

Simple Care Instructions for Granite Countertops

So you've agonized over the decision to go with natural stone or solid surface and finally decided on granite for its variations and natural beauty. You've pondered whether to use a light or dark color, subtle variations or more noticeable ones. The granite counter tops are finally cut and installed and they are everything you hope they would be. They enhance your kitchen, making it the preparation, dining and entertaining room of your dreams. So how do you care for your new counter top?

A granite countertop is a significant investment in your home, so it is only right that you should protect and care for it in the proper manner. Granite is a beautiful and durable material that will last for a very long time. By following a few suggestions for use, your countertops will last a lifetime while maintaining a brand new appearance.

General Information

The most important facet of understanding your granite countertops is that it is a porous material. Any natural stone has the characteristics and must be understood to ensure the beauty of the stone. Porous simply means it can be penetrated by water, oils, grease, and chemicals. Use a nontoxic sealer to resist all types of stains. This must be resealed annually. Most hardware stores carry stone sealers. You simply wipe on with a soft cloth, let it soak in for 15 minutes, wipe off excess and then you are done.

It is important to clean all spills and keep unwrapped foods from being on the tops for extended periods of time as the oils and minerals can eventually work through the sealer and can stain your top. Under normal conditions this is never a problem. An example of a potential problem would be to leave for vacation with a grease spot on the granite surface.

Scratches on countertops are always a concern for homeowners and under normal use granite resists scratches better than any other surface on the market. Obviously if someone intended to scratch the surface it can be done but with normal cutting and food preparation your granite tops will last a lifetime.

The best aspect of granite is the resistance it has to heat. You have the freedom to take hot dishes directly out of the oven and place it on the granite without fear of damaging your countertops. No other countertop material can make that claim so enjoy the value of your solid granite countertops.

Regular Maintenance & Cleaning

If your granite darkens when it is wet, do not be alarmed. It will return to its original color when the water evaporates. The safest way to clean your granite tops is to use products designed specifically for stone. Cleaners and disinfectants of this type are neutral on the acid scale, so they pose no risk of hurting the polish. Dish soap and water will work to clean your tops, as will spray on cleaners such as Windex. Avoid anything that contains bleach or any wipe or cleaners that have grit in them. If you want to avoid water streaking while cleaning you must wipe your tops until they are completely dry. If lime build up occurs around your faucet do not use lime removal products. Gently scraping the lime off with a straight razor is the best solution.

Avoiding Scratches

Granite is a quartz based material and can therefore be scratched by quartz or anything harder. Knives will not scratch granite, although cutting on your countertops is not recommended as your knives will dull very quickly. **Diamonds will scratch granite.** Removing diamond rings before cooking is recommended. Certain stoneware dishes contain rough silica sand and pose a risk of scratching. Some pizza-stones will scratch granite if they are spun around while cutting the pizza. If you use a marble cutting board make sure the rubber or plastic feet remain secure. If the marble ends up rubbing on the granite this does pose a scratching risk.

Avoiding Chips

Chips in granite are not a common occurrence. When they do happen, chips are most often caused by banging something into the edge of the countertop. Heavy pots and pans and the bottoms of large bottles do most of the damage. Take care when you handle them around your granite. If a chip does occur and you find the piece that chipped out, save it. Most of the time it can be epoxied back into place. Hot pans high and low temperatures will not harm granite in any way. You can take a pan off the stove or a dish out of the oven and set it right on your countertop without damage. If you have a seam in your countertop it is best to avoid setting hot materials on top of it. The epoxy in the seam is heat resistant, but can be melted if exposed to heat for an extended period.

Sealing Granite is Simple

The clear sealers are applied with a cotton rag and simply rubbed into the surface. Often it only needs to be done once a year. Sealing granite is by no means a hardship and it takes just a few moments of your time. It is a very small price to pay for the beauty and durability you get with a granite top.

Do's and Don'ts:

Do-clean surfaces with mild detergent, stone soap or specialty cleaner and soft clean cloth.

Do-rinse surfaces thoroughly after cleaning then dry with soft clean cloth.

Do-blot up spills with paper towel immediately.

Don't- use vinegar, lemon or other cleaners such as bathroom, grout or tile, and tub cleaners. Don't- use cleaners containing abrasives.

All in all, granite counter tops are one of the easiest counter top surfaces to take care of. They only need cleaning and the occasional sealing to make them beautiful and to make them last. So take care of your counter tops and they will be an investment you are proud to have in your home and a major selling point if you ever decide to move.

If you have any other questions about your granite countertops feel free to contact us. Enjoy!