

## What do I need to know?

Cabinets are the unsung heroes of the kitchen. When we look at a kitchen we see the doors and accessories, but underneath it are the cabinets. We will almost always choose our dream kitchen on the basis of the right door design to create the desired look; the cabinets are often an afterthought and we simply accept those that our kitchen company supplies.

However, it could save you time and money to put some thought into ensuring the right quality cabinet lies underneath. The 2015 Houzz survey found that on average homeowners changed their kitchens after 13 years; with the right cabinets your kitchen will not only look better but will last longer too.

It is worth remembering that when choosing cabinets it is like building the right foundations for your house; making an informed choice at the beginning will mean your kitchen will look great and last longer.

So what should you be looking for?

### How it is made

The more well built the cabinet, the stronger it will be and the longer it will last. This will keep your kitchen looking great and, should you wish to upgrade in the future, you can change the doors without the need to replace the cabinets.

The strength of a cabinet will be determined by a number of factors:

- The *skills of the person putting it together* will inevitably affect the quality of the finished cabinet. If you purchase a flat-packed cabinet the finish will be less stable than a rigid cabinet ready assembled by machine.
- The *fittings used* will also depend on whether your cabinet is flat-packed or ready assembled. Flat-packed furniture uses the cam and dowel technique. Whereas rigid cabinets are assembled using glue and dowel, a far stronger alternative.
- The *edgings used* on the cabinet will affect its strength and durability. Better quality edgings, such as PVC glued on by machine, will not peel off over time.

### What it is made of

The quality of the materials will affect the strength of the cabinet and the quality of the finish. At the end of the day, you don't want a cabinet that starts to sag after a few years under the weight of a heavy granite worktop.

Due to ease of packing and transportation flat-packed cabinets are made of thinner, lower density chipboard. These are less strong and the materials used also means less choice in colour; usually white, cream or a single wood-effect.

In contrast, rigid cabinets are made of high density, melamine chipboard with solid backings. These give you much more choice for matching with your doors or even to choose a contrasting colour.

### What is inside

Here you will find those finishing touches that can really make a difference. As always the better the quality of materials used, the longer they will last. Poor quality fixings in poor quality cabinets after a while will result in doors dropping and drawers than don't open properly.

Look for branded fixtures and fittings, including soft close hinges, drawer runners and buffers from companies such as Blum or Salice. They may cost more initially, but will last longer than cheap mass produced ones.

There is a vast choice of storage solutions and prices vary considerably, for example Häfele or Kesseböhmer. Consider your storage needs when choosing your cabinets. Think about how you will use your kitchen and what storage you will need in order to maximise the use of space.

### Other things to look out for

- *Service void.* This is the gap behind base cabinets that allows for services, such as electrics, gas and plumbing. Without this gap services need to come from below, inside the cabinet or be buried into the walls, which can lead to an increase in installation time and cost.
- *Adjustable legs and fully adjustable hanging brackets* are pretty much an essential. After all there is no such thing as a perfectly flat floor or straight wall!
- *Internal dimensions* of the wall cabinets. The modern trend for large dinner plates and pasta bowls means that sometimes they don't fit into wall-mounted cabinets. It really is worth checking!
- *Holes for adjusting shelf height.* Not all jars, bottles and kitchen items are the same height, so the ability to change the shelves around will make storage much more flexible.
- *Shaped units for sinks and hobs* can offer you more choice for design and prevent the need to cut cabinets to accommodate your appliances, which would affect the rigidity.

### What will I get from Fitakitchen?

Here at Fitakitchen we send out all our cabinets ready assembled. Mostly they are manufactured rigid using the dowel and glue construction method. In some cases camlock fixings will be used to aid access in restricted areas or to aid manufacture. Additionally, some of the larger tall housings will be delivered as a flat pack, as they are too big to fit through most doorways.

Further specifications:

- All cabinets are constructed using 18mm Egger board and 8mm solid backs.
- Cabinets are colour co-ordinated both inside and out.
- A 52mm void is provided at the rear of base units and an 18mm void is provided at the rear of wall units – to allow for easy plumbing and wiring.
- Base units are 560mm deep (excluding doors).
- Wall units are 300mm deep (excluding doors).
- Base units are supplied with 150mm adjustable legs with sockets. The leg socket is ready fitted, but you will need to attach the legs yourself (this is to avoid breakages during transit).
- Wall units are supplied with concealed hanging and wall-mounting plates, allowing for adjustment.
- Handles are not pre-fitted, as positioning of handles is a very personal choice.
- All cabinetry includes Blum Blumotion Tandembox drawers and Blum Cliptop softclose door hinges.

Usually we sell our cabinets with the chosen doors already attached – this is for ease of fitting and will save you money. However, if you require cabinetry without doors or need a non-standard size, then please do contact us with your requirements [enquiries@fitakitchen.com](mailto:enquiries@fitakitchen.com).