

## Granite Countertop Do's & Don'ts

**The easiest way** to keep your stone looking great is to **avoid bad habits** that may damage it. Granite, [marble](#), travertine, limestone, soapstone, quartz and solid surface are similar in many ways, but their differences require varying [degrees](#) of maintenance. However . . .

**If you utilize** the granite care and cleaning procedures that follow for *all* your countertops . . . no matter what type of stone or surface . . . you'll eliminate most *potential* problems without ever having to think too hard about it or worry that you may be causing damage.

### **Do: Blot up spills immediately.**

Acidic substances like wine, coffee, fruit juices, tomato sauce and sodas will not etch granite like they do marble, but they could potentially stain [the surface](#). Cooking oils may also leave a stain if not wiped up.

### **Do: Clean surfaces using a sponge or soft cloth.**

Using a specially formulated stone cleaner like [HYPERLINK "http://store.countertopspecialty.com/Stone-Care-Pro-STONE-PLUS-Spray-Cleaner-for-Natural-Stone-More-1-QT--p172.html"](http://store.countertopspecialty.com/Stone-Care-Pro-STONE-PLUS-Spray-Cleaner-for-Natural-Stone-More-1-QT--p172.html) [Stone PLUS](#) is recommended to keep your tops in the best condition and protect the sealer, but hot water will do for quick clean-ups. Dish soap won't hurt your granite, *but* repeated or excessive use of soap will cause build-up and dull your countertop's shine.

### **Do: Use coasters under all glasses, bottles and cans.**

Again, granite won't etch and using coasters on dense and/or properly sealed granite is not an absolute necessity like with marble, but using coasters is just a good practice to protect all surfaces.

### **Do: Use trivets and hot pads under pots, pans and dinnerware.**

Yes, you can take a hot pot off the stove and put it right on granite, quartz or soapstone without any problems. Not true for all other surfaces. But you must consider other issues as well.

**Grit** that gets trapped between the pot and the countertop surface may scratch the surface--even granite. Granite is very hard and can take tons of abuse without any damage, but it does contain some softer minerals that could be chipped or scratched. The likelihood is pretty slim, but it is possible. And *ALL* other surfaces are softer than granite. Better safe than sorry.

**If it does happen**, don't fret too much. Most **chips and scratches** can be easily repaired, but it's best to avoid them by following the granite counter top care tips.

**Also**, once you remove the hot pan from the countertop the surface will be very hot and may burn.

### **Do: Use cutting boards.**

Again, avoid the possibility of scratching the surface and protect your knives. Cutting on stone will dull and damage your knives' edges quickly.

### **Do: Dust mop your natural stone floors regularly.**

Use a clean, dry, non-treated dust-mop. Some people choose to use a vacuum cleaner. But be real careful. Worn parts or grit jammed by the wheels may scratch the surface.

**Do: Use door mats inside and out along with runners and area rugs.**

Grit, dirt and sand carried in by our shoes are abrasive and will wear and scratch the surface. Clean the rugs regularly.

**Don't: Use generic cleaning products such as bleach, glass cleaners or degreasers.**

These products that you buy at your local store contain acids, alkalis and other chemicals that can etch marble and degrade the granite sealer leaving the stone more vulnerable to staining.

Trying to [save money](#) by using these chemicals only ensures that you'll spend a lot more time and money on you granite counter top care in the long-run. HYPERLINK "<http://store.countertopspecialty.com/cart.html>" [See our Stone Care Center for recommended products.](#)

**Don't: Use vinegar, ammonia, lemon or orange as cleaners.**

**Don't: Use bathroom, tub & tile or grout cleaners.**

The powders and even the "soft" creams contain abrasives that will scratch and dull surfaces.

**Don't: Sit or stand on your countertops.**

Unlike laminate countertops, granite, marble and quartz countertops are very hard, but not flexible and they DO NOT have a plywood backing so too much weight in one spot could cause a crack.

**Don't: Place toiletry products directly on your countertop surface.**

Hair products, perfumes, colognes, nail products, creams, lotions and potions may stain granite or etch the polish (on marble) leaving a ring. Protect your countertop by placing these products on a decorative tray like they do in fancy hotels!

### **Bad Advice You May Have Heard**

Unfortunately, if you search around the web you'll find lots of conflicting and plain wrong information about the characteristics of countertop surfaces and the correct procedures for granite counter top care.

I've seen Windex recommended for cleaning granite. True, it will clean it and your countertop will look nice and shiny. But as noted above, when used consistently over time, Windex and all other generic cleaners may damage the surface or granite sealer. You won't see it right away.

### **Dish Soap?**

Dish soap is also commonly recommended for stone and granite counter top care as a daily cleaner because it will not damage your stone or sealant if it's a mild, plain soap like Ivory.

However, soap scum will build up over time, dulling the surface and requiring a thorough cleaning with special products to restore the original luster.

So, while using a soapy sponge or cloth for quick clean-up while you're cooking, etc. is certainly fine, cleaning your countertops with soap is not the best or easiest method for granite counter top care.

## **Cleaning Schedule**

**Daily:** Truthfully, hot water and a sponge is sufficient to wipe up spills and debris and keep your countertops clean and tidy throughout the day. At the end of the day, a quick spray and wipe of the most heavily used areas with a stone cleaner will adequately clean, disinfect and protect your countertops.

**Weekly:** Use the stone cleaner over the entire surface.

**Quarterly:** Polishes can also be used periodically to add just a bit of extra shine for the ultimate in natural stone and granite counter top care.

**Yearly:** [HYPERLINK "http://www.countertopspecialty.com/sealing-granite-countertops.html"](http://www.countertopspecialty.com/sealing-granite-countertops.html) [Testing](#) your granite every year is a good idea to determine when it needs to be re-sealed. You'll hear that you should do it every year or in 3-5 years, but the frequency for proper sealing really depends on the type of stone (porous or dense) and the quality of the sealant.

When necessary I recommend [HYPERLINK "http://store.countertopspecialty.com/Sealers-c6/"](http://store.countertopspecialty.com/Sealers-c6/) [Stone Care Pro or SenGuard Sealers](#).

It's a very easy job and unless you have a stone that really shouldn't be sealed (i.e. some black granites), then re-sealing when needed will ensure that your countertops are well protected against staining.

## **Think Roman Coliseum**

A lot to say, but many of my recommendations are things that you probably do already. So really, granite counter top care is very easy. In fact, if all you ever did was seal your stone and wipe with a sponge and hot water your countertops would likely still look great 10 years from now. But follow the simple steps for granite counter top care outlined above and your countertops will always look spectacular!