# Laminate worktop: Installation and maintenance

This information presents the most effective ways of fitting and installing Formica® Laminate worktops. Before you do any work on your new worktop, please ensure you are completely satisfied with the product by checking for damage or defects. These guidelines are intended to help you achieve the best possible results.
Information applicable to UK/Ireland region only.

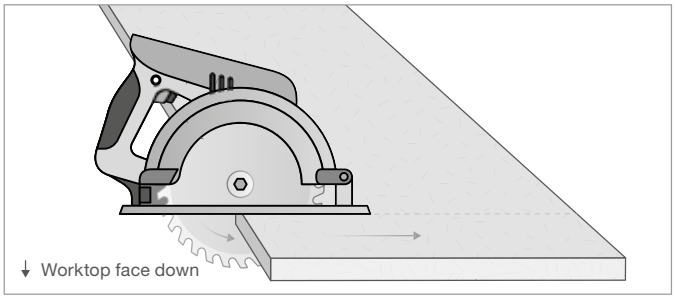
## Important message to the installer

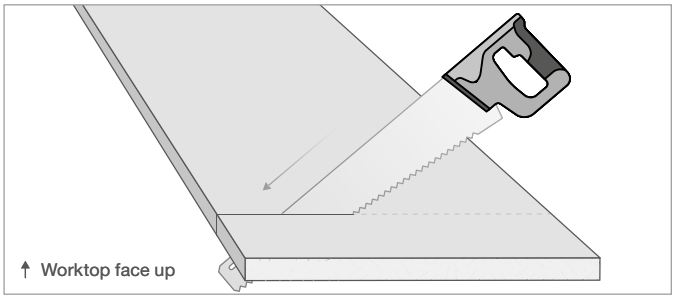
**This installation and maintenance sheet must be left with the end user, as the guarantee is only valid if guidelines as described in the installation sheet have been followed.**

**Measuring**
Marking can be done with a soft pencil either on the face of the worktop, if using a hand saw, or on the back if using a power saw. Always check measurements before cutting.

**Preparation**
The worktop should be adequately supported during all cutting, drilling or sawing operations. All cutting tools should be sharp and safety goggles should be used whenever cutting laminated boards.

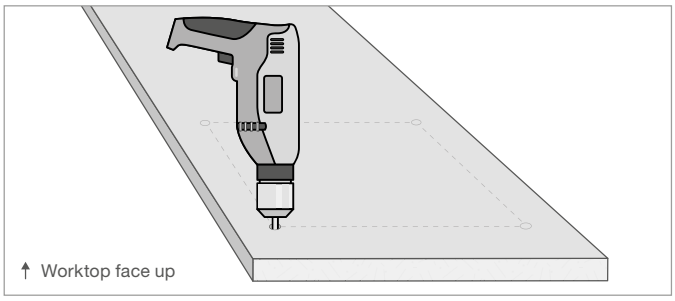
**Cutting**
Laminate worktops can be cut a number of ways. The best results are achieved when the worktop is cut slightly oversize by 5mm, using either a portable power saw (with the decorative side face down) or with a hand saw (decorative side face up). To finish the edge use a portable hand router, straight edge and 'G' clamps. Clamping the straight edge of the worktop, either with the decorative side face up or down, but always ensuring the cutter will enter at the postformed edge, will result in a perfectly straight chip-free cut. It is difficult to maintain a totally chip-free finish when using a hand saw, without having to tidy it up afterwards. If the sawn edge is to be laminated, it is advisable to use a portable router. When cutting and joining two worktops, particular attention should be paid to sealing the joint with a silicone sealant or a contact adhesive, this will prevent the possibility of water ingress.

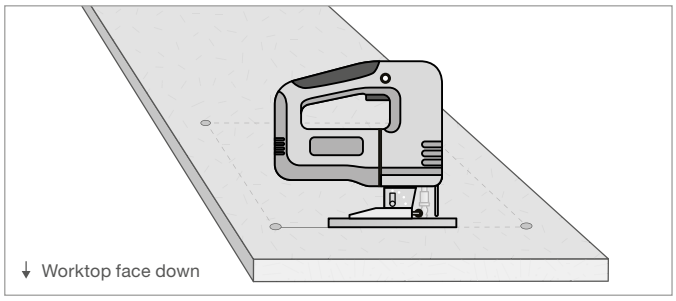



**Making cut-outs**
Any cut-outs should be carefully measured and marked. Then working from the decorative surface, drill through all the corners using the largest diameter drill possible, since sharp internal corners can lead to cracks forming in the laminate surface. Ensure that there is a minimum radius of 10mm at each corner.

