



Countertop Care and Maintenance

Natural stone is inherently hard and durable, and thus an ideal material for kitchen countertops and bathroom vanities. With proper care and maintenance, your natural stone countertop can last for decades, be it granite, marble, or travertine. Observance of this Care & Maintenance Guide will help you prolong the life of your new stone countertops.

Cleaning

Natural stone (granite, marble, travertine, limestone, etc.) needs to be cleaned regularly to maintain its natural sheen and vitality.

Do's

- Clean stone surfaces with a few drops of non-acidic soap scum remover, a mild liquid dishwashing detergent or denatured alcohol.
- Use a specialty cleaning agent made especially for natural stone. These specialty cleaning agents will remove oil, residue, and help clean up everyday food or bath and beauty product spills.
- Thoroughly rinse and dry the surface after washing.
- Too much cleaner or soap may leave a film and cause streaks.
- Blot up spills immediately.

Don'ts

- Do not use products that contain lemon, vinegar or other acid content that may etch the surface.
- Do not use abrasive cleaners such as dry cleaners or soft cleansers.
- Do not use cleaners that contain acids such as bathroom cleaners, grout cleaners, or tile cleaners.
- Do not apply acetone or any type of paint thinner.
- Do not mix bleach and ammonia; this combination creates a toxic and lethal gas.
- Frequent or over-use of soap scum remover could result in dulling the surface of the stone.

Prevention Measures

Doing the following is strongly recommended:

- Always use coasters under cups and drinking glasses.
- Do not use the stone countertop as a cutting board. This may scratch the stone.
- Always place heat-resistant mats under kitchen or bath appliances, dishes or china.
- Always blot liquid spills immediately. Do not wait to clean up messes.
- Regularly dust countertops, islands and vanities.
- Regularly clean stone surfaces with warm water and a soft cloth.

Spills and Stains

In the event of a spill, do the following:

1. Blot the spill with a paper towel immediately. Don't wipe the area, this will spread the spill.
2. Flush the area with plain water and mild soap and rinse several times.
3. Dry the area thoroughly with a soft cloth. Repeat as necessary.

Keep in mind that spills of certain chemicals, especially acids or alkali products, will permanently stain the stone. This cannot be helped. Therefore, it is important to consider sealing all natural stone countertops for an extra layer of protection and to carefully observe prevention measures.

Sealing Stone

All natural stone is porous and should be sealed before use. Springs Granite seals all stones during installation with StonePro Quality Pro Sealer. This is a high quality sealer that is purchased from a stone supplier. We also recommend Miracle 411 Impregnator which can be purchased from Home Depot or Lowes at a reasonable price. Sealers will not only prevent the surface from getting stained or discolored, but will also make the surface more durable against wear and tear.

Sealer (also called impregnator) comes in water or oil-based variants (Springs Granite uses an oil-based sealer) and can have a natural or glossy finish. In general water-based sealers are easier to apply and are safer for the environment; if your countertop has a shiny polished surface, a sealer with a glossy finish is unnecessary. Applying sealer in most cases is quite simple, does not require any special tools, and can be completed in a few minutes.

One way to test your stone countertops to see if they need an additional coat is to apply a few drops of water to the surface:

- If the water beads on the surface and doesn't absorb at all, your countertop *does not* need an additional coat.
- If the water is absorbed by the stone within a few minutes, it needs an additional coat of sealer.

Avoid Irregular or Excessive Weight on the Stone Surfaces

Stone countertops are tough and durable, but because of its rigidity, will crack under irregular or excessive weight. Do not apply too much weight to any one spot, as this may cause the stone to crack. Do not sit or stand on the countertop surface. Also, be observant of what wall decorations hang over the stone countertops. If the hanging decorations are heavy and fall onto the countertop, the natural stone may crack under the stress.

Miscellaneous Granite Care

Granite has an extremely high melting point so it is very resistant to differences in hot and cold. You can place a hot pan on the surface of the stone without damaging the stone. Placing a hot glass dish directly on the surface of the stone may cause the glass to crack. You may cut directly on the surface of the stone without scratching the stone, however you may dull your knives very quickly.

Engineered Stone Care

Engineered Stone is relatively low maintenance and each brand of Engineered stone has their own care and maintenance guidelines. Engineered stone has a lower melting point than granite and hot pots and pans should not be placed directly onto the stone surface. Care should also be taken not to scratch the surface as it is difficult to impossible to repair scratches without dulling the original shine. There are specific sealers that can be purchased for engineered stones, however their necessity is debated. Engineered stone is more prone to fading due to the sun, so a sealer with a uv protectant is recommended.

Marble Care and Maintenance

Marble is the most difficult type of stone to take care of. It is softer and much more porous than granite or an engineered stone. Springs Granite applies a porous stone sealer during installation, and we recommend resealing marble countertops annually. It is important to clean up any acidic spills immediately because any type of acid will etch the stone. Also marble is much easier to scratch so we would recommend always using potholders, coasters, and never cutting directly on the surface. Marble can be refinished by a stone professional in the event of staining or scratching.