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EC59-1137 The Surface for the Purpose

Jerre L. Withrow

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the surface for the purpose

BY

JERRE L. WITHROW

Extension Specialist, Housing

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

The variety of surfacing materials and styles available make it possible for a homemaker to satisfy nearly any need and taste. No single product has all the qualities for a perfect all-purpose finish, however. One material may be suitable for one use and be a poor choice for another. The characteristics of the different materials have been summarized in the table on pages 2 and 3 to help you select a surfacing for your needs.

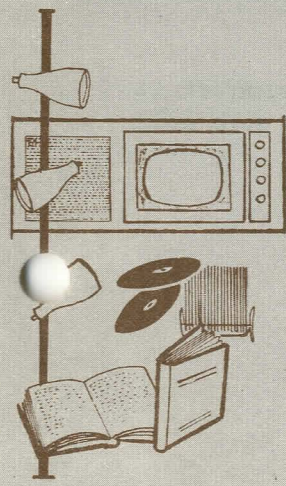
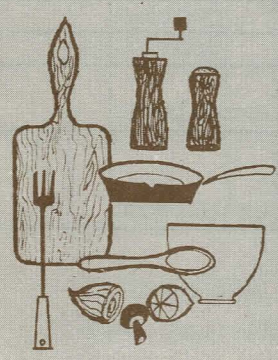
Combinations of materials are frequently desirable within a house since surfaces must withstand a variety of conditions. Stain resistance is important in a kitchen and laundry, where foods and bleaches are present. Hallways are in little danger of exposure to these hazards. Here abrasion from dirt and sand might be the prime factor.

The multitude of products on the market can be classified according to their properties, process of manufacture, and resultant characteristics. Your particular needs will determine which considerations are most important to you.

The most expensive material is not always the most satisfactory for the purpose. "Will acids, alkalis or grease be in contact with the material? Will traffic be heavy across this surface? Will we want to change the décor in a year or two?" Questions such as these will help your family determine what your needs are or what service you expect to receive from the material selected. The following table will tell you what performance you may expect from the different materials.

Your dealer can tell you the classification of the trade names in his stock.

EXTENSION SERVICE
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CHARACTERISTICS OF SURFACING MATERIALS

Character-istics	Inlaid Linoleum	Melamine Laminated Plastic	Polyester Laminated Plastic	Stainless Steel	Ceramic Tile	Cork Tile			Vinyl Plastic	Asphalt Tile	Rubber Tile	Vinyl Asbestos	Colored Cement	Wood	Brick or Slate	Printed Felt- base enamel (Linoleum or Vinyl)
I. Suitability for Counters	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—			✓	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—
Floors above grade	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Floors below or on grade	—	—	—	—	✓	—			—	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓	✓
II. Resistance to Stain-Acid- Alkali	good	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent	poor			excellent	poor	fair	good	fair	good	fair	
Heat	poor	good	fair	excellent	excellent	poor			poor	poor	good	fair	excellent	good	excellent	
Cigarette burn	fair	good	good	excellent	excellent				poor	poor	poor	good	excellent	poor	excellent	
Heavy impact	fair	poor	poor	poor	poor	poor			fair	poor	excellent	fair	excellent	fair	excellent	
Color change by sunlight	fair	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent	fair			excellent	fair	fair	good	excellent	good	excellent	
Moisture Absorption	poor	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent	poor			good	excellent	fair	good	excellent	poor	excellent	
Cutting	fair	poor	poor	good	excellent	fair			fair	poor	fair	fair	excellent	poor**	excellent	
Abrasion	poor	excellent	good	excellent	excellent	poor			fair	fair	poor	poor	excellent	fair	excellent	
Grease & oil	fair	excellent	excellent	excellent	excellent	poor			excellent	poor	poor	good	poor	good	excellent	
III. Resilience	good	poor	poor	poor	poor	excellent			poor	fair	excellent	poor	poor	fair	poor	
IV. Quietness on Contact	good	good	good	poor	poor	excellent			good	fair	excellent	fair	poor	poor	poor	

✓ = appropriate
— = not appropriate

* Vinyl from one manufacturer has a special backing which is unaffected by moisture and alkali.

**Though resistance of woods to knife cuts is poor and appearance of counter is damaged, wood is the best material for a cutting block because it does not dull knives as much as other materials.

Information on this chart is adapted from:

Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station - Work Counter Surface Finishes, Research Bul. 764 - 1955

Small Homes Council - Plastics as Building Materials, Circular D9.0 - 1956
Counter Surfaces, Circular F9.1 - 1958
Flooring Materials, Circular F4.6 - 1955

Pennsylvania State University - Buying Smooth Surface Floor Coverings, Extension Circular 388 - 1957

University of Wyoming - Floors, Extension Circular 153 - 1957

WHAT WILL IT COST?

Most materials for surfacing are priced by the square foot or square yard. Sixteen 9 x 9 inch tiles or thirty-six 6 x 6 inch tiles make a square yard. Cost per tile must be converted to cost per square yard for comparison with other materials.

Some materials may be purchased in several different gauges or thicknesses. The price increases with the thickness. Actual prices will vary some with location, but relative price will probably be constant. Some of the most common materials are listed below in order of decreasing cost.

Counters

Stainless steel
Ceramic tile
Slate
Hardwood
Laminated melamine
Vinyl
Laminated melamine
Inlaid linoleum 1/8"

Floors

Ceramic tile
Brick or slate
Vinyl
Cork tile 1/8"
Rubber tile 1/8"
Vinyl asbestos tile 1/8"
Wood
Colored concrete
Inlaid linoleum 1/8"
Asphalt tile 1/8"
Printed enamel

The cost of the material itself comprizes 50% to 75% of the total cost. The expense of installation depends on: the shape of the area to be covered; the complexity of the design; whether counter is purchased in stock sizes; fabricated in a shop, or custom built on the job; the condition of the surface to be covered; and local labor rates. Type of coving, joining, and edging on counters are also considerations affecting total cost.

IS INSTALLATION IMPORTANT?

Proper installation is essential for satisfactory results from any of the materials. A simple installation may be a home project. Different products, however, require different handling. Manufacturers' recommendations as to under-surface treatment and the kind and application of adhesive, should be obtained from your dealer. Tiles of linoleum and vinyl are more easily installed floorings than rolls of the material, but because of the numerous seams necessary, they are not suitable counter surfacing. Stainless steel and laminated plastic must be professionally handled for success.