Cut-outs can once again be made using the portable hand router, similar to the method described above, however, a jig-saw can be used providing the four corners have been pre-drilled using a 12mm drill bit. Mark out the area to be cut on the face side of the worktop and drill a hole in each of the four corners.




After drilling, turn the worktop over and mark a straight line from one edge of a hole to another. Then using a jig-saw with a fine toothed blade, cut from hole to hole. Ensure the piece to be cut away is well supported on the last cut. After the cut-out has been made, try the sink or hob for size.

**Dishwashers and washing machines**
Every laminate worktop is supplied factory sealed along the front underside edge. Integrated dishwashers and washing machines emit steam and moisture on a regular basis. It is recommended that extra protection should be given to worktops which have these appliances underneath. Extra sealant or a baffle plate should be placed on the underside of the worktop for extra protection. Consult the appliance manufacturer for further details.

**General**

Laminate worktops are rigorously tested in line with British and European standards to ensure that they will meet the exacting requirements of any modern kitchen. Every laminate worktop therefore incorporates specific features which make it highly resistant to heat, impact, scratching and moisture. Our decorative laminates are tested to a temperature of 180°C. Boiling water and cooking splashes will therefore do no harm to the surface of the worktop. All laminate worktops are effectively sealed to protect the core from moisture along the front and back edges.

**Cleaning**
General cleaning of the surface requires only a damp cloth and a mild detergent or non-abrasive cleaner diluted in warm water. Abrasive scouring powders, creams and even polishes should all be avoided. If the worktop has a textured surface, a soft nylon nailbrush can be used to ensure a more thorough cleaning. Potentially persistent stains should be removed immediately. For gloss worktops, buff the surface after cleaning with a soft cloth.

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| | Things to do | Things to avoid |
|---|---|---|
| Heat | To prevent damage from hot objects, use heat resistant mats on the surface of the worktop. Always use ashtrays for cigarettes. | Never place objects from the oven or hob directly onto the laminate surface since this may lead to blistering. Care should be taken with hot irons and cigarettes. |
| Scratching | Always use a chopping board for preparing food. | Cookery items, kitchen utensils and other objects sliding across your worktop will produce fine scratches in the laminate. Never cut foodstuffs directly on the laminate surface. |
| Moisture | Wipe spilt liquids away from joints and cut-outs immediately. Ensure that all inset appliances are properly sealed with a suitable waterproof silicone sealant. | Moisture will not harm the laminate surface but it is advisable to wipe away any spillages as soon as possible. The critical areas are around joints and cut-outs. |

**Tiles**

When tiling above a worktop a space of at least 3mm should be left between the surface of the worktop and the bottom row of tiles to allow for easy removal of the top.

**Sealing of holes for services**

Where pipes are to be brought up through the worktop, a 2-3mm allowance for expansion/contraction should be maintained around the pipe. The void can then be filled with silicone sealant. When installing a dishwasher care should be taken to ensure that the protective deflector provided by the dishwasher manufacturer is fitted correctly to the underside of the worktop.

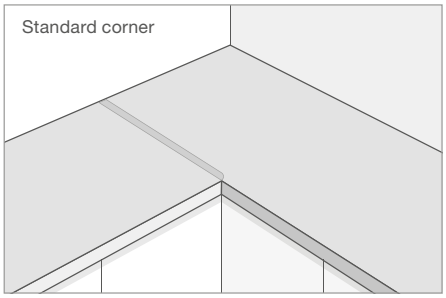
**Edging of worktops**

**Postformed:** All exposed edges should be finished with matching laminate, as supplied with every laminate worktop. Ensure that the cut edge is flat, clean and dust free. Prior to applying the adhesive to the edges, the laminate surface should be protected (ie sticky tape) to prevent the over spill of adhesive curing/marring the surface during the edging process. Apply a proprietary adhesive, ideally PVA adhesive (which is suitable for woodwork), to the edge of the worktop. It can be applied using a 12-25mm paint brush, directly to the chipboard edge. The edging strip should then be placed sanded side down onto the wet adhesive. Ensure that there is sufficient overhang of edging on both the face and underside of the worktop. Using an electric iron, then slowly move set on medium, apply pressure to the edging strip and hold in place for approximately 5-10 seconds, along the strip and repeat. Leave for at least 1 hour before removing excess edging strip. To remove excess edging strip use either a portable trimming machine or a sharp block plane. Final finishing can best be achieved by using a 250mm smooth file.

