

out of the woods

Give your island a custom treatment with a little lumber

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Tip Sheet

Don Conner, director of the National Wood Flooring Association Certified Professionals, offers advice on how to best approach this project:

- Start with a 4x8-foot sheet of cabinet-grade plywood cut to the desired length and width.
- Use ¾-inch-thick strips or planks for the top layer. Any hardwood will do, but softer species like cherry or walnut will show more wear.
- Glue the wood strips to the plywood, then screw each piece from beneath to create a tight seal. Attach 2x¾-inch facers onto the sides and round their edges for a finished look. Build the legs separately and screw the cross brace into the underside of the plywood.
- Cut holes out for the sink and faucet if your island has plumbing, and sand the entire piece before applying stain and polyurethane. Remove sink and faucet from the original island, then lay on the new top and reinstall the plumbing. Affix the wood with angle brackets on the four corners of the cabinet.
- Anchor the legs for stability by drilling dowel holes into the floor and underside of the leg or use a wrought-iron bolt from the top.

Add the warmth of wood to the blandest of kitchens and instantly double work and seating space by extending your basic island into a long and lanky wood counter. Even if your kitchen doesn't have tons of spare floor space, this hybrid counter/table unit creates a more open look and leaves plenty of leg room. With some plywood, solid wood strips or planks and the right stain,

anyone can tackle this do-it-yourself project. Create drama by contrasting cream cabinets with rich mahogany accents, or opt for a more neutral palette. The bonus? Unlike stone or laminate countertops—once nicked, forever flawed—wood surfaces can always be sanded, stained and recoated with a protective layer for that just-built shine. ♦