

## Removing Countertops

One of the most cost effective ways to renovate your home is to “do-it-yourself.” From sanding and painting to digging and planting, there are many projects that a determined homeowner can accomplish. There are some jobs, however, that are better left to the professionals. These jobs are too heavy, too labor intensive or require specialized tools and skills.

Case in point: installing new granite countertops. The weight of the granite alone is enough to send anyone running to a phone to call for professional help. If you have new countertops on the way complete with the manpower do get it done, you are probably thinking you get the day off. But don't lay down your tools just yet. There is a way to cut costs on this otherwise costly project—by doing the demo work yourself. Some contractors charge as much as \$550 to remove the old countertops, a relatively easy job that even the most inexperienced handyman can handle.

First, remove all the drawers from your cabinets. This makes it much easier to gain access to your work area. You will also need to remove the contents of your cabinets so you can get underneath to work. Fortunately, these are things you will need to do before your new counters are installed anyway, so you are already ahead of the game.

It will also be necessary to remove your old sink. To do this, simply detach the plumbing from the drains and faucet (don't forget to turn the water supply off), and remove the fasteners from the underside of the sink. There will be some sealant around the edge of the sink, but it should easily lift from the countertop.

If you look at your existing laminate countertops, you will see that they are in sections. Each section is attached to the cabinet base by screws drilled through the underside of the countertop. The next step to removing the old countertops is removing all these screws. This requires getting down on the floor and inside the cabinets at all kinds of uncomfortable angles. Luckily, a power screwdriver can speed this process along (although a manual screwdriver may still be needed for those hard to get to angles).

Next, remove the sealant from the edge of the backsplash. You can use a putty knife or screwdriver to do this. Be careful to remove as much as you can from any surface that you plan to save, so that when you pull off the counters, it doesn't damage the wall.

Before you try to remove the countertops, make sure you have removed any outlet covers that may be attached to your backsplash. Also, keep in mind that there may be some glue adhering the backsplash to the wall, requiring a little more elbow grease to remove.

Finally, you are ready to take the old counters off. Have someone assist you with the lifting and removal. If you have trouble getting a section off, double check that all your screws have been removed. If the backsplash adhesive is giving you trouble, try sliding a putty knife behind the backsplash to break the bond.

Now your old counters are gone, your kitchen is ready for the new ones, and you saved yourself a little money. Now, all that's left to do is watch the professionals get to work.

## About the Author

Ki helps individuals looking for houses in the [Austin real estate](#) market. His site has a graphical search of the [Austin MLS](#).

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