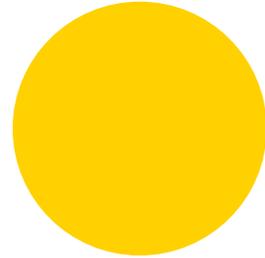


# IMPROVEMENT CENTER

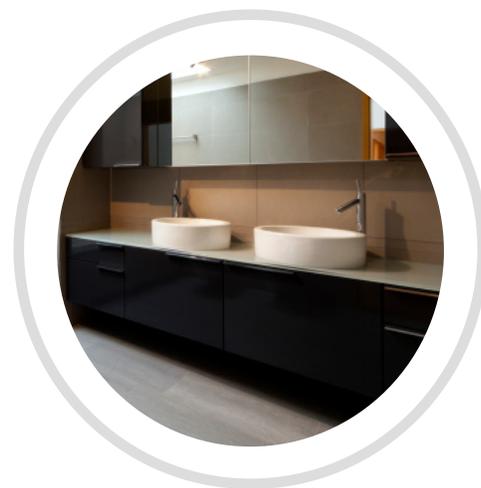


## Vanity Top Product Guide

# Vanity tops: styles for any bathroom decor

Choosing a vanity top for your bathroom remodeling exemplifies the old saying, "The sky's the limit." There are so many materials, styles and colors from which to make your selection. Some vanity top materials even give you the option of picking the edge style that best complements your bathroom's decor.

The good news is that the price range for vanity tops is as vast as the material and style options. There are tops that are very budget-friendly and those that come close to falling into the realm of, "If you have to ask, you can't afford it." However, before selecting a material, you first have to know a little about vanity top configuration and bowl design.



## Vanity top construction

A vanity top creates a platform on top of one or more cabinets and is the location of your bathroom sink bowls and faucets. The type of bowls you plan to use and the top material combine to determine how your top should be configured. These are the three primary types of sink bowls:

1. **Molded.** These bowls are molded right into the top to form one piece. They can be ordered in many standard sizes, as well as for custom layouts. This configuration is only available in materials -- such as cultured marble -- that can be molded together to form a top.
2. **Under-mount.** This is one of the most popular types of sink bowls because it can be used with many upscale, vanity-top materials such as granite, marble and Corian. The hole for the sink bowl is typically cut on-site for precise placement.
3. **Drop-in.** This type of sink bowl can be used with just about any type of vanity top material, but the sink bowl must have a supporting flange. The openings, like those for the under-mount bowls, are usually cut on the job site using a template from the sink manufacturer.

When ordering a vanity top with molded bowls or when cutting the opening for an under-mount or drop-in configuration, always double check your measurements.



## Vanity top materials

You might be amazed at some of the materials used to create vanity tops these days. Here are some old reliables and a few new kids on the block:

### 1. Budget-friendly vanity tops

Just because a material's economical doesn't mean it can't be attractive. If you're remodeling on a tight budget, these two beautiful choices deserve strong consideration:

- Cultured marble. While it may not be the real thing, it can look pretty close. Cultured marble is a synthetic product that's available in quite a few colors.
- Laminate. This material isn't always the best choice for a vanity top due to its low tolerance of humidity and moisture. However, it may be difficult to beat its price and the number of available colors.

Costs vary, but expect to pay about \$10 to \$15 per linear foot for a laminate top and \$60 to \$90 for cultured marble.



### 2. Green options

If you're passionate about working to save the environment, you can even contribute with your choice of vanity tops. Try these eco-friendly selections:

- Recycled glass. If you've wondered where glass bottles go when they're recycled, consider the question answered. Several companies combine recycled glass with cement and other additives to create beautiful vanity tops in numerous colors. The tops are advertised to be as durable as natural stone.
- Recycled paper. As far-fetched as it may sound, there are a few companies that specialize in turning old paper into eco-friendly vanity and kitchen countertops. The paper is combined with resins to form a durable and water-resistant top that's available in nine beautiful colors.

Pricing for these green vanity tops varies depending on color, size, and manufacturer, but expect them to be in the range of Corian and some granites.

## Vanity top materials – cont'd

### 3. Upscale vanity tops

When you talk about upscale vanity tops, marble and granite have to be part of the conversation. These natural stones are well known for their beauty, durability and extreme color variations and veining. Both stones are available in numerous colors, usually determined by the part of the world from which the stone was quarried. While they were once used primarily in high-end houses, marble and granite vanity tops can now be found in homes of all price ranges.

Marble and granite tops have a wide range of pricing that is based on the size of the top, edging style, and the rarity of the stone variety. Expect costs to start about \$70 per linear foot, but some premium varieties can reach \$200 and higher.

