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Worktop Care Guide

Stone Worktops

Incredibly resilient and visually stunning; natural stone worktops are as practical as they are beautiful.

When polished and sealed, Granite and Marble are water resistant, stain-resistant, heat resistant and scratch resistant. This is not to say that they are impervious to damage however and it is still important to wipe up spills quickly and to take care when placing objects on the surface. All our polished stone worktops are sealed before they are installed but they may need to be resealed on a regular basis. Honed surfaces (matt not polished) are much more porous than polished surfaces and particular care should be taken not to leave liquid standing on the surface as well as wet, acid, alkaline or oily food products. Oil based substances can sink into honed or polished stone and take a long time to dry out so we recommend that all spills are mopped up immediately.

Care

1. Granite and Marble worktops should not be rubbed with abrasive materials (such as metal pads, scouring detergents and wire wool or alkaline and chlorine based cleaners or bleach) instead, wash with clean warm water to which a non-abrasive light neutral detergent may be added. Rinse with clean warm water and dry with a lint free towel or similar.
2. Regularly clean your worktop with a good quality stone cleaner. Using unsuitable products may reduce the effectiveness of the sealer that is on your worktop. Suitable products should be PH Neutral. Black Diamond produce excellent cleaning products to help you clean, polish and seal your worktop. Visit <http://www.bdstoneworks.com/products.htm> for product details and cleaning tips.
3. Liquids spilt on your granite worktops should be mopped up immediately. The most risk is from highly alkaline or acidic liquids (such as lemon juice or vinegar), oil based substances (such as butter and cooking oils - hot oil splattering from cooking pans around the cooker), wine, detergents and alcohol. The risks here are of an aesthetic nature not structural.
4. Do not allow any build up of liquid, salt or detergent on your worktop.
5. Over time, a film builds up on the surface if water is left to dry on the worktop. This film will dull the look of the worktop making the finish appear blotchy and uneven. To prevent build up of the film, it is very important to wipe the worktop completely dry after spills and cleaning.
6. Your worktops should not be brought into contact with strong acids or chemicals including paint stripper, brush cleaner, oven cleaner, nail varnish remover, degreaser or similar products.

7. For a longer lasting finish, granite worktop surfaces can be sealed to reduce its natural porosity. Surface treatments should be reapplied up to every 4 months after cleaning with a neutral detergent. A recommended product is Lithofin Stain Stop, available from Bristol Marble who can advise on its use.
8. Do not hit your worktop with anything blunt or heavy. It can crack, chip or even break (the edges are most likely to be damaged if physically abused).
9. Do not cut directly onto the worktop.
10. Do not expose your worktop to excessive heat - we advise the use of a trivet, pot stand or similar to place your pans on when taken directly from the hob.
11. Do not drag objects along the worktop especially heavy pots and pans.

Stain removal

- Black Diamond Granite Cleaner (available from bdstoneworks.com and lakeland.co.uk) is both food safe and kind to the stone. It should remove most marks but if a stain has sunk into the stone it may be time to get the experts in. Contact It Woodwork for advice.
- If you wish to try some green cleaning methods to surface stains with household products, try a 4:1 mix of water to vodka (in that order). Do not use vinegar or lemon based solutions as the strong PH levels can be damaging to the stone.

Defects and imperfections - Granite

Granite is a natural material and on rare occasions can have defects or imperfections due to the natural working characteristics of materials supplied. There may be small chips which arise in the course of manufacture, delivery and installation. We reserve the right to replace or repair minor defects entirely at our own discretion. We also reserve the right to use chemical or resinous fillers, some of which may already be present in the granite worktop to effect any repairs.

Stainless Steel Worktops

Stainless steel has long been used in commercial kitchens as a practical and hygienic work surface. Introduce it to the domestic environment and not only do you benefit in the same way top chefs have over the years but you also have a visually stunning surface requiring minimal maintenance.

Of all worktop materials, stainless steel probably requires the least maintenance beyond the daily clean. No surface sealers, oils or polishes are required to keep the worktop from degrading and there is no silicone to break down or stain where sinks meet worktops.

