

Fitted kitchens

Kitchen units vary widely in style but since most modern units are a standard size, you can easily transform your kitchen with new worktops or cabinet fronts. For a low cost kitchen makeover, add decorative mouldings or new handles to existing units. If you are buying a new fitted kitchen, measuring up is crucial so you may prefer to ask your supplier to calculate the size of cabinets you require, particularly if you have uneven walls or floors.

Marking out

Mark out the positions of all base and wall-mounted units to ensure your cabinets are installed level.

- First check that there are no cables or pipes behind the walls where you will be fixing the cabinets, using a stud/pipe/cable detector. If you are fixing the units to a stud wall you will need to mark the position of all the wall studs.
- Find a plumb line to align units with by placing a spirit level vertically on an inside corner of adjacent walls. Mark out a vertical plumb line as far into the corner as possible using a level.
- To mark the height of the units, use a spirit level to measure up from the highest point of the floor. A convenient height for units is 890mm (2ft 9in) as this allows for the depth of the worktop on top. Draw a level horizontal line to mark this height.
- Measure the depth of the worktop and draw a second plumb line to mark the top of the worktop.
- Measure up 1400mm (4ft 6in) from the floor and draw a plumb line to mark the bottom of your wall-mounted units.
- Measure the height of the units and draw a plumb line to mark the top of your wall units.
- Starting from your plumb vertical line in the corner, measure and mark out the outline of all individual base and wall-mounted units.
- Use chalk or masking tape to mark the position of the base units on the floor.

Mounting wall units

It is advisable to fit the wall units before the base units as this gives you more room to work.

- If your units have to be fully assembled before being fixed to the wall, affix a temporary timber ledger board to the wall through the wall studs to support the weight of the units. Make sure this is fixed securely to wall studs or a masonry wall.
- Assemble the units one at a time or label doors and fittings so you know what belongs to which unit.
- Start by mounting the wall units from one corner of the



Fix a temporary timber

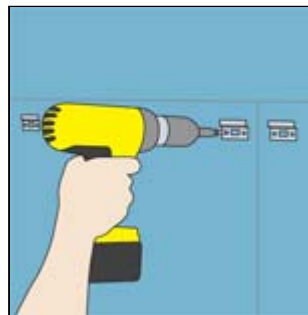
room and work your way along. If the walls are out of plumb, a gap will be created where the wall and cabinet meet. If the gap is less than 6mm (0.2in), plane the cabinets until they fit. Otherwise, fill the gap with shims or filler strip.

- If there are fixtures on the back of the units, drill pilot holes so that you can see the fixture holes from the inside of the unit.
- Attach the unit with the fixings supplied.
- If your unit requires wall brackets, mark out their exact position on your outline of the unit and attach them using suitable screws for the wall type.
- Fix the corresponding unit brackets to the unit at an adjacent angle to the wall bracket so that unit and wall brackets can be slotted together.
- When the units have been fixed, make any final adjustments to the level with the screws in the top corner inside the unit.
- Using screws provided, butt the units against each other so that they appear level from the front and clamp them. Use shims and filler strip where necessary, and connect them.
- Mark the position of the doorknob or handle fixing holes.
- To prevent the wood from splitting as you drill fixing holes, clamp a block of wood to the outside of the door. Drill a hole just larger than the fixings.
- Screw the doorknob or handle in place.
- To hang the doors, screw the hinge plate into the appropriate holes in the side of the unit.
- Position the hinge over the marked area in the door and screw it down.
- Align the hinge and hinge plate and join them together with the pre-inserted hinge pin or screw.
- Secure the hinge by tightening the central screw in the hinge plate.
- Follow the instructions for adjusting kitchen unit doors to ensure the doors are flush and operate smoothly.

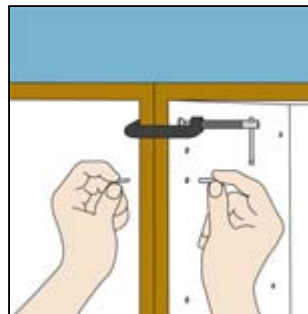
ledger board to the wall through the wall studs to support the weight of the assembled units.



If a gap is less than 6mm plane the cabinets until they fit. Otherwise, fill the gap with shims or filler strip.



If using wall brackets, mark their exact position on your outline of the unit and attach them using suitable screws.



Before screwing the units together, butt them against each other so that they appear level from the front and clamp them and use shims and filler strip where necessary.



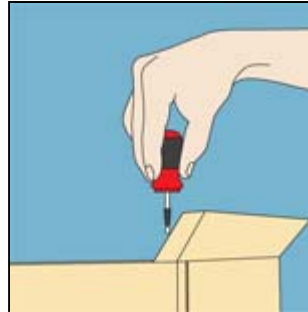
Align the hinge and hinge plate and join them together

with the pre-inserted hinge pin or screw.

