



Bring Natural Elements Into Your Home With Stone, Brick, Tile or Wood

One of the reasons we love nature so much is our inherent connection to the outdoors and to natural elements that are living such as wood. Choosing materials that resonate with your personal style is the first step for bringing them into your home. One homeowner may enjoy the rugged nature of natural stone walls in their kitchen – while another may prefer the more sophisticated flair of dark wood mahogany flooring in their living room. Choose natural elements that incorporate your style and connect you to your interiors.

Wood

For many homeowners wood is one of the only materials that can be finished to look like shiny marble or can be left raw and unstained to reveal its gorgeous imperfections of knots and grains. Bringing wood into your interiors is one of the easiest and warmest of natural materials and comes in a variety of finishes, species and applications. From flooring to ceiling beams wood also can be reclaimed and refinished from older buildings to keep its life sustainability ongoing for years in your home.

And Wood furniture is one of the most popular as it is durable, beautiful and wood can be finished in any way imaginable. Look to artisan crafted furniture if you prefer a rustic and country appeal to your interiors, or look to antique wood bedroom and living furniture to bring back the nostalgia of early turn of the century home living. If your , wood furniture with minimal lines that is free from ornamentation can create show-stopping appeal in your kitchen bar stools or in your sleek headboard of your bed.

Tile

One of the most versatile materials out there, tile, can work well on floors and walls as well as for decor. Whether you're considering a low-budget bathroom remodel or you're planning a major kitchen renovation, tile can add functionality and beautiful aesthetic appeal to any room. "In addition to white subway tile and marble, brick-look and stone-look tile are some of our best sellers," says Kailyn Bachman from H. Winter Tile in Allentown, Pa.

In Your Bathroom

Tile works well for much more than just flooring. Cover the wall behind the tub area with tile, and you'll dramatically increase your bathroom's ability to keep water where it belongs. For best results in the bathroom, try stylish subway tiles or go up-scale with . Not only are these materials durable and easy to install, but they're also available in colors ranging from white to black and everything in between. Kailyn Bachman from H. Winter Tile in Allentown, says, "in addition to white subway tile and marble, brick-look and stone-look tile are some of our best sellers to homeowners looking to remodel."

Create a Kitchen Backsplash

Without a visually appealing backsplash, a kitchen never seems complete. Take your kitchen rehab ideas to the next level by getting creative with your backsplash. Go classic with colorful , or add some intense color with a variety of smaller tiles in a mosaic pattern. The backsplash is also the ideal place to add metal tiles, as they can withstand all kinds of heat, spills, and general wear and tear. No matter what color or type of tiles you choose, a tile backsplash adds a dash of flair to your kitchen remodel.

In Your Entryway

Make a great first impression on visitors and welcome friends and family by installing tile flooring in place of hardwood or laminate flooring. While you can make a statement with classic sandstone or , consider taking your foyer to the next level with a bold mosaic design.

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Brick

Brick walls add character to any room by serving as a focal point or providing a backdrop that either complements or contrasts the room's other design elements. Whether your style is industrial or rustic, the beauty and uniformity of a brick wall can add texture and beauty. If you're fortunate enough to live in a home with solid masonry walls, selectively exposing the brick by removing the top layer of plaster is a great way to add texture, warmth and character to your space. However, if you don't have an original brick wall, you can create the appearance of one. Bachman states, "adding brick & stone to fireplaces is a great way to add subtle warmth and texture while still making a statement. Brick-look porcelain tiles are a great alternative to using real brick for a variety of reasons: the material and installation are usually less expensive, the tiles are thinner and lighter for ease of installation and are made of non-porous material."

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Applying thin brick tiles (real brick that's sliced thin) is another great way to add depth to an accent wall. Usually, a single accent wall is enough to create an impact in any room. While brick veneers can be used anywhere, they might look more realistic in some locations. A kitchen is a great place to incorporate brick, especially as a counter-to-ceiling backsplash above a stovetop. A fireplace wall also works really well for a brick veneer accent. However, basements are a favorite place for incorporating because it does so much to transform the room, especially when windows could be limited. Brick veneer is actually made out of the same materials

as regular bricks, so if you choose the right place in your home for your brick wall, no one will ever know it didn't come with the house.

Stone

Natural stone is one of the most beautiful materials available for the home. Natural stone is a versatile and sustainable material that can be used throughout your home. From Kitchen countertops, bathroom vanities and fireplace surrounds, to flooring and walls to outdoor kitchens. Natural stone creates lasting beauty that only gets better with time. And, unlike man made alternatives, no two stone products are alike. Each stone possesses unique variations in color, pattern, and sheen, offering endless design possibilities. And that is one of the primary benefits for choosing natural stone is for its one-of-a-kind look.

When selecting natural stone for your home project it's important to consider the space in which the stone will be used. For high traffic areas, such as a busy family room, a harder stone





Granite is an extremely hard, durable stone that is available in an endless array of colors. Because of its durable nature, granite is well suited for kitchen countertops, shower walls, and bathroom vanities, and even flooring.

Marble is an elegant, classic choice and is commonly used for bathroom vanities, backsplashes, fireplace surrounds and bar tops. Marble is softer than granite, it will stain, etch and scratch more easily so it is not typically recommended for high traffic areas such as a kitchen.

Quartzite is very similar to marble, but harder and more resistant to abrasions. It is an attractive alternative to kitchen countertops and comes in a variety of colors. Soapstone is a durable stone that is softer than granite. It is heat resistant, making it ideally suited for fireplaces. And because it does not stain, it has become a more popular choice for kitchen countertops ■

that is more resistant to abrasions is a better choice. A softer stone is typically better suited for areas where the stone is not exposed to as much use, such as a backsplash.

There are 4 commonly used natural stone types. **Granite, Marble, Quartzite, and Soapstone.**

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