



Choosing Materials Early in the Remodeling Process

By HEIDI TOTTY, a Diamond Certified Expert Contributor

One of the best ways to ensure a successful remodeling project is to choose your materials before work gets underway. Delays in product availability are common, so waiting until your contractor is onsite to make selections can quickly derail your timeline and add unexpected costs. Here are a couple of things to consider:

Start with cabinets and plumbing fixtures. Cabinets often take the longest to arrive (typically six to eight weeks), so they should be the first items you select and order. The same goes for plumbing fixtures, which are currently seeing extended lead times. If you wait until construction begins, your project may stall while you wait for these essential components to arrive.

Don't wait on tile or countertops. While tile and countertops often have shorter lead times (usually one to two weeks), they should still be ordered before the project begins. Even small delays can cause scheduling issues, especially if the installation crew is waiting for those pieces to be ready.

Remember, preparation is everything in remodeling, so if you understand your lead times and make sure all necessary materials are in place before the first hammer swings, you'll go a long way toward ensuring the quality and efficiency of your project.



Plumbing fixtures and cabinets take the longest to arrive, so make sure to order them first. Photo: Napa Kitchen & Bath ©2026



Countertops and tile tend to have shorter lead times, but you should still order them prior to your project's start date. Photo: Napa Kitchen & Bath ©2026



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Choosing the Right Countertop Material

By HEIDI TOTTY, a Diamond Certified Expert Contributor

When it comes to remodeling your kitchen or bathroom, one of the most important decisions you'll make is choosing a countertop material that matches your lifestyle, design goals and maintenance preferences. Here's a breakdown of the most popular materials on the market:

Quartz

Made from a mix of natural quartz and resin, this manmade material is durable, stain-resistant, and available in a wide variety of colors and patterns. However, quartz isn't completely heatproof, so placing a hot pot or pan directly on the surface can cause thermal shock and result in cracks. To protect your investment, always use a trivet or hot pad.

Porcelain

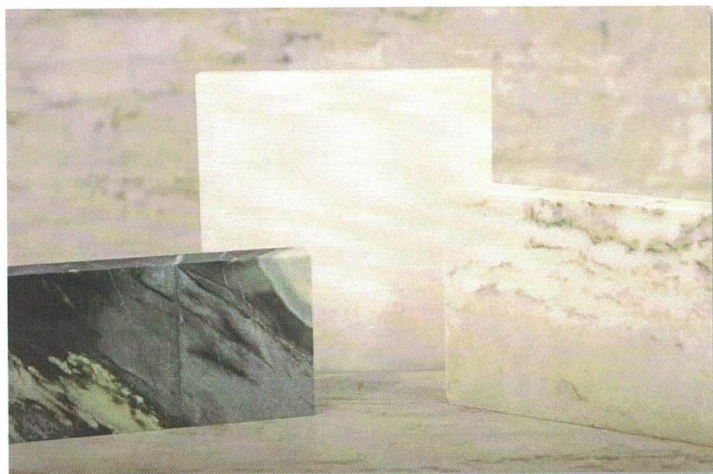
Porcelain slabs are gaining popularity as a modern countertop option, especially for those who want a sleek, seamless look. These surfaces are highly heat-resistant, but they're also thinner than other materials, which means edges near sinks or high-use areas are more prone to chipping.

Wood

Wood brings a natural warmth, making it a popular choice for kitchen islands and accent areas. It's ideal for adding texture and a cozy feel, but it does require extra care when it comes to water. Prolonged moisture exposure can lead to warping, so be sure to quickly wipe up spills and consider sealing your countertops for added protection.

Natural stone

Natural stones like granite, marble, and quartzite have unique textures and color variations that elevate any space. However, they do require regular sealing to prevent staining—marble needs to be sealed every three months, while granite and quartzite typically need it every six months. You can also choose between a polished or honed finish depending on your desired look.



The type of countertop material you choose will depend on your specific needs and goals. Photo: Napa Kitchen & Bath ©2026



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Heidi Totty: Family Matters

By MATT SOLIS, Editor

Heidi Totty never planned on a career in the kitchen and bathroom remodeling industry, but in 2004, a well-timed call from her father changed everything. “My dad remodeled homes for many years and eventually opened an appointment-only showroom in Napa, but there came a point where he realized he was getting too old to do both, so he asked if I could help with the showroom,” she recalls. “I was working at a daycare at the time and it happened to be closing its summer program, so the timing couldn’t have been better!”

Today, as owner of Napa Kitchen & Bath, Heidi says her favorite part of her job is helping clients through every phase of the remodeling process, from choosing finishes to seeing the final results. “Selecting products for a kitchen or bathroom remodel is like a puzzle—you have everything from cabinetry and tile to flooring and countertops, so when it all comes together, it’s really satisfying to see the finished space. Watching people fall in love with our designs is the best reward.”

A lifelong resident of Napa, Heidi says she can’t picture herself anywhere except in the heart of Wine Country. “I’ve never lived anywhere else and I don’t really want to. Napa still feels like a small town in the best way—everybody knows each other and it makes for a special place.”

When she’s not at the showroom, Heidi enjoys crafting with her sister; doing jigsaw puzzles; and spending quality time with her husband, Alan, and their sons, Dalton and Parker. “Honestly, my biggest hobby is spending time with family,” she laughs. “We like hanging out, talking



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about our days, going on walks and catching up on Netflix shows together.”

When asked what her life might look like if she retired tomorrow, Heidi says she would utilize the extra time to bring her loved ones even closer. “It would be amazing to have a piece of land where our whole family could live. Something like a compound, where everyone has their own space but is close enough to support each other. I think that would be really cool.”

Ask Me Anything!

Q: Are you a dog person or a cat person?

A: Both. We have a cat named Rosie and a dog named Murphy.

Q: What was your first pet?

A: An orange and white tabby cat named Rusty.

Q: What was your favorite board game as a kid?

A: Pay Day.

Q: If you could immediately travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?

A: Belize. My stepmother has a house there and we still haven’t been to visit.

Q: What’s your favorite local restaurant?

A: Hop Creek Pub in Napa. I also like Napa Yard.