

Care & Maintenance Guide for NATURAL Stone

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. See your local Granite Expo retail associate for a list of specialty cleaning agents carried at Granite Expo stores, or e-mail us at info@thegraniteexpo.com.

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, or check with a local Granite Expo for a specialty cleaning agent.

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.

Special Note on Kovastone® Quartz Stone Surfaces

Kovastone® quartz stone surfaces are a specially engineered stone that is solid and far more resistant to wear and tear than natural stone. Quartz stone is generally resistant to scratches, stains, and harsh chemicals, but proper care and maintenance is still advised. Thus, continue to follow all prevention measures set forth in this Guide.



Sealing Stone

All natural stone is porous and should be sealed before use. Although Granite Expo does not offer any sealing services, we are happy to recommend experienced and professional contractors for the job. 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 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.

1. Wait at least 72 hours after the initial installation before applying sealer.
2. Before sealing it is important to make sure the countertop is clean. Often a mild liquid detergent does the trick but for the best results use denatured alcohol.
3. After cleaning make sure the surface is completely dry.
4. Apply the sealer according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Wait at least 2 hours before applying an additional coat. Generally, one coat is sufficient but in a high traffic area you may want to apply as many as three coats. 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.



Repairing Scratches and Minor Damage

An experienced Granite Expo installation professional will be able to repair any scratches or minor damages to the stone countertops. Call your local Granite Expo stores to schedule a repair if your stone surface is ever damaged.

Need More Information?

Do you have additional questions not answered here? Call your local Granite Expo for more information.

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