



# SINK FITTING GUIDE

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## I. CHOOSING YOUR SINK

Choosing a sink to go with your new countertops can be a harder part of the process than you might expect. It is often an after-thought or a last-minute decision, but it shouldn't be – for a couple of reasons:

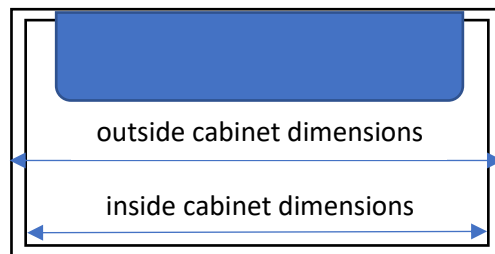
- Your sink choice may dictate the way your cabinets are built, or may necessitate modifications to your existing cabinets. The more information you can give your cabinetmakers or contractor upfront, the smoother the process will go – and the less likely you are to incur delays (and extra costs).
- Unless you are working with a laminate countertop that can easily be cut on site, your countertop fabricators are going to need to know the precise sink shape and dimensions before they begin fabrication. In our case, with concrete, we build the sink cut-out right into the mould, so we require the sink before we can pour your countertops.
- Remember, too, that the sink you want (or need) may not be available for off-the-shelf purchase at the time that you go looking for it, and it can take some time to bring in special orders. If you don't have your sink in hand at the time of templating, you may

delay the fabrication and installation of your countertops, which can be frustrating for both you and your countertop fabricators.

When it comes to selecting your sink, there are **two basic considerations** (material and colour aside): the **style** of sink, and the **size** of the sink. The style – usually a choice between top-mount, undermount, farmhouse or vessel – is a question of design and personal preference. The size of your sink, however, is very much determined by the size of your cabinets and the structural requirements of your countertops.

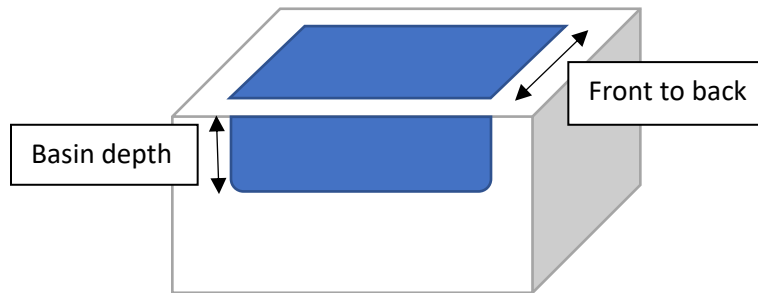
**Size:** At the most basic level, your sink must be **SMALLER** than your sink cabinet. You need to make sure that there is enough room in the **interior** of your cabinet for the sink to sit and be secured. There are three dimensions that you need to pay attention to.

**Left to right:** Sink specifications will generally include a minimum cabinet size. For example, a 33” sink (referring to the measurement from left to right from the outer edges of the sink lip) might specify a minimum cabinet size of 36”. (Not sure what size sink cabinet you need? 36” wide is a good, standard option.) Note that the cabinet size specified is referring to **outside** measurements (from outside edge to outside edge of the cabinet), so the actual width of the open space where the sink has to fit will be smaller than this. Sink manufacturers tend to cut it tight when specifying minimum cabinet size, so it is a good idea to check with your installers about their specific requirements for sink sizes before purchasing your sink.



**Front to back:** Verify the size of your sink from **front to back** to ensure that it is compatible with the depth of your cabinets and countertops. For top-mount and undermount sinks, you need a certain width of countertop material in front of, and behind, your sink cut-out to satisfy structural and functional considerations. Farmhouse sinks and vessel sinks need to leave enough room behind the sink to place faucet holes in the countertop without getting too close to the back edge. Whatever kind of sink you choose, remember to allow room behind the sink for faucets and accessories, your

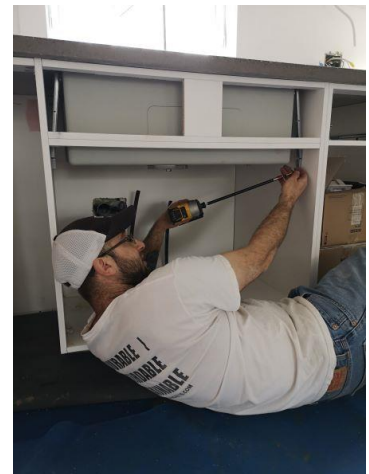
backsplash (if applicable) and window sills that might stick out and limit how far back your faucet can go.



