



TS RENOVATIONS · STONE & SURFACE CARE

Countertop Care Guide

Every countertop material looks a little different, wears a little differently, and asks for its own kind of care. Here's what makes each one a good fit, and how to keep it looking its best for years to come.

AT A GLANCE

Natural Stone → **Engineered Surfaces** → **Wood & a Few Others** →

Eight Habits That Keep Your Countertops Looking New

A FEW THINGS TO KNOW FIRST

A countertop is one of the most-touched surfaces in a kitchen, and one of the larger investments in a remodel. Choosing the right material is half the decision, caring for it well afterward is the other half, and that second half is what determines how the counter looks in ten or twenty years.

Knowing what to expect ahead of time is simply part of choosing the right material for how you live. A couple of small choices go a long way, too. Eased and bullnose edges tend to hold up better over the years, especially on a softer material like soapstone.

THE WAY THEY AGE

Marble & Soapstone

Both patina with time, and a fabricator can rehone or repolish either one. Comes polished or honed; honed ages into a softer, matte look.

Engineered Surfaces

Stay close to how they looked on day one.

Granite & Quartzite

Comes polished or honed, and honed ages into a soft patina.

Butcher Block

Deepens in color and character with every oiling, and shows honest wear like knife marks over time.



Get to Know Your Countertop Materials



NATURAL STONE

Granite

Hard, dense, and highly resistant to scratching and heat, granite is a dependable, classic choice for a kitchen that gets used hard. Every slab is quarried, not manufactured, so the color and pattern run all the way through the stone and no two pieces ever match exactly. It's also porous, so sealing keeps it performing at its best.

Soapstone

Softer than the other stones on this list, soapstone patinas and darkens in color over time, especially where it's touched most. That look is part of the appeal, and it's a popular choice here in Vermont. We like rounded, eased edges here rather than a sharp square profile, since the softer material is more prone to chipping at a hard corner.

Marble

Soft veining and a cool, smooth surface make marble a favorite for anyone who bakes, it's the material bread and pasta makers tend to ask for by name. It also develops a soft patina over time, part of its character. It's one of the more porous natural stones, so staying ahead of sealing matters most here.

Quartzite

Often confused with quartz, but the two aren't related. Quartzite is a true natural stone, formed from sandstone under heat and pressure, and it's harder than granite.

ENGINEERED SURFACES

Quartz

Engineered from crushed quartz crystal and resin, quartz isn't as heat resistant as natural stone since that resin can scorch. Because the pattern is designed and set on top of each slab, slabs within the same lot look nearly identical, which makes lining up veining at a seam easier. It's one of the most popular countertop choices today.

WOOD & A FEW OTHERS

Butcher Block

A warm, natural surface that brings real character into a kitchen, especially around an island or a baking station. Walnut, maple, white oak, and cherry are a few of our favorite species for this. Unlike stone, it's a living material that moves and ages with use, and it earns its own real estate on a counter.

Ultracompact Porcelain

Brands like Dekton are among the most popular in this category, an extremely dense, heat- and scratch-resistant surface that does a convincing job mimicking natural stone looks like travertine and limestone. It comes in a range of matte and polished finishes and can be cut into ultra-thin slabs for shower walls and fireplace surrounds, not just countertops.

Solid Surface, Laminate, Concrete & Stainless

These four are outliers for different reasons. Solid surface and stainless need no sealing at all and are genuinely low-maintenance, laminate is durable but can't be repaired if it's scratched or scorched, and concrete needs regular resealing to resist stains. Talk to us to learn more if you're considering any of these for your project.





Eight Habits That Keep Your Countertops Looking New

These eight habits are built around natural stone, since that's where they make the biggest difference. Several of them, wiping up spills quickly, skipping abrasive scrubbers, always using a cutting board, are just as useful no matter what's on your counters. Others, like resealing, are about keeping stone's protective seal doing its job.

1

Wipe spills as they happen, especially acidic ones. Wine, citrus, coffee, and vinegar can etch unsealed or worn stone if left to sit. A quick wipe with a damp cloth is all it takes, there's no need to scrub.

2

Use a pH-neutral stone cleaner, not whatever's under the sink. Most all-purpose cleaners, especially anything with vinegar, bleach, or ammonia, will slowly break down the sealant. A dedicated stone cleaner, or just warm water and mild dish soap, is the safer daily choice.

3

Skip the abrasive scrubbers. Steel wool, scouring pads, and gritty powders can dull the polish over time. For anything stuck-on, a soft cloth and a little elbow grease does the job without scratching the surface.

4

Always use a cutting board. Stone resists scratching far better than laminate or tile, but a blade run directly across the surface will still dull faster than expected, and it dulls your knives, too.

5

Set hot pans on a trivet, not directly on the counter. Natural stone handles heat better than most surfaces, but a sudden temperature swing can still crack it in rare cases. Engineered surfaces like quartz are more sensitive, a hot pan can scorch the resin and leave a cloudy white ring that won't buff out.

6

Reseal on a schedule, not just when it looks like it needs it. Most sealants last one to three years depending on the stone type and use. A simple check: drip a few drops of water onto the counter. If it beads up, the seal is holding. If it soaks in, it's time to reseal. Butcher block needs the same attention: oil it regularly unless it has a varnish finish.

7

Avoid standing water and damp items left on the surface. A wet sponge or dish towel left in one spot for hours can work its way past the seal faster than a quick spill.

8

When in doubt, call in a professional resealing rather than guessing. Over-sealing can trap moisture and cause cloudiness; under-sealing leaves stone vulnerable.

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Built to Last



Following these recommendations will help your countertops hold up to the daily demands of a busy kitchen. From morning coffee and family dinners to homework, weekend projects, and even the occasional experiment, your countertops will be there for all the moments that make your kitchen uniquely yours.

With the right care, your countertops can stand the test of time.



www.tsrenovationsvt.com



802-777-8516



info@tsrenovationsvt.com