Cornice and pelmet

To complete the wall units a cornice can be fixed to the top and a pelmet to the bottom. Cut the pieces of cornice to the required length. As most wall-mounted kitchen units are fitted with one side abutting against a wall, you will need only two pieces of cornice: a short length for the side and a longer length for the front. But both pieces need to be cut to make a mitre joint at the corner of the cabinet. For this it is best to use a mitre box.

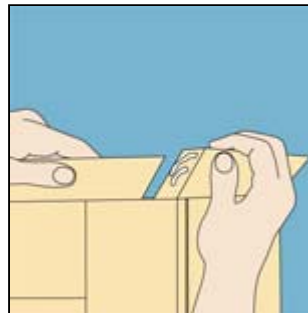
- Carefully place the shorter length of cornice in position and screw it to the top of the unit.
- To produce a stronger joint, apply wood adhesive to the mitred end. Then position the longer piece of cornice so its bottom edge is flush with the front edge of the unit, and its mitred end is firmly butted against the mitre of the shorter piece.
- Screw the longer piece of cornice in place with wood screws. Wipe away any adhesive seeping out of the mitre joint.
- For the same unit two pieces of pelmet will be needed, cut to the required length and mitred at one end.
- Two plastic joining blocks need to be screwed to the top inside edges of both pieces of pelmet.
- First, position the shorter length of pelmet along the shorter edge of the unit and screw it to the underside of the unit.
- With the shorter piece of pelmet in position, apply wood adhesive to its mitred end. Then address the longer piece of pelmet to the front edge of the unit, ensuring the two mitred ends butt together firmly.
- Screw the longer piece of pelmet to the underside of the unit and wipe away any wood adhesive seeping from the mitre joint.



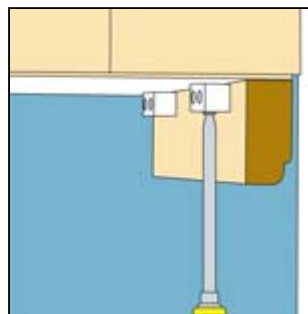
Carefully place the shorter length of cornice in position and screw it to the top of the unit.



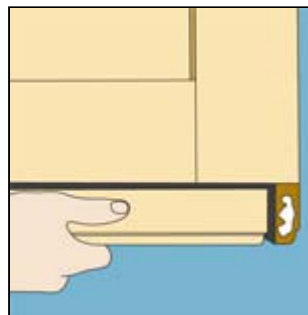
Apply wood adhesive to the mitred end.



Position the longer piece of cornice so its bottom edge is flush with the front edge of the unit, and its mitred end is firmly butted against the mitre of the shorter piece and screw into place.



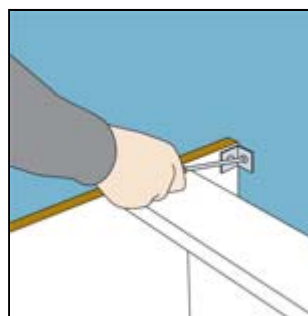
Two plastic joining blocks need to be screwed to the top inside edges of both pieces of pelmet.



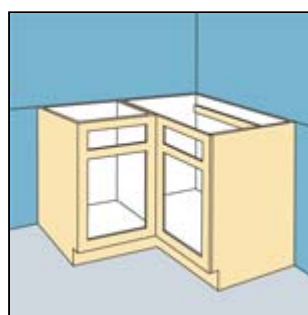
Address the longer piece of pelmet to the front edge of the unit, ensuring the two mitred ends butt together firmly.

Fitting base units

- Install the corner base unit first. This may be a single corner unit, two separate units connected with a corner post, or a blind base and a standard unit.
- If the flooring has not yet been laid, elevate the cabinets on risers to the height of the new floor.
- If your units have adjustable legs, put each unit in place and clamp them together.
- Place a spirit level on top of each unit and adjust the legs until all the units are level.
- Screw the units to the wall through the back of the unit or to a fixing rail with brackets attached to the side of the unit.
- If you are installing a blind inside base unit, position this unit first and then butt the standard unit to it.
- Insert shims under the units and in the front edges as needed to make the unit plumb - it should sit exactly against your marked outline.
- Clamp the units together. The front of the standard unit should stick out further than the front of the base unit to give clearance.
- Measure the gap and insert a shim of the appropriate size between the units at the back and attach the units to the wall, checking that they are level.
- Fit the remaining units, checking the level each time.
- Before fitting the sink unit, cut out plenty of space for supply and waste pipes, using a jigsaw.
- Paint wood preserver and sealant around any sawn edges.
- Butt the units together in the same way as the wall units.
- Fix the handles onto the unit doors. Mark the position of the doorknob or handle fixing holes.

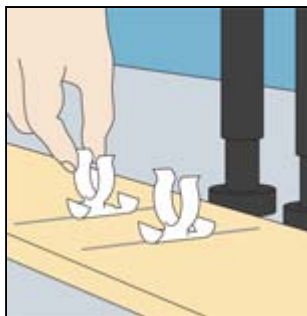


Screw the units to the wall through the back of the unit with brackets attached to the side of the unit.