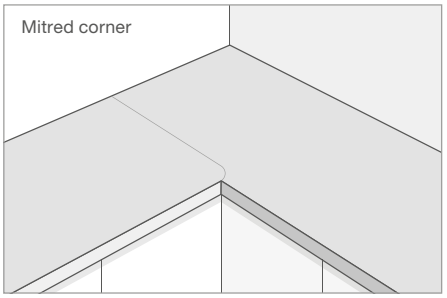
**Square edge:** Formica Laminate square edge worktops and breakfast bars are manufactured with 3 edges completed with a Polypropylene (PP) edge. Additional matched PP edge strips can be purchased from your Formica stockist if required to complete any exposed edge. Formica PP edge strips can easily be applied using glue press clamps or edge presses. Suitable adhesives include – PU adhesive, contact adhesives, two part dispersion adhesives or glues suitable for lacquered or varnished surfaces. Please refer to the adhesives manufactures guidelines for application. For best results apply at room temperature (not below 18 C). The edge band can then be trimmed back and milled using a manual milling router with a radius milling tool and a bearing. Formica edge bands can also be applied using small edge banding units or hand held edge banding devices.

**Jointing of worktops**

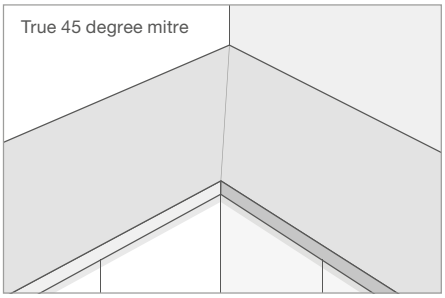
Laminate worktops can be jointed either by a standard butt joint using a profiled jointing strip, a scribe masons mitre joint or a true 45 degree mitre joint. When cutting butt and scribe joints always use a good quality jig and follow the manufacturer's instructions for an accurate finish. Always use a good quality well maintained hand router with a sharp cutter. Jointing bolt slots should be cut using a jig, to a sufficient depth to support the preferred jointing bolt. A standard jointing bolt can be used for a 38mm worktop, whereas a slimline jointing bolt (for 22mm) should be used with a 22mm worktop..




Always use good quality jointing bolts as follows:
Up to 500mm joint length - two bolts 600 to 750mm joint length - three bolts 750 to 900mm joint length - four bolts




Jointing biscuits should also be used to add strength to the joint and ensure the joint is level. If in doubt consult a professional fitter.




Care should be taken when trying to achieve a true 45 degree mitre as they can become weak at the narrowest point. Always ensure connector bolts are sufficiently used from the end point to prevent damage or breakage.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Joints are vulnerable to moisture ingress. Ensure that a quality adhesive or sealant is used during the jointing process. Avoid placing electric kettles or tea pots directly over joints. Always use a trivet or protective matt to protect the joint from moisture.

**PVC Aprons**

PVC aprons can cause excessive wear to the edges of laminate work surfaces. We would recommend that PVC aprons are not used as over a period of time the excessive wear will become more evident and spoil the look of the worktop.

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# Splashbacks: Installation and maintenance

This information represents the most effective ways of fitting your splashback. It is intended to act as a guideline to allow you to achieve the best possible results. Please ensure you are entirely satisfied with your product before commencing installation. Information applicable to UK/Ireland region only.

**Measuring**

Preparation prior to fitting, ensure that the wall is dry and free from damp, and flat by holding a straight edge against it. Bostick pads and SikaBond could cope with a deflection of 2-4mm. If the walls are uneven to such a degree and in some respect damp, the wall should be covered with a Vapor Barrier and screw fix vertical timber grounds of appropriate dimensions and at fixing centres (max 600mm).

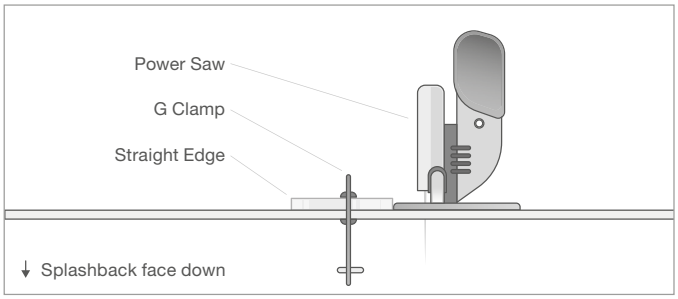
**Cutting**

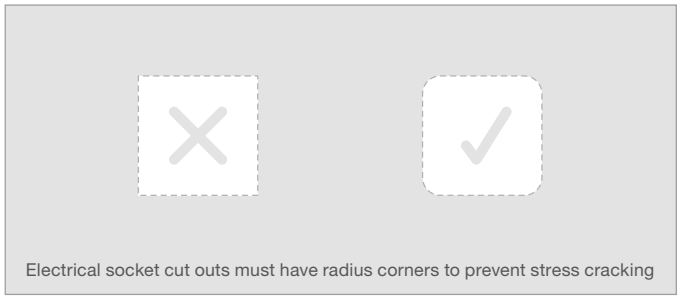
With the board well supported, mark the position of the cut on the reverse side and clamp a straight edge in place. Remember to allow for the bed of the power tool when positioning the straight edge (fig 1). Using the straight edge as a guide; position the saw against it and cut through the board.

**Internal Cut-Outs and Apertures (Sockets)**

Whenever a cut-out is made within the splashback, always ensure that the internal corners are radiused (min 6mm) as this will prevent the likelihood of stress cracking. To achieve this detail, use either a portable hand router (with jig) or a combination of an electric drill and jig saw. Mark out the area in the correct position to be cut on the face side and drill a hole (12mm ø) in each of the 4 corners, turn the panel over and mark a straight line from hole to hole. With the aid of a jig-saw with a fine toothed blade, upward cutting, cut along the lines, ensuring that you DO NOT overshoot into the radius corners.

Fig 1: Fitting your splashback



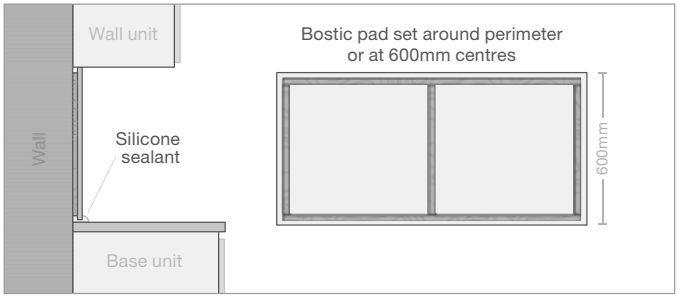



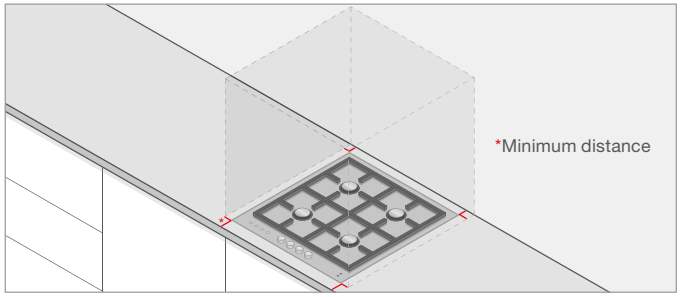

**Fixing the splashback**

Once cut to size the splashback can be fixed using Bostik pads, SikaBond system, or wall panel adhesives such as Liquid Nails, Gripfix, or Evode. When fixing the splashback with Bostik and SikaBond, the appropriate installation data sheets can be obtained by contacting these companies. Please follow the manufacturer's instructions as described on the tubes when using a wall panel adhesive. Regardless of the fixing method you choose; it is advisable to position the adhesive pads/tapes and beads of glue at centres that do not exceed 600mm. On a 600mm high panel, perimeter fixing along with central fixing at approx 600mm depending upon the length of the panels. To provide a seal against the possible effects of moisture, the panel should be suspended up from the worktop by 3mm until the adhesive takes hold. The void can then be filled with a matching coloured silicone sealant.

