

How to Make Granite Seams Disappear

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Granite countertops are one of the most popular and beautiful materials to have in your home. Granite has a wide variety coming in numerous colors and patterns making one of the most diverse natural stone options for countertop surfaces. When installing granite in your home having seams in the countertop is pretty much inevitable. When installing large amounts of granite such as full kitchen countertops or islands seams will happen where granite needs to bend or switch direction. If not properly installed, granite countertops seams can be both an eyesore and cleaning nuisance. This is no reason to steer away from having granite countertops in your home. Experienced fabricators and installation teams should be experts in creating a seemingly perfect granite countertop.

What is a seam?

A seam is where two pieces of stone come together to make a transition. The seam is a filled space or gap between two pieces of granite. Since granite is a natural resource mined from the earth, the slabs are cut in all different shapes and sizes making it so that two or more slabs of granite are used on one surface. Once the granite is installed the seam looks like a straight line running through the counter.

For larger projects, a stone fabricator might decide to add seams to the countertop. It is needed typically due to slab sizes or more rarely technical reasons such as inability to install large sections between existing walls etc. It is imperative for a fabricator to either avoid seams or if not possible make them look perfectly matched and well joined with almost invisible seam lines. To do this, a skilled technician would match patterns on different slabs to blend in adjacent seam sections. In most cases, if done correctly, seams are not noticeable.

Does my Stone Countertop Need To Have Seams?

Seams are often unavoidable, especially for larger projects. For smaller surfaces, like a bathroom vanity top, a seamless countertop is usually possible.

How many seams will I have?

Depending on the length of the space, type of granite, and size of the slab that will dictate how many seams a surface may have.

Why do bad seams happen?

- Poorly matched patterns
- Uneven slab creates a lump and seams that leave a gap. This can be unsanitary, collecting crumbs, mold, and bacteria.
- Not properly filled but resin or epoxy

How to Hide Seams

Color Matching Filler

The gap between two slabs of granite can be filled using epoxy, polyester glue, or resin. It is important to match the color and pigment of the filler with the color of granite to ensure it is as seamless as possible. Some installers use silicone but that is not recommended since it allows the granite to move. Since every slab of granite is unique sometimes colors can't be easily matched using pre-mixed seam pigments. In order to perfectly match the granite installers can mix pigment to get the perfect fit.

Placement

The location of the seam needs to be carefully determined. Seam layouts should be done prior to cutting material. Strategically placing the granite is a great way to make seams less noticeable a great place to put seams is on the corners or curves of a countertop. It is also possible to hide seams under cabinets. It is not recommended to put a seam near an opening for appliances such as a sink since it will be exposed to water and high traffic making it more susceptible to breakage. Seams should be placed no less than 6 inches from the edge of a cutout to prevent weakness and damages to the countertop.

Similar Pattern

No two slabs of granite will ever be the exact same but they can be very similar. Matching up the pattern and colors of two slabs can be a huge help when trying to hide seams. A pattern going in a different direction will be much more visible than a pattern going in the same direction. This may seem obvious, but if overlooked, two different looking pieces of granite that leave a completely visible seam in your counter.

Size of Slab

Have two different size slabs creates a dead giveaway for visible seams. Different thickness in slabs makes an uneven seam which is even more noticeable. You will also be able to feel the difference creating a bump in what is supposed to be a flat surface. Even being centimeters off from one another can create an uneven surface.

See a Sample

Have the retailer or fabricator show you samples of their seam work. When shopping for countertops it's important to see the past work of their installation team.

Chips and Imperfections in Granite

Some stones will chip a lot during the cutting process but do not worry. If small chips end up along a wall or on exposed edges they will disappear during the polishing and edge formation process. Since granite is natural stone no piece will be flawless all granite is prone to small imperfections and stress marks.

Seam Length

The smaller the seam is the less noticeable it will be. Long seams are common in vertical pieces such as shower walls and backsplashes.

Factors to Consider when purchasing granite:

Granite Thickness

The ideal thickness for counters is at least 1 to 1 ¼ inch. The thinner the slab the less durable the surface will be. The thicker the granite the higher quality it is considered to be. High-end granite is minimally 1 ¼ inch.

Granite Appearance

It is important to check out the appearance of granite before purchasing looking for any imperfections looking for any noticeable scratches, and chips. When looking at samples it is important to remember no cut of natural stone will ever be identical to one another.

Granite Porosity

Porosity is another factor that is very important to consider when purchasing granite. The porosity of granite impacts the way you care for the stone and how much sealant it will require. Granite is a porous natural stone, if it is not properly sealed, the liquid is able to penetrate and damage the surface. The good news is that there is an easy fix to this problem granite countertops are able to be sealed which will prevent damage to the surface of the stone.

Granite Durability

Granite is a very durable resistance to scratching, cracking, and chipping. Granite is also one of the most heat resistant countertop materials. A properly installed and sealed granite countertop will look like new for an entire lifetime under normal use and proper care. Granite usually does not require re-sealing.

Granite Cost

Granite typically retails anywhere between \$35- \$75 per square foot and goes up from there. The cost of granite is determined by thickness, appearance, porosity, and country of origin.