If you are installing a blind inside base unit, position this unit first and then butt the standard unit to it.

- To prevent the wood from splitting as you drill fixing holes, clamp a block of wood to the outside of the door. Drill a hole just larger than the fixings.
- Screw the doorknob or handle in place.
- To hang the doors, screw the hinge plate into the appropriate holes in the side of the unit.
- Position the hinge over the marked area in the door and screw it down.
- Align the hinge and hinge plate and join them together with the pre-inserted hinge pin or screw.
- Secure the hinge by tightening the central screw in the hinge plate.
- Follow the instructions for adjusting kitchen unit doors to ensure the doors are flush and operate smoothly.
- For a neat finish, fix a plinth to the base of the units. Apply adhesive or screw fixings to the inside face of the plinth or cornice, and attach it to the units. If your units have legs, screw the clips supplied to the plinth and clip them around the legs.
- Following the same process for fixing door handles to the doors of the wall units, attach the handles onto the drawers.
- Screw the drawer fronts onto the drawers inserting the screws into the pre-drilled holes in the inside of the drawer.



If your units have legs, screw the clips supplied to the plinth and clip them around the legs.

Kitchen worktops

The worktop is not only a prominent feature, but also where much of your food preparation takes place so it needs to be hardwearing as well as attractive. Hardwood, marble and granite worktops are durable and stylish but can be expensive and difficult to install. Alternatively, you could choose from a range of laminated worktops with veneers in imitation wood or stone. To tile your worktop, see the project on ceramic tiling.

Worktops tend to come in standard lengths: 2m (6ft 6in), 3m (9ft 8in), and 4m (13ft). Some width may be lost during the installation so it is a good idea to allow for this; any excess can always be cut down to size.

Fitting a kitchen worktop

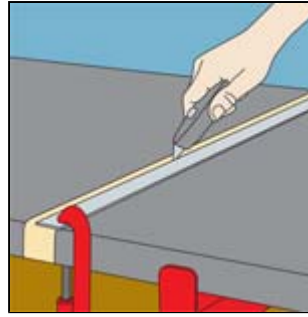
- Place the worktop on the base units with the back edge against the wall and adjust it until the overhang at the front of the units is even.
- Measure the overhang. The overhang should be about 40mm. If it is more than this, you will need to measure the excess and cut off this amount from the back of the worktop with a jigsaw. Wear protective gloves and goggles when using a power saw.
- Scribe the worktop to fit tightly against uneven walls: Reposition the worktop with an even overhang. Measure the largest gap between the back of the worktop and the wall. Cut a block to this size. Push the block hard up against the wall, and, holding a pencil against the front face of the block, run the block and pencil down the length of the worktop so that you draw a line copying the



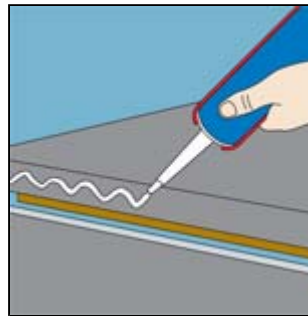
You will need to scribe the worktop to fit tightly against uneven walls.

profile of the wall. Clamp the worktop onto your sawhorses or workbenches and trim along this line using a jigsaw and sharp plane. You may want to smooth the surface with a sander.

- To cut the worktop to the desired length, measure and mark the cutting line on the worktop and cover the line with masking tape.
- Clamp a straightedge along the cutting line to guide you and use a new fine-tooth blade to avoid damage to the veneer. Don't forget to support the end of the worktop you are cutting off, otherwise it may break off and crack the laminate on the whole worktop.
- Remove the masking tape and smooth the edge using a plane.
- To conceal the rough edges, glue on a matching trim or a laminate end cap, or screw on a metal finishing plate. If you use a stick-on trim, you may need to file the edges down, filing towards the worktop.
- If your worktop runs around a corner, now repeat the process to cut and scribe the adjacent length of worktop. If the worktops are mitre cut, first position them so that their angled edges meet exactly, keeping the overhang even along both worktops, and then scribe the second worktop to fit.
- Position the first worktop and mark the screw holes on the base units onto the underside of the worktop.
- Drill pilot holes over your markings with a drill bit slightly smaller than the diameter of the screws.
- If applicable, now position the second worktop and mark and drill the screw holes.
- To join two worktops that are cut straight, screw a joining strip onto the second length of worktop and secure it in place from underneath. To join mitred worktops, apply adhesive to the angled edges and fix them together from underneath.
- Now fix the worktop(s) to the units from underneath with 18mm long screws.
- Seal along the joints and between the worktop and walls or sinks with silicone sealant.



Clamp a straightedge along the cutting line to guide you and use a new fine-tooth blade to avoid damaging the veneer.



To join two straight worktops screw a joining strip onto the second length of worktop and secure it in place from underneath.



Fix the worktop to the units from underneath with 18mm long screws.