*Splashbacks may be fitted/used adjacent to a hob; however it is essential to check with the hob manufacturer regarding the minimum distance required between the splashback and the gas jets.

Fig 2: Fitting your splashback

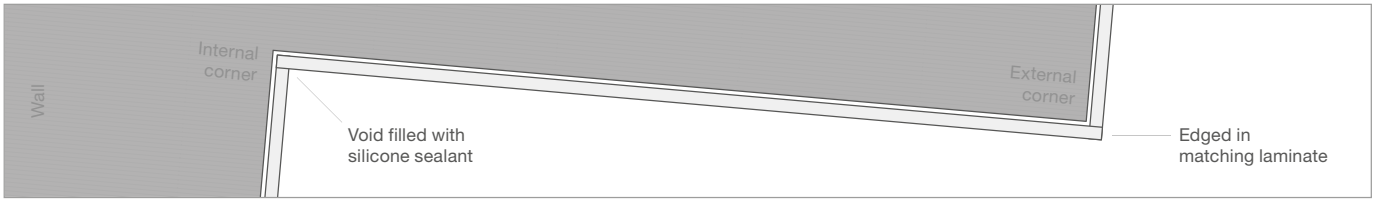



**Internal/External Corner Details**

When fitting up to an internal corner, it is once again advisable to leave a small gap of approx 3mm which can be filled with a matching silicone sealant. This will allow for expansion and contraction due to climatic changes. On an external corner detail, the MDF edge would be visible, therefore matching laminate can be applied to provide a finish. Quadrant extrusions (tile trim) can also be applied.

Fig 3: Internal/External Corner Detail




**Edging the Splashback**

In parts, the top edge of the splashback may be visible. In these instances, a matching laminate can be applied to provide a finish; likewise, coloured quadrant extrusions (tile trims) can be fixed onto the exposed edges at the corners and tops. It is recommended that the laminate edging strips are applied by a kitchen fitter. Ensure they are sealed water tight.

**Maintenance**

Your splashback should be cleaned using a mild detergent and warm water. For particularly stubborn marks, general multi purpose surface cleaners can be used. Never use abrasive cleaners or pads on laminate surfaces.

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# Upstand: Installation and maintenance

This information represents the most effective ways of fitting your upstand. It is intended to act as a guideline to allow you to achieve the best possible results. Please ensure you are entirely satisfied with your product before commencing installation. Information applicable to UK/Ireland region only.

**Preparation**
Prior to fitting, ensure that the wall is flat. Ensure that the worktop is fitted correctly and that there is no loose dirt or plaster on the wall.

**Cutting**
Measure the worktop or wall you want to fit the upstand to. Mark the upstand on the face at the correct length and check your measurements before cutting. Cut a 45 degree mitre for fitting into and around corners; ensure they are water tight and sealed.

**Fixing**
Once cut to size and edged (if required), the upstand can be fixed. The upstand must be fixed to the wall which your worktop backs on to. Fix the upstand with a wall panel adhesive; following the manufacturer's instructions to ensure a good bond. The upstand can then be sealed using a silicone sealant, following the manufacturer's guidelines for good use. Seal the area where the upstand meets the worktop and where the upstand meets the wall. Please note when fitting your upstand adjacent to a gas hob, it may be necessary to check with the hob manufacture as to the minimum distance to which the upstand can be fitted in relation to the gas jets.

**Edging the Upstand**
If the upstand requires edging a matching laminate can be applied to provide a finish; likewise coloured quadrant extrusions (tile trims) can be fitted onto the exposed edges at the corner and tops. It is recommended that the laminate edging strips are applied by a kitchen fitter. Ensure they are sealed water tight.

# Wood block worktops: Laminate edging

**Fitting laminate strips to the edges of your wood block Formica Laminate worktop**

Formica Laminate square edge worktops and breakfast bars are supplied with pre-fitted edge strips.

Formica Laminate postformed worktops and breakfast bars are supplied with laminate strips suitable for edging your product. To ensure you achieve the most dramatic and realistic look, wood block postformed worktops are supplied with laminate edge strips which have been specifically cross cut to allow you to align the wood block of the edging to the wood block on the surface.

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