That said, there are methods and products available to enhance the look of your worktop and make the cleaning process easier. There are a few do's and don'ts to follow and things that you need to be aware of not least of which is that despite its name stainless steel can in fact stain. Follow this guide and your worktop will be looking great for a lifetime.

Never:

- Use metal scourers to clean stainless steel, and never leave metal scourers on stainless surfaces; especially in sinks (If the scourer starts to rust it will leave rust stains on the stainless steel).
- Leave ironware or non stainless steel (especially wet) in sinks or on stainless surfaces. If any rust starts to develop where contact is made this also will stain the stainless steel.
- Do not cut food directly on the worktop as it will scratch easily.

Avoid:

- Using cleaners containing chlorine (which includes most bleach) or abrasives. The chlorine in bleach reacts with the steel and over time will dull the surface and can lead to surface corrosion such as pitting.
- The use of plastic bowls for washing up as these cause heavy localised scratching.
- Leaving salt, vinegar, citric fruit juices, mustard or pickles on the surface for any length of time as they can cause corrosion;
- Leaving water to dry on the surface. Mineral deposits and limescale will adhere to the surface which can pick up stains more easily.
- Placing excessively hot saucepans or pans directly on the worktop.
- Avoid sliding hard or sharp-edged objects (e.g. heavy cooking utensils) over the worktop.
- Intensive polishing of one point produces local changes to the degree of shine (especially with brushed finish).

Care

Cleaning finger marks, deposits and smears off your stainless steel worktop is not difficult to achieve with basic household cleaners, the trick to getting it to look its best is in the drying. Daily cleaning is best done with soapy water and a soft clean cloth. Always dry the worktop thoroughly to avoid smears and deposits building up.

To get a perfect smear free finish without the use of specialist cleaners, use a squirty detergent bottle with a soap solution in it. Liberally spray the solution over the entire worktop and wipe off using a clean damp cloth. Before the worktop starts to dry naturally buff off the moisture with a microfibre cloth or paper towels.

Using a stainless steel polish will further improve the appearance of the surface and also add a protective surface to guard against limescale and other deposits and make cleaning easier.

To remove lime scale or other mineral deposits you may need to use cleaning agents containing vinegar or lemon juice. Clean with a vinegar in water solution (20% vinegar, 80% water) or with lemon juice and table salt dissolved in water.

To sanitize stainless sinks without using bleach apply undiluted white Vinegar with a clean cloth to the entire sink surface or use a *stainless safe* household cleaner. The same method can be used with chlorine free bleach or suitable household cleaners.

Removing stains

To remove rust marks and other stubborn stains, here are a few great environmentally friendly options.

- Use a liberal amount of vinegar on a soft scourer (white – the type recommended for non stick pans).
- Create a paste using equal amounts of lemon juice and baking soda and apply to stains with a sponge. For more stubborn stains, leave the paste on the stain for 15minutes before rubbing off.

- Use Bar Keepers Friend as per the instructions. This is available from good hardware shops, supermarkets and online.
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Brass & Copper Worktops

Brass and copper provide not only a visually stunning work surface but are also practical and hygienic requiring minimal maintenance.

The care of brass and copper work surfaces can be largely divided into two schools of thought; leave alone to age gracefully or polish and shine every day with pride. That said, copper and brass are living surfaces and *will* react to what life throws at it. Marks and stains are inevitable and will soon add to the rich patina that creates much of the allure these beautiful materials provide.

Do's and Don'ts

- Don't use metal scourers or wire wool to clean polished brass or copper as they will scratch the surface.
- Don't cut food directly on the worktop, as it will scratch easily.
- Don't place hot pans directly on the surface. They will cause irreversible expansion to the metal, which will warp.
- Avoid using bleach, ammonia or citric acid based cleaners on copper or brass (unless intentionally wishing to add patina). These cause increased oxidation of copper and brass, which will darken the surface. It also causes corrosion, breaking down the surface of the metal.
- Avoid sliding hard or sharp-edged objects (e.g. heavy iron pans) over the worktop.
- Liquids left on the surface will leave marks and stains.

Care

Copper and brass are highly reactive and trying to maintain a polished finish is not recommended. Spots and marks will form and can be caused by a variety of things from fingerprints to cleaning agents. These can be removed with localised cleaning methods but leaving them to add to the natural patina may be preferable.

The mild abrasive pad, often found on the back of a sponge, can help remove spots or dried on substances, but the abrasive may leave marks. Use Bar Keepers Friend for stubborn mark removal or a soft cloth dipped in a mixture of baking soda and lemon juice. For tougher jobs, sprinkle only baking soda on the cloth and rub it over the marked area, or sprinkle a generous amount baking soda onto a lemon wedge and rub the wedge over the surface. Wash the area with castile soap, rinse with water and dry with a clean towel.

You can use more aggressive abrasives for really stubborn stains but they will scratch or matt the surface which could leave an inconsistent finish. That said, minor abrasive marks should dull down over time through natural wear and as the worktop's patina evolves.

Daily cleaning of copper and brass worktops should be done with mild dish soap and a soft cloth or sponge. The worktop should be dried after cleaning as wet smears will mark the surface.

Engineered Solid Surface Worktops

Incredibly resilient and virtually maintenance free; engineered work surfaces combine practicality with a contemporary edge.

Quartz, recycled glass, Corian and concrete worktops are water resistant, stain-resistant, heat resistant and scratch resistant. This is not to say that they are impervious to damage however and it is still important to wipe up spills quickly and to take care when placing objects on the surface.

Care

- Unlike stone and timber, recycled glass, Corian and quartz work surfaces do not need regular sealing.
- Engineered Solid surface worktops should not be rubbed with abrasive materials (such as metal pads, scouring detergents and wire wool or alkaline and chlorine based cleaners or bleach) instead, wash with clean warm water to which a non-abrasive light neutral detergent may be added. Rinse with clean warm water and dry with a lint free towel or similar.
- Regularly clean your worktop with a good quality stone cleaner. Suitable products should be PH Neutral.
- Black Diamond produce excellent cleaning products to help you clean, polish and seal your worktop. Visit www.bdstoneworks.com/products.htm for product details and cleaning tips.
- Liquids spilt on your granite worktops should be mopped up immediately. Discolouration may occur if spills are left on the surface. Highly alkaline or acidic liquids (such as lemon juice or vinegar), oil based substances (such as butter and cooking oils - hot oil splattering from hot pans on the cooker), wine, detergents and alcohol have the potential to cause discolouration to some degree.
- Over time, a film builds up on the surface if water is left to dry on the worktop. This film will dull the look of the worktop making the finish appear blotchy and uneven. To prevent build up of the film it is very important to wipe the worktop completely dry after spills and cleaning.
- Do not hit your worktop with anything blunt or heavy. It can crack, chip or even break (the edges are most likely to be damaged if physically abused).
- Do not cut directly onto the worktop.
- Although heat resistant we advise that you do not expose your worktop to excessive heat - use a trivet, pot stand or similar.
- Do not drag objects along the worktop especially heavy pots and pans.

Stain removal

- Water based stain removers are available, formulated for the specific removal of organic stains such as wine, coffee, nicotine, fruit juices etc.
- Alkaline degreasers are useful for removal of dirt of an organic and greasy nature.
- For difficult residues on Corian, use "Deep Cleaner for Corian" from Stone Care International.
- Black Diamond Granite Cleaner (available from bdstoneworks.com and lakeland.co.uk) is both food safe and kind to the stone. It should remove most marks but if a stain has sunk into the stone it may be time to get the experts in. Contact It Woodwork for advice.
- If you wish to try a green cleaning method to tackle surface stains, a 4:1 mix of water to vodka (in that order) may be effective. Use immediately with a cloth or sponge – don't leave the solution on the surface for extended periods.

Defects and imperfections

Even engineered solid surface worktops, on rare occasions, can suffer defects or imperfections such as small chips. These can arise during manufacture, