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## Sinks and mixers

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Of all appliances, the sink is the workhorse of the kitchen. Research shows that about 60% of the time spent in the kitchen is at the sink, compared with about 20% at the cooker. For this reason alone, it is important that the right sink is chosen at the outset.

The sink is also the least likely appliance to be replaced, partly because of the expense of altering the plumbing but mostly because it will affect the worktop in which it sits, where the cut-out hole will almost certainly be different or the bowl(s) may be an integral part of the worktop material.

For locating the sink within the kitchen, see pp. 41, 42.

A single sink bowl is not enough for washing food, filling pans, disposing of waste, hand washing dishes and/or clothes, doing flowers, etc. Ideally houses have a separate utility/laundry room with a large deep sink for laundry which can also deal with washing muddy boots, soaking clothes and filling vases.

Even in the smallest kitchen a '1½ bowl sink' is preferable to a single sink bowl as it allows for slops to be disposed of in the smaller sink.

In seriously small kitchens, where there is room for only a single bowl, choose the largest possible so that a smaller washing up bowl may be used within the sink, leaving space around for rinsing dishes or disposing of waste.

The small kitchen may also benefit from a chopping board accessory designed to fit over the sink bowl which will extend the available worktop area when the bowl is not in use.

## Types of sinks

Sinks come in the following broad categories:

<b>Inset</b>	a sink top inserted into a hole cut out of the worktop and secured with a self-rimming flange.
<b>Sit-on</b>	sink top designed to fit over a specific sized base cupboard which will butt up against adjoining worktop surfaces and leave an undesirable dirt-trapping slot.
<b>Under-mounted</b>	individual or double bowl units fixed to the underside of work tops made of solid material.
<b>Integral with worktop</b>	bowls cast or welded to a worktop of the same material, i.e. composite stone, Corian, SS, etc.
<b>Individual</b>	individual bowl(s) such as the traditional fireclay Belfast sink which can sit on or be adjacent to worktops or draining boards.

Sink unit surrounds should include holes for mixers to contain water splashes and keep limescale spotting off the adjacent worktop. Ideally sink mixers should be *wall mounted* to avoid the problem of scale and dirt accumulating round the base of mixers. But this involves making a duct behind the sink to accommodate pipework and to allow the underside of the spout to project about 110 mm over the sink top.

*Waste outlets* are better positioned at the rear of the sink bowl to allow more flat area as a work surface. This prevents plugs from being accidentally removed and makes for more accessible storage space in the cupboard underneath the bowl.

Note that the depths of sinks can vary from as shallow as 120 mm to as deep as 250 mm.