

Granite Countertops Care and Maintenance

Blot up spills immediately: Spilling anything other than water or mild soaps, especially acidic substances must be avoided on these countertops. Substances like wine, tomato sauce, fruit juices, alcoholic beverages, coffee and soft drinks won't necessarily etch the granite like they do with marble, but they can stain the surface if neglected. Moreover, cooking oils can also leave their stains, if not wiped up immediately.

Sponge or soft cloth for cleaning: For regular cleaning as well as blotting up spilled liquids, paper towels, sponge or soft cloth must be used. Damp rags can be used to remove sticky residue from the countertop. Use warm water and mild soap to clean the granite. However, excessive and repeated use of soap can cause the surface to become dull. Steel wool or other cleaning products should not be used to clean the surface.

Avoid harsh cleaning products: Many common household cleaners, such as bleach, kitchen degreasers and glass cleaners contain acids, alkalies and other chemicals. These harsh cleaners can degrade the sealer, thereby making the granite susceptible to staining. Bathroom, grout, tile or tub cleaners must be strictly avoided. Moreover, ammonia, vinegar, orange or lemon must also not be used as cleaners.

Avoid adding weight to countertop edges: It is important to avoid putting unnecessary weight on the edges of the countertops. Increased pressure and weight can lead to damage of the edges. Activities such as using the countertop to climb up and clean something or reach a shelf, grabbing on to the countertop for balance, etc. must be avoided. All this can cause the attractiveness of the granite to diminish.

Use cutting boards: Granite is scratch resistant; however, this does not imply that one can use the countertop in place of a cutting board. Cutting boards must be used and all possibilities of causing scratches must be avoided. Moreover, cutting on granite will not only dull the stone, but will also damage the knives' edges.

Use hot pads or trivets: Granite countertops can withstand heat very well, unlike other surfaces. Granite is a hard stone and can take tons of abuse, without getting damaged. However, the granite surface comprises some soft, thin strips of granite. These thin strips lack enough surface area to absorb all the heat from the piping hot pots and pans, thereby resulting into chipping and scratching of the lustrous surface. Generally scratches are not formed so easily, however, it is advisable to use trivets or hot pads.

Apply sealant for protection: Application of sealant on granite countertops, either semi-annually or annually, helps protect the granite surface from damage. When solvent based sealers are applied to the countertops, the surface achieves a new, sparkling look. Sealers do not eliminate the danger of staining; however, they do increase the window period of stain blotting time. Sealers generally need to be reapplied every year.

Quick Care and Cleaning Tips for Granite Countertops

- 1. Wipe up spills immediately.** Spills have a tendency to soak into the surface, so to avoid deep staining wipe up spills immediately.
 - 2. Use mild soap and warm water.** It's safe to use a neutral cleaner such as stone soap or mild dishwashing liquid and warm water. Too much cleaner or soap may leave a film and cause streaks. After using the soap solution, the surface should be rinsed properly. Finish off by drying with a soft, clean cloth.
 - 3. Different methods for stain removal.** **(a)** First, try removing it with this paste: mix together a cup of flour, 1-2 tablespoons of dishwashing liquid, and water. Place the paste over the stain, cover in plastic wrap, and leave overnight. In the morning, use a wooden utensil to scrape away the paste and give it a rinse. This should work except for stains made from grease, oil, or milk. (this method is not for honed surfaces). **(b)** For organic stains resulting from coffee, tea, or fruit, a mixture of 12% hydrogen peroxide and water should work wonders. **(c)** Ink, marker and wine stains on darker stone require pure acetone for removal. Hydrogen peroxide works well on light-colored granite also. **(d)** Another method to remove wine, ink, or any other non-oil stain is to mix molding plaster and pure bleach into a paste. Apply for 30 minutes, remove, and rinse. (this method is not for honed surfaces). **(e)** For oil-based or fat-based stains, create a paste of molding plaster and water. Keep it on the stain for 3 hours and then remove and rinse. (this method is not for honed surfaces)
 - 4. Reseal annually (semi annually if heavily used).** Of course, on surfaces that will be used for food preparation, use a non-toxic sealer.
 - 5. Disinfectant cleaners.** New disinfectant cleaners on the market now come in formulas designed for granite countertops. Purchase this type of product if you prefer disinfectant cleaners to other cleaning options.
 - 6. Use coasters.** Especially for alcoholic and citrus beverages, as the acid in these drinks can dull granite's surface.
 - 7. Keep hot items off the surface.** In the kitchen extremely hot pans should not be kept on granite surfaces since it quickly absorbs and distributes heat.
 - 8. Test cleaning methods.** Always test these cleaning methods on small discreet area for color fastness or granite damage.
-

Do's & Don'ts

Do clean surfaces with mild soap, mild detergent or stone soap.

Do thoroughly rinse and dry the surface after washing.

Do blot up spills immediately.

Do protect countertop surfaces with coasters, trivets or placemats.

Don't use ammonia, vinegar, lemon juice or other cleaners containing acids on granite. The acid in high concentration etches the surface.

Don't use bathroom cleaners, grout cleaners or tub & tile cleaners.

Don't use abrasive cleaners such as dry cleansers or soft cleansers.

Don't mix bleach and ammonia; this combination creates a toxic and lethal gas.