

Replacing plastic laminate on a counter

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A viewer asked the question, can I replace the plastic surface on my kitchen counter? If there are curves and bends, like a round front edge or a continuous splashback, either forget it, or cut off the curves. With home workshop equipment you won't manage to mold the new plastic laminate to the curve. But you can cut off the front edge of the counter and then finish it off with something like wood molding. The real key is to use the same thing to remove the plastic that may have caused the damage in the first place -- heat. Using either a paint stripper gun or an iron, warm up the plastic, and the contact cement below will soften up. Then you can pry off the plastic, probably little broken piece by little broken piece. Once that is done, scrape the surface flat -- although you don't need to remove all the glue. When putting down the new counter, you should be aware that contact cement now comes in a latex (solvent free) type as well as the standard, solvent type. The latex type appears to cost more, but goes further so actually costs less. Its biggest advantage is that the open time (the time between when it is ready to put the two pieces together and when it is too late to put the two pieces together) is 48 hours! -- not 20 minutes. Which makes it much easier to work with. Cut the laminate to allow a little overlap all around. Then, separate the counter and the laminate with either dowels or wax paper so you can precisely position the new counter surface. Carefully slide out the separator and let the laminate drop into place. Trim off the overlap and attach a new front molding and you have a brand new counter. For more pocket money but much less elbow grease, you could just buy a new counter.

Keywords:

Damage, Counter, Glues, Kitchen, Molding, Laminate, Repair, Techniques