertop materials, quartz is one of the best that you can choose. As mentioned, these surfaces are known for their beauty, durability and easy maintenance requirements. If you like the look of natural stone but want a surface that is easier to care for, quartz is your best alternative. To care for quartz, all you will need to do is keep up on cleaning and make sure to exercise proper caution in high traffic areas like the kitchen.

What Are the Characteristics of Man-Made Stone?

Quartz countertops are made by combining roughly 90 percent ground natural quartz with about 10 percent polyresin. Because the surfaces are manufactured, they are non-porous and do not require the sealing that natural stone does. If properly cared for, these quartz countertops can stay in great shape for many years to come.

How Much Do Quartz Countertops Cost?

Cost is a very important factor in any remodeling project. On average, quartz countertops will cost between \$50 to \$120 per square foot. The cost of the material will ultimately depend on a range of factors, including how rare it is, how much of the material you need, and any special cutouts and angles your job requires.

In comparison to other materials, quartz falls somewhat in the middle of cheap and expensive. Common types of quartz can be found in a similar price range to many natural stone materials, while high-end quartz can be a little pricey.

The table below compares the average price of quartz countertops to that of many other countertop materials.

Cost of Quartz Countertops vs. Other Materials

Ceramic Tile	Between \$5 to \$7 per square foot
Laminate	Between \$20 to \$50 per square foot
Granite	Between \$32 to \$75 per square foot
Butcher Block	Between \$35 to \$200 per square foot
Marble	Between \$40 to \$100 per square foot
Quartz	Between \$50 to \$120 per square foot
Recycled Glass	Between \$50 to \$125 per square foot
Slate	Between \$50 to \$200 per square foot
Soapstone	Between \$55 to \$100 per square foot
Quartzite	Between \$60 to \$120 per square foot
Concrete	Between \$70 to \$150 per square foot
Limestone	Between \$70 to \$200 per square foot
Solid Surface	Between \$75 to \$120 per square foot
Stainless Steel	Between \$75 to \$150 per square foot
Onyx	Between \$75 to \$250 per square foot
Gemstone	Start around \$100 per square foot

What Are the Pros and Cons of Man-Made Stone?

This section breaks down the pros and cons of engineered stone countertops.

Pros

Many Colors and Styles to Choose From

One thing you will find with quartz countertops is that you certainly will not be limited in your selection of colors and styles. Whether you want something that is solid in color or contains veining reminiscent of natural stone, there will surely be a suitable quartz option for you.

Strength

Quartz is one of the strongest countertop materials you can have in your home. It is not prone to chipping and breaking like laminate and many other cheaper products on the market.

Durability

As long as you properly care for the surface, a quartz countertop (or backsplash, bathroom vanity top, etc.) can stay in great shape for a long time. In fact, the surface is likely to remain in your home longer than you do.

Cons

Be Careful with Heat

One of the only downfalls of man-made stone countertops is that the surfaces cannot withstand high levels of heat. For example, you cannot place a hot pot or hot pan on the surface like you would be able to with granite countertops (although it is still never a good practice). If you do place items like these on a quartz surface, the material can sustain a permanent burn mark. This occurs because the resin begins to melt when exposed to excessive heat. Never put items like these on the surface without using trivets or hot pads. Similarly, do not place any hot hair tools from the bathroom on the surface either.

Man-Made Stone Surfaces: Pros and Cons

Pros	Cons
Many colors and styles to choose from	Be careful with heat
Strength	
Durability	

Can You Install Your Own Quartz Countertops?

Do not make the mistake of thinking that quartz countertops are any lighter or easier to handle during installation than natural stone countertops. This is not the case; quartz countertops are very heavy and difficult to install. Due to this, you will need to hire a professional to install the surfaces. Hiring a professional will significantly reduce the risk of improper installation and of you getting injured attempting to install the surface. Even if you consider yourself a DIY expert, you will need the assistance of a professional for this job.

Environmental Impact of Man-Made Stone

Quartz is often regarded as a more environmentally friendly choice than its natural counterparts. This is mostly because quartz can be manufactured virtually anywhere, unlike some types of natural stone that can only be found in certain locations throughout the world. Because quartz can be manufactured almost anywhere, you will be able to find surfaces that will not require extensive shipping, which can help the environment.

There is no reason to believe that man-made stone surfaces are not as good as natural stone in terms of quality. These surfaces are known for their beautiful appearance, durability, easy care and many other benefits. As for other countertop materials, such as laminate, man-made stone is superior in quality.

Countertops, backsplashes, bathroom vanity tops, kitchen island tops and other home surfaces are a key part in creating a certain feel in a room. Regardless of what color or style you choose, a quartz surface is sure to make an impact in your home, both visually and functionally. Considering the high-quality appearance and the durable properties of the material, it is no wonder why so many homeowners today are opting for quartz to complete their remodeling projects.

This guide will help you know what man-made stone is, how it compares to other options on the market and various other bits of information that can help you when making your decision to buy. Because countertops and other surfaces are such a big part of your home, you will want to make sure you get a surface you will like. It is very possible that surface will be man-made stone.