

GRANITE COUNTERTOPS CARE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDE

Granite Features

One of the biggest fears people may have about natural stone is the maintenance it requires. With the public increasingly turning to the use of natural materials in the home, granite has become the countertop of choice for today's home owners. Synthetic solid surface materials are no match for the richness, depth, and incredible performance of real granite. Unlike laminates and solid-surface materials, a hot pot or frying pan has no effect on granite's mirror-like finish.

The diamond-like hardness of granite makes it virtually impervious to abrasions, stains and heat. (It's important to note that granite won't stand temperature stress such as fireplaces where the stone expands and contracts in very short period of time. The seams, however, will prevent cracks.) Most importantly, by choosing a granite countertop you not only give your kitchen everlasting performance and beauty, but you also increase the value of your home.

You'll find caring for your natural stone is easy. Warm water, mild dishwashing liquid, and soft clean cloth are generally all that's needed to maintain your granite countertop surface. The best care you can give your natural stone is preventive care. By following a few suggestions, your countertops will last a lifetime while maintaining a brand-new appearance.

Basic Cleaning and Maintenance

- 1) Avoid using cleaning products with any kind of acid or abrasive; they may cause de-colorations or scratches.
- 2) Do not stand , kneel down on or sit on your countertops, as they could crack or break.
- 3) Do not place hot pans or other objects directly on your countertops. This may cause discoloration (mainly in dark granites) and/or cracking. Always use a protective barrier between any hot object and granite such as trivet or mat.

Granite countertops are surprisingly resilient to stains like citric acid, coffee tea,

alcohol, or wine, and virtually impossible to scratch. However, as a preventive measure, wipe up any spills on the countertops within a reasonable amount of time and do not let liquid sit on the countertop overnight. It is important to note that granite is most prone to staining by oil. Be careful not to place any pots or frying pans with oil traces on the bottom on the countertop surface. Blot oil and acid spills as soon as they happen, and clean with mild soap and warm water to avoid any harm to your countertops.

If the oil stains remain, there is a special cleaning procedure for the removal of deep-seated, time-set dirt and grime. A general poultice with baby or baking powder and water is the best remedy. First, moisten the surface of the granite with the same liquid that made the paste. Then apply the poultice paste to the granite surface about ½” thick. Tape plastic sheeting over the poultice area, and allow it to sit for 48 hours. Remove the poultice with a spatula, rinse the cleansed area with clean water, wipe off excess water, and allow the surface to dry.

Granite tends to attract soap scum. Rinse with hot clean water on a regular basis and use a paper towel to dry. Another way to remove lime build up, soap scum, stains or dried spills, is to use a straight razor blade in a gentle scraping motion. Do not use lime removal products or cleaning products that contain ammonia, as this will affect the seal on the stone.

For stubborn stains you can also use dry steel wool grade 00, or a no-scratch Scotch Brite pad to try to remove them.

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. Take care when you handle heavy pots and pans around your granite profiles as these are the most prone to cause chipping. If a chip does occur and you find the piece that chipped out, hold on to it. Most of the time it can be epoxied back into place.

Sealers

If you are questioning whether to seal your granite countertop, the Marble Institute of America provides the following information:

“Should natural stone counters be sealed? In many cases it makes sense to seal marble and granite countertops with a quality sealer. The product should have a life expectancy of ten to fifteen years and be of an oliophobic

(resistant to water and oil based stains) nature. Once properly sealed, the stone will be more resistant against everyday dirt and spills.

In today's natural stone industry, many species of granite receive a resin treatment at the factory where the blocks of granite are cut into slabs and then polished. The treatment is used to fill microfissures, indentations and other minor characteristics that are found in many natural stones. The reason for the resin treatment is to address what most consumers consider as imperfections, but in reality are "birth marks". The consuming public gravitates to perfection, defined as no "birth marks," and so the marble and granite industry tries to fulfill the desire. Both resined as well as unresined slabs will outlast most of our lifetimes. Granite should, and in most cases will, be the last countertop surface a person will buy, providing a strong return on investment. The bottom line: Sealing resin treated countertops may increase the resistance of the already resistant nature of stone (adopted 11/8/06).

Resined stones — In some situations, impregnating sealers applied to a resined stone will cause the material to cloud, discolor, or fade. While this is a new topic in the stone industry, some initial reports have indicated that the application of a color enhancer may hide the problem. Additionally, the problems have occurred with solvent-based vs. water-based impregnators. It is highly recommended that you consult with the Sealant Manufacturer prior to applying a sealer to a resined stone.”

Please click on the link below for more information on sealing from MIA:
<http://www.marble-institute.com/designprofessionals/sealing.cfm>

The use of sealers is an excellent preventive measure and will encourage the preservation of your granite countertops. Some granite can be very porous. Sealers fill in natural pores and repel spills on the surface, radically reducing the rate of absorption. This gives you time to wipe spills away before they have a chance to penetrate your stone. After the installation process, the granite must be sealed. We recommend a re-application of this sealer annually, or more often for some light granites, to fully maintain the luminosity and avoid stains. Some dark colored, dense granites (browns, blacks) do not require sealing. When the water or liquid spilled on your countertop fails to bead up when splashed, or you begin to notice a water darkening spot that dries out, this is an indication that your countertop needs to be re-sealed.

The good news is that if your granite surface has stains, scratches, or cracks, or dull areas, and you're not happy with it, it can be fixed and brought back to the original pristine finish it had when it was first installed. At AB Granito Restorations Ltd., we have the workmanship, techniques, and tools needed to restore your granite surfaces to their original graceful look. Simply call us for a re-seal service and maintenance program, and we'll repair any damages and help you prevent further damages.