

CREATE A KITCHEN THAT CAN TAKE A LICKING

The kitchen is often the heart of the home. For your kitchen to shine for special occasions, it needs to resist the hazards of everyday life.

The kitchen table

The kitchen table is the workhorse. It's the homework and crafts spot, the cookie-decorating center and the dumping ground for backpacks. Yet when cleared off, it needs to get dressed up

for entertaining and celebrations. So, in selecting your tabletop materials, consider a material that either hides stains, crumbs and scratches, or one which repels.



A crisp white top is one of my favorites in a modern kitchen. Plastic laminate is an inexpensive solution and looks great mounted to

Baltic birch with the layers of wood exposed on the edges. Over time, plastic laminate can stain, scratch or chip.

Solid-surface materials such as Corian are very durable. They resist stains, and a light buffing usually removes any trace of stubborn stains or scratches. The white top in this kitchen was created from Corian and placed on chrome legs. Solid surface can be very heavy, so a sturdy base is necessary.

Using reclaimed wood or a rustic, antique table allows for use without worrying about dents, scratches or stains. They may just add to the patina.

Visual textures can help hide the imperfections of daily life. Granite is durable, and its pattern would help hide crumbs. Kirei board, made from reclaimed sorghum straw, has a wonderful texture and warm color.

Chairs and barstools

Chairs get stained from spills and fingerprints, from using them as a step stool and — in the case of my kids — making their upholstered seats the replacement for a napkin.

Plastic, metal or wood chairs allow for easy cleaning. In the kitchen shown, the kids each have a Stokke Tripp Trapp chair. These chairs adjust as the kids grow, have straps for little ones, and the wood frames and seats clean easily.

If you prefer the softness of upholstered chairs, there are many fabric options that did not exist a few years ago. Sunbrella, other solution-dyed fabrics and commercial fabrics such as Crypton and Nano-Tex brands, have moved beyond the limited solid colors woven into a tough, thick duck cloth. Now there are infinite colors, woven into endless patterns and textures, even soft velvets and boucles. You would never assume by their appearance that, in most cases, liquid spills bead up and roll off without soaking into the fabric. Many of these fabrics clean with bleach, showing no signs of stains or fading.

Think leather is susceptible to oils, fingerprints



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This kitchen includes surfaces that are stylish but can take a beating from the little ones.

and impossible to clean? Now your barstools can repel red wine without a care. Edelman Leather has a Crypton finish, which resists stains.

Select materials to suit your style, amount of use/abuse and cleaning abilities. Now, if I can just get the kids to use a napkin.

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