with sheet metal. Some come with geometric patterned textures. NOTE that this type of laminate is suitable only for *light duty*, *vertical, interior surfaces.* However manufacturers are still developing new metallic laminates which they are confident will be suitable for work surfaces in the future.

Postforming

Most laminates can be postformed to bend over worktop front edges and over upstands at back of worktops. The usual recommended minimum internal radius is 10 mm, although some manufacturers can use a 3-mm radius which produces an almost square-edged look mimicking that of natural stone worktops.

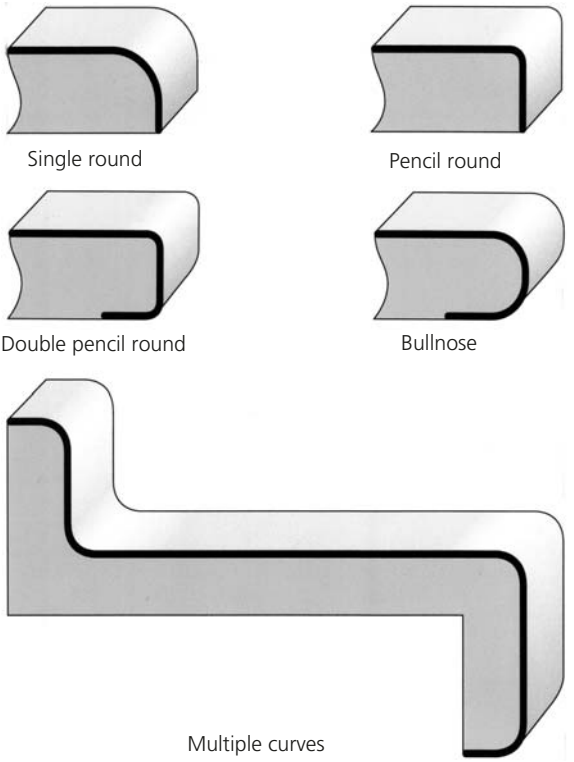
Worktop manufacture and substrates

Plastic laminate worktops are always made in specialist workshops as it is difficult to achieve bubble-free bonding of the laminate to the substrate and to make perfectly mitred corner joints. Where worktops are made on site, advice should be sought from the manufacturer as to the most appropriate adhesive as these may vary from product to product.

The most suitable substrates for plastic laminates are moisture resistant chipboard, MDF and plywood as these are cellulose based with dimensional movement characteristics similar to those of decorative laminates.

Typical thickness is 28 or 38 mm. The underside and rear edge of the substrate should be faced with moisture resistant foil.

The most practical front edge profile is *bullnosed* or *double pencil round* where a postforming grade laminate is carried down the front face and back 15 mm underneath where it should meet the moisture resistant foil. This joint should be



Front edge and Upstand profiles for plastic laminate worktops
by Spa Laminates

sealed with a silicone or resin seal. The distance of 15 mm is so that any drips from the front edge will fall on the face rather than the top edge of the cabinet doors below. See p. 160.

Front edges may also be lipped with hardwood or aluminium trim.

For a better, easy-to-clean, moisture-proof kitchen worktop, an integral upstand 75 to 100 mm high should be fixed to the back with the laminate taken up and round the top edge.

Holes for sinks, taps and hobs are generally best cut on site as the exact positions of these fittings can vary slightly from the drawings.