**Basin depth:** The depth of your sink basin has less to do with countertop requirements or cabinet size, and more to do with sink capacity, ergonomics and water consumption. How much water will it take to fill up your sink? How far do you want to reach down when washing? How big are your pots and pans? You will need to ensure that the plumbing for your sink is designed accordingly. If you are replacing an existing sink with a deeper or shallower basin, you may need to have the height of the plumbing adjusted to align with your sink drain.

When it comes to **concrete**, we have two main considerations:

1. We need to ensure that the concrete around the cut-out is wide enough on all sides to be structurally sound (wide enough at the back to accommodate faucet holes, if required, and wide enough front and back to minimize the likelihood of cracking during transportation and installation).
2. We need enough space between the sink walls and the **inside** edges of the cabinet to properly secure the sink in place. We use a combination of silicone and compression clips, and need room to get our hands and tools into the space between the sink and the cabinet to secure the clips. The minimum cabinet size specifications do not always allow for this.



Every style of sink has its own specific installation requirements, which are important to understand as you choose your sink. Read on to find out more about general considerations,

and our specific requirements for the different types of sinks. If you've still got questions, we'd be happy to help!

## II. TOP MOUNT (DROP-IN) SINKS



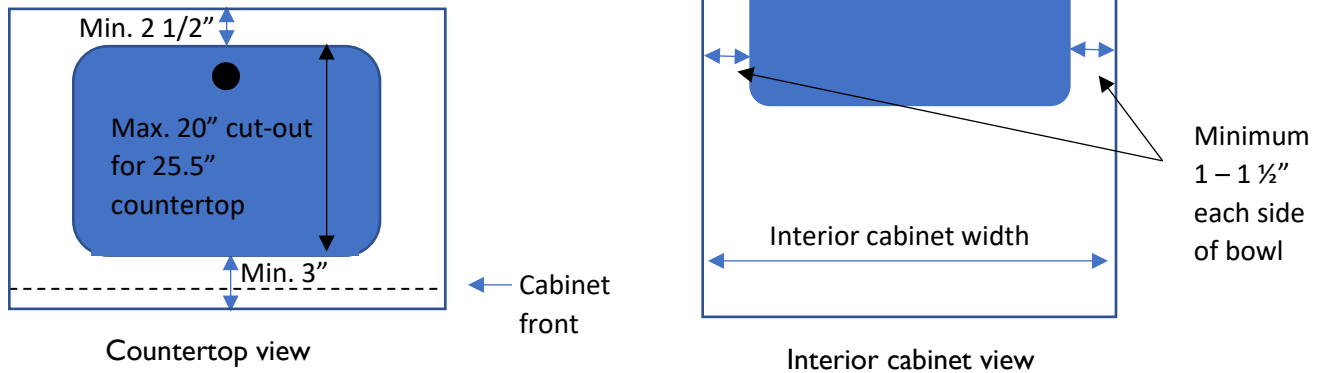
Top mount or drop-in sinks are the simplest, and cheapest, to install, and can be used in both stone and laminate countertops. They require a rough cut-out to accommodate the size and shape of the sink, but they do not require as precise a fit as an undermount sink, nor do they require that the inside edges of the cut-out be finished, as these edges are not visible once the sink is installed.

Drop-in sinks sit on top of the counter, with the lip resting on the counter, and have faucet holes built into the sink itself. The cut-out will be larger than for an undermount sink as it must accommodate both the sink and the faucets. Drop-in sinks are generally secured to the counter with clips underneath to hold the sink tight against the countertop (clips are usually supplied with the sink), and with a line of silicone around the rim of the sink to stop water from getting in where the sink meets the countertop surface.

**Sizing:** The following diagrams illustrate the minimum distances that we require between the **sink cut-out** and the edges of the countertop and cabinets when installing a drop-in sink. We require a **minimum of 2.5" behind** the cut-out **and 3" in front** to provide structure to the slab. If you are installing a standard 25.5" deep countertop, you should choose a sink that requires a cut-out that is no larger than 20" front to back. If you aren't sure how to determine the cut-out size, choose a sink that measures **no more than 21" from front to back, lip to lip**.



To determine the maximum sink size, left to right, measure the **interior** cabinet dimensions from left to right and **subtract 2 to 3 inches**. Your sink **bowl** should be no wider than this measurement. This will ensure that there is at least a 1 to 1 1/2 inch gap between the edge of the sink bowl and the inside wall of the cabinets, allowing room for the installers to properly secure the sink to the countertops. One (1) inch is a minimum. One and a half (1 1/2") is preferable. Remember that the stated sink size usually refers to 'lip to lip' measurements, so you may have to dig to confirm the actual bowl size if you can't physically measure the sink.



**Templating:** When preparing the cut-out for a drop-in sink, we can usually follow the paper template that comes with it if necessary, although it is preferable that we have the sink itself on hand, as the templates are not always accurate.

### III. UNDERMOUNT SINKS



Undermount sinks, as their name suggests, are secured to the underside of the countertop – usually with a combination of glue or silicone and some form of clips or bracing. The cut-out for an undermount sink is more precise than for a drop-in, mirroring the exact form of the sink, and the inside edges of the cut-out must be finished (polished) as they will be visible. You can expect to pay extra for an undermount sink cut-out, given the added labour and precision involved in both fabrication and installation. As a rule, undermount sinks can only be installed in stone or solid surface countertops (including concrete), where the inner edge of the cut-out can be finished and exposed to water – which is not the case with laminate.

The main advantage of an undermount sink is that there is no raised sink lip resting on the counter. In addition to a nice clean look, this means that you can wipe things right from the counter into the sink with no crumbs or water getting caught around the lip. Beware, however, that water and gunk can collect on top of the sink ledge, where the sink meets the bottom of the countertop, if the cut-out leaves a portion of the sink ledge exposed. At D.A.S., we make our cut-outs slightly smaller than the sink opening to cover the sink ledge and reduce the risk of ‘gunk’ build-up, but there is no hard and fast rule about this within the industry.



**Faucet holes.** True undermount sinks do not include faucet holes. These will be drilled directly into the counter, positioned according to your preference and any structural or functional considerations (e.g. window sills). As a rule, faucets are placed in the centre of sink, although we have had clients request an offset where the two sink bowls are not of equal size, or to cheat the eye where the sink is not perfectly centred vis-à-vis the window.

There are a number of sink models available that can be mounted as either drop-in or



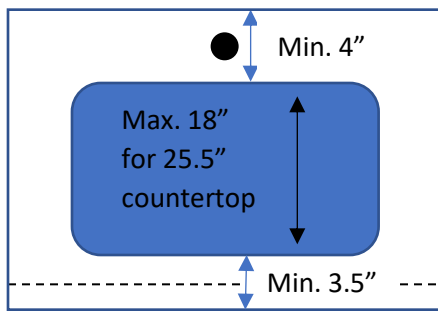
This sink can be mounted as undermount or drop-in.

undermount. These models include built-in punchouts for faucet holes, meaning that if you are installing the sink as an undermount, the faucet holes in the counter must line up with the punchouts underneath. This can be done, of course, but it eliminates any flexibility for the placement of your faucets and creates somewhat of a headache for the installers. Our advice is that, if you know you want an undermount sink, go for a true undermount.

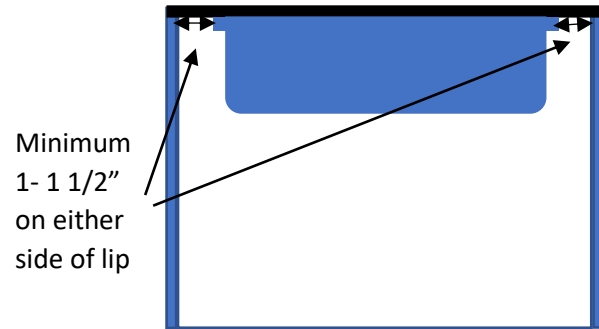
**Sizing.** Because faucets are not included, the cut-out for an undermount sink will be smaller from front-to-back than a drop-in sink with the same bowl dimensions. This isn't a licence to go big, though! You need to leave adequate room for the faucet holes behind the sink. Moreover, because your sink is essentially hanging from the underside of the counter, it is important that you leave your installers room to properly install the sink using the appropriate systems for your countertop material. At D.A.S., we use a combination of silicone and pressure clips to minimize the risk of failure. We need enough room on all sides of the sink to insert both the clips, and our hands and tools as we fasten them.



Below are some guidelines with respect to **our** requirements for undermount sink sizes. As a rule, in a standard 25.5" deep countertop, your undermount sink should measure **no more than 18" total from front to back** (including the lip). To determine the maximum width of your sink from left to right, subtract 2-3 inches from the **interior** cabinet dimensions. This will ensure a minimum of **1 – 1 ½ inches** between the lip of the sink and the inner walls of the cabinet. If you don't have access to your cabinets (because they're not built yet), choose a sink that is **3 ½-4 inches smaller** than the stated cabinet size (outer edge to outer edge).



Countertop view



Interior cabinet view

Remember, when choosing the **depth** of your sink bowl(s), that an undermount sink will sit an inch or two lower than a top mount sink.

**Templating:** While we can work with a paper template for drop-in sinks if required, we need to have the actual sink on hand when preparing an undermount cut-out in order to ensure a precise fit. For custom projects, we generally pick up the sink at the time of templating, and bring it with us when we return to install the countertops. If the sink is not available at the time of templating, it is the client's responsibility to get it to us before we can proceed with their project.



#### IV. FARMHOUSE / APRON FRONT SINKS



Farmhouse or apron front sinks sit at the front of your cabinets with the front side of the sink exposed. It is important to understand that **these sinks are not supported by the countertop, but rather by the cabinets underneath** (see **Installation** section below for details).

Farmhouse (or apron front) sinks often serve as a showpiece in a kitchen, and can lend either a country look or a modern feel to the space, depending on the sink design. They are usually, but not necessarily, undermount, with faucets holes drilled into the countertop behind the sink. Farmhouse sinks tend to have wider, deeper bowl(s) than your typical undermount or drop-in sink, which can be good or bad depending on how you look at it: bigger bowls can be practical if you often work with oversized pots and pans, or if you like to use your sink for things other than dishes – as a baby bath or laundry sink, for example! – but they require a lot of water to fill up, and can be

hard on the back for people who are taller or shorter than average. Note, as well, that you will have less storage space under your sink cabinet, as the farmhouse sink will occupy the top half.

**Sink Installation:** Unlike other sinks, farmhouse sinks are supported by a frame built into the cabinet underneath, rather than being suspended from the countertop. As such, the sink cabinet has to be specially designed (or modified) to hold a farmhouse sink. The cabinet doors will be shorter, as the sink will occupy the top portion of the cabinet front, and a frame must be built within the cabinet to support the sink at the correct height. Remember that a large sink full of water is very heavy, so the frame needs to be solid and the sink secure.

Unlike with other sinks, which are installed after the countertops are in place, **farmhouse sinks need to be installed in their final position prior to templating the countertops** to ensure that the size and placement of the countertop cut-out around the sink can be accurately determined. If you want a farmhouse sink, it is important that you plan ahead!

### Positioning:

**Height:** It is important that the frame supports your farmhouse sink at the correct height.



While shims can be used for minor adjustments upward, they should not be relied upon as a substitute for good framing. Framing your sink to just the right height can be difficult, so bring in a professional to get it right if need be. But what is the right height?

If you're installing your farmhouse sink as an undermount, you want the top of the sink lip to sit even with or just below the top of the cabinets where the countertop will rest. By "just" we mean no more than 1/16". It is important that the sink NOT sit higher than the top of the cabinets as this will throw off the countertops.



This sink is too low.

While top-mount farm sinks do exist, they are not common, and tend to be of unique design. If you are installing your farmhouse sink as a top mount, be sure to consult your cabinet maker and countertop fabricator/installer ahead of time to confirm installation requirements based on the specific sink you have chosen.

**How far forward?** It is up to you how far forward you want your sink to sit, vis-à-vis the front edge of the countertop. It is largely a question of aesthetics, and may depend on the whether your sink bows out at the front or runs straight across. Many people prefer to pull their farmhouse sinks forward a little bit, so that the front edge of the sink extends out beyond the edge of the countertop. This puts a greater focus on the sink as a design feature. There is no right or wrong, but you will need to determine where you want the sink to sit prior to

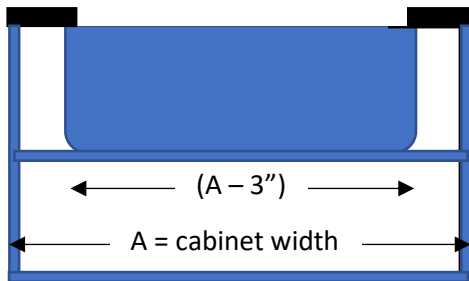




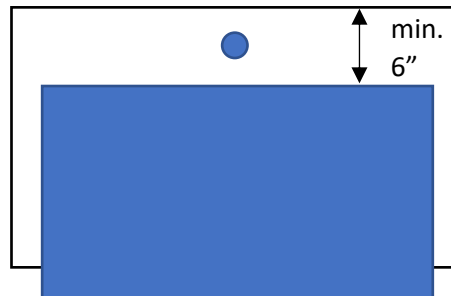
templating, and ideally secure it there so that it doesn't shift prior to installation. Make sure your sink is centered from left to right within the cabinet too before fixing it in position! Once the position of the countertop cut-out has been determined at templating, you will not be able to reposition the sink.

**Choosing your sink size:** While it is less critical that installers can get their hands in between your farmhouse sink and the inside wall of your cabinets, you still want to allow room within the cabinet to work around the sink while securing it in place. A good rule of thumb is to choose a sink that is 3" smaller than your cabinet size (measured from outer edge to outer edge, left to right). For example, choose a 33" farmhouse sink for a 36" cabinet.

Most farmhouse sinks measure between 18" to 21" front to back. You will need to leave enough room behind the sink for a stretch of counter that is wide enough to accommodate your faucet and any structural requirements related to your particular countertop material. Remember that how far forward you choose to position your sink will affect the amount of countertop space behind. With concrete, we like to have 6" of countertop to work with behind the sink. Any farmhouse sink within the standard range of 18" – 21" can be accommodated in a standard 25 1/2" deep countertop, as long as it is positioned accordingly.



Front cabinet view



Top view

**Considerations for D.A.S. clients:** The one-sided cut-out required for a farmhouse sink



(without a stretch of countertop at the front to provide structural support) creates a weak point in a long stretch of concrete countertop, with a high chance of cracking around the cut-out during handling and transportation. As such, we install most farm sinks with a separate backpiece behind the sink, seamed on either side. Because of this, farm sinks can be useful in breaking up an otherwise long stretch of countertop that may exceed our handling capacity or push your square foot pricing beyond what you budgeted for.



When framing your cabinets for a farm sink, remember to include supports for the concrete back piece behind the sink, as shown here.

If you are planning to include a farm sink in a concrete **island**, please consult us early on (before your cabinet design is finalized), as the placement of the farm sink and the size of the island are important factors in determining feasibility. An off-centred farm sink cut-out in a large island can create structural issues during handling and installation that may lead us to refuse the project or charge a higher price to compensate for the higher risk of breakage.



## V. VESSEL SINKS



Vessel sinks are essentially bowls that sit on top of the countertop, with a hole drilled in the countertop for the drain to pass through. They are primarily used for bathrooms, and are frequently used as a decorative feature. The variety of shapes, colours and materials – ranging from glass to stone, and of course, concrete – is extensive, which can be exciting or overwhelming depending on who you are.

Like with everything, there are pros and cons. Vessel sinks are perhaps the cheapest and easiest type of sink to install, as they do not require a full cut-out in the countertop, but just a hole for the drain. They are a good DIY option for this reason, and can be mounted in any type of countertop. They are also relatively easy to replace if you are someone who likes to redecorate often (although – for the sake of the environment - we encourage you to think twice before replacing something that is still perfectly functional for purely aesthetic reasons). And depending on the shape and size of your vessel sink, you may gain some counter space. Vessel sinks are a good choice for smaller vanities – in powder rooms or guest bathrooms, for example – where a full-sized sink cut out might not be practical.

Beware, however, from an ergonomic perspective, that your sink bowl will be higher than an in-counter sink, which could be uncomfortable or inconvenient for children and shorter people. Some people find that cleaning around the base of a vessel sink, where it meets the countertop, can be difficult to reach, and a magnet for dirt. Others find that vessel sinks have a higher tendency to cause splashing, although this can be mitigated by choosing the right faucet height and placement. If you are replacing an existing in-counter sink, you may need to have your plumbing extended upward toward the countertop to meet the vessel sink drain.

**Sizing your vessel sink:** There is less standardization for vessel sinks than there is for other styles of sink. You don't need to worry about sizing the vessel sink to fit within the sink cabinet, but you do need to ensure that your sink fits on your countertop, with room for the faucet hole behind or beside the sink (unless you are installing a wall-mounted faucet). While most vessel sinks will fit on a standard vanity top (22 – 22.5" deep), it is always recommended that you confirm the fit of your particular sink choice before finalizing your order or purchase.

Knowing your sink size and shape will be important in determining where you need the drain and faucet holes placed within your countertop. You will need to confirm drain position with both your plumber and your countertop fabricators, to ensure that the plumbing lines up with the sink drain.

**Drain hole size:** If you are having countertops custom-made, and the fabricators will be responsible for cutting or forming the drain holes, you will need to confirm the required hole size prior to fabrication. This may be specified in the documentation for your sink, but if you are unsure, provide the sink itself to your fabricators so that they can confirm the measurements. Note that vessel sink drain holes are wider than standard drain or faucet holes.



Note that most vessel sinks do not have overflows, and many are not designed for pop-up drains (meaning that you won't be able to 'close' the drain to fill up the basin for washing your face etc.).

**Faucet height and placement:** If you are installing a faucet in your countertop, you will need to choose a faucet that is tall enough to reach over the rim of your vessel sink – in other words, you will need a "vessel sink faucet". If you want to minimize splashing, however, don't choose a faucet that is way higher than the edge of your sink. The farther the water has to fall, the more likely it is to splash when it hits the bowl.

Be prepared to specify where you want your faucet placed vis-à-vis your sink, as there is greater flexibility with vessel sinks. The main options would be centred behind the sink, or offset to the left or right. Ideally, you want the spout near the back edge of the bowl, rather

than pouring into the centre of the sink. This, along with the right faucet height, will help reduce the risk of splashing.

Some people choose to install a wall mounted faucet to go with their vessel sink. A wall mounted faucet allows greater flexibility with respect to the size and position of your vessel sink, as you don't have to leave room behind the sink for faucet holes in the countertop. Beware, however, that retrofitting the plumbing for a wall faucet can be quite expensive. If you want a wall faucet, plan ahead and budget for it.

**Considerations for D.A.S. clients:** If you are planning to install a vessel sink, we will require that you specify the following details before we can finalize the moulds and pour your countertops:

- Position of drain and faucet holes
- Required hole size for your sink drain

If you are unsure how to determine these details, or would like some help in figuring out the best positioning, we would be happy to work with you at the time of templating, provided that you have your sink(s) and faucet(s) on hand.

## VI. OTHER SINK CONSIDERATIONS

Here are a few other considerations when it comes to sinks, based on what we have observed or heard from our own clients:

**Single or double bowl?** Your overall cabinet size may determine whether you have room for a double bowl sink. Most single bowl sinks are 33" wide or less, while double bowls sinks can measure up to 48" wide (left to right). Remember that, the bigger the sink, the more counter space it will take up.

Even if your cabinet is big enough to hold a double bowl sink, you still have a choice to make. Depending on how wide your cabinet is from left to right, you may have to choose between two smaller bowls or one big bowl. Think about your dishwashing habits. Double bowls can be handy if you do a lot of dishes by hand, as they allow you to wash on one side, and rinse on the other. If you mainly wash large pots by hand, a larger single bowl might be more practical.

**Two even sized bowls or one larger / one smaller bowl?** If you want a double bowl sink, but have limited space in your cabinet, consider a sink with one larger and one smaller bowl. This will make it easier to accommodate larger pots and pans, while still leaving you a second bowl for rinsing etc. If you go with one larger and one smaller bowl in an undermount sink, you may want to think through where to place your faucet. Do you want it centred on the sink cut-out, or aligned with the division between the two bowls? If your sink is centred on a

window, you may want to centre the faucet with the window instead. There is no right and wrong, but be prepared to make a decision.

**Sinks in the island?** As islands get bigger, it is increasingly common to see sinks in the island, rather than along the kitchen wall. An island sink can be a good option if your kitchen wall doesn't have a window. In open concept homes, placing a sink in the island allows you to look out into the home's living space and survey children or participate in conversations while you wash, rather than having your back turned to family and friends. On the other hand, where the option exists, some people find the act of washing dishes while gazing out the window to be a relaxing experience and an opportunity to disconnect.

Before you decide to put your sink in your island, think about your dishwashing habits and the suitability of your island material for frequent exposure to soap and water. Where do you usually store your dirty dishes? And what do you do with the clean ones? Having stacks of dirty (or clean) dishes on your island may or may not bother you, but at least take the time to think it through.

As noted above in the Farmhouse Sinks section, if you are planning to install a farmhouse sink in your island, check with your countertop fabricators before finalizing the design to ensure that the placement of the sink will not cause structural issues during fabrication and installation.

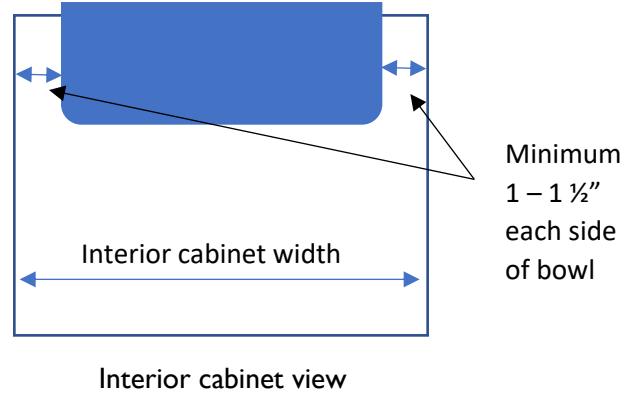
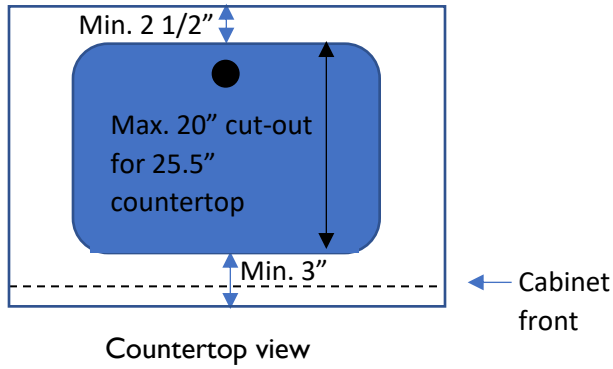
**Sink materials.** There are many different sink materials on the market today, and this guide is long enough without us pretending to be experts on the pros and cons of each. Do a search online for 'best sink materials' and you will find plenty of information. We will say, however, that it is worth putting a bit of time into choosing your sink material. Unless you have a vessel sink, it can be difficult to replace a sink without replacing, or at least modifying, your countertops. Looks and cost are important, of course, but you should also consider durability, scratch and crack resistance, and how easy the sink is to clean and repair.

