

## Installation & FAQ

We do recommend that you hire a qualified woodworking professional for home installation. Such a contractor will be able to advise you on finish and care as this will vary depending on the finish you select. However, if you are a do-it-yourself personality, this bamboo material is an absolute joy to work with and installation will be a very satisfying and rewarding experience.

### Finish and Installation

The plank will come to you in an unfinished slab form. We sand it to 180 grit at the factory, but it will need to be fine sanded and finished with a sealer as soon as possible to avoid damage due to excessive dryness. It is advisable to keep the plank tightly sealed in the plastic wrapping in which it is shipped until you are ready to begin work. Once work has begun, re-wrap each night until you have applied your sealer. If you have to cut the plank or make a sink hole, do this before sanding.

### Sanding

We recommend that you sand the plank before you router the edge, that way the sanding will not deform the routers work. Keep the planks well lit at all times, the use of bright shop light off to one side helps with this task. Start with 180 grit paper and slowly work up to 220 grit, and always sand out the scratches before changing grits. Bamboo is a very hard surface and scratches will show up later with finer sanding, so take your time. Sand as thoroughly as you can, as the material really comes to life with fine sanding. We recommend sanding as high as 400 grit, as it highlights all the tiny pores and the culm node joint you wont regret it! Before applying the finish, examine the entire surface closely for scratches. Always remember, it is much more difficult to remove any scratches after the finish has been applied.

### Routing

If you plan on putting a custom edge profile n the countertop, you will have to router the edge face. If it is to be used as an island, router all sides. This material will accept any profile bull nose, mitre, full, round, etc. Note: Bamboo is a very hard fiber and will easily burn and tear out when routing so go slowly and use several passes. Do not try and router your edge in one pass and make sure your bits are brand new or at least very sharp. After routing, go back and cleanup the router marks with fine sandpaper.

## Finishing

You are now ready to apply your choice of sealer. Select any of the great finishes currently available. The process is the same as on a wood surface. We do not recommend applying color stain directly to the raw bamboo as it is difficult to get the stain even. If a stain is required, first seal the bamboo with one coat of finish and then mix the stain into your sealer. This will give it a uniform finish. Always test any finish on the underside. Note: We do not recommend any water based finishes, as they tend dilute the natural colors and appearance of depth; nor do we recommend plain mineral oil or chopping block oil as they tend to dissipate quickly and require weekly re-oiling. We highly recommend Waterlox ([www.waterlox.com](http://www.waterlox.com)) a tung oil/resin finish. This is very easy to apply with a brush or rag. It is best to apply two or three coats of the sealer and two or three coats of the topcoat. The top coat is available in gloss or matte finish. One of the best features of this finish is the easy upkeep, simply recoat every three years, or as needed. follow the instructions on the can for best results. If you plan on using the counter as a cutting surface, use four coats of the sealer only, rub out each coat before it dries to avoid pooling and shiny spots. However, for sanitary reasons, we do recommend the use of cutting boards.

## Joining Planks Together

For kitchen island installation, or if you want to make the counters over thirty six inches wide, you'll need to join multiple planks together. All you need is a few pipe clamps and some high-grade two part epoxy (we recommend West System [www.westsystem.com](http://www.westsystem.com)), a router and a belt sander. The factory edge needs to be trued-up before gluing. This is accomplished by clamping a straight edge (angle iron or a very straight board) to the top as a guide for your router. Use a new or very sharp straight router bit for this procedure. Do not cut more than about 1/16 at a pass and work slowly so as not to burn the cut. Repeat this for the opposite edge. Test for straightness by dry clamping the planks together and make sure no gap is visible. We recommend that you use biscuits or dowels about every six inches in the adjoining faces to make the seam stronger. ALWAYS dry run (no glue) the clamping procedure to help anticipate potential problems. If possible, clamp on a flat concrete floor. Hint: On a concrete floor tape down a thin sheet of plastic. Use caution so that the plastic does not creep into the glue seam during clamping, the pipe clamps have a tendency to bow the planks up from either end. To prevent such problems, you can use a downward force, such as a simple 2x 4 wedged from the ceiling properly placed on three or four strategic spots on the planks. Let dry overnight, then simply belt sand the seam flat. Be careful to keep the sander moving in a figure eight motion and avoid bearing down so as not to create dips and valleys. When the two surfaces are even, switch to an orbital hand sander (see sanding instructions)

## Installation

It is best if you can completely finish the counter off site and installed it with all surfaces and edges pre-finished in some cases this is not possible, but in any case make sure all edges are pre-sealed (yes even the edge that goes against the wall!) Totally bamboo recommends fastening your counters to the cabinets or other structural members about every 12" if this is not feasible use a caulking type adhesive or a silicone bead (typically this would be on a back edge or cleat that is not accessible from the inside of the cabinet) make sure the bracket or tie down has a over size hole to allow for the counters seasonal movement which can be up to  $\frac{1}{4}$ " in width and up to  $\frac{3}{8}$ " in length (per 96") depending on the climate in your area