## VII. FINAL WORDS

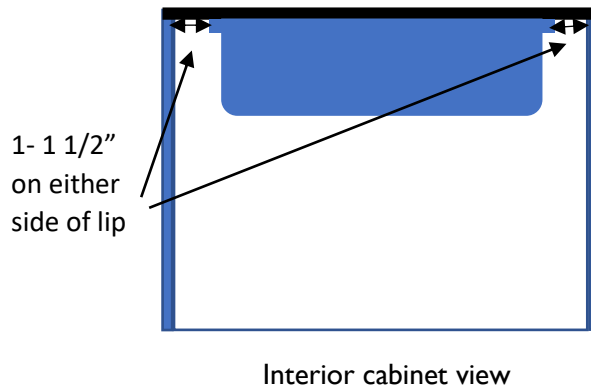
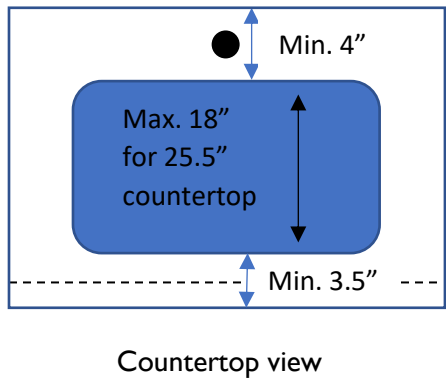
If you remember nothing else from reading this guide, remember this: **your sink should not be an afterthought!** If you are struggling with sink sizes, or are unsure whether your dream sink can work in your cabinets, please don't hesitate to contact us. We often can't proceed with your project until your sink is physically present, so give yourself time to get this piece right!

# SINK SIZING QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

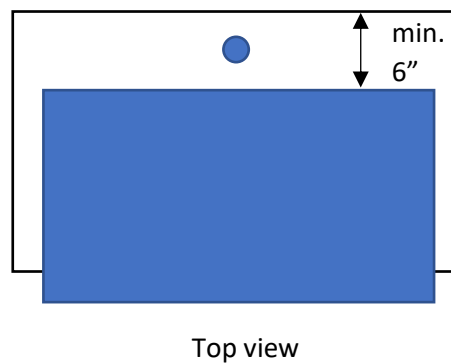
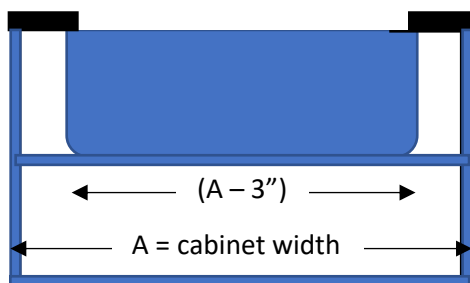
## Topmount sinks



## Undermount sinks



## Farmhouse / apron front sinks



## **Vessel sinks**

While sizing requirements for vessel sinks are less precise than for other styles of sink, you will want to make sure that there is enough room on the countertop behind or beside your vessel sink to place a faucet, and that the sink itself leaves you enough useful countertop space to store your bathroom 'stuff'.

Be prepared to specify:

- Position of drain and faucet holes
- Required hole size for your sink drain

Remember that you will need a taller faucet to reach over the edge of the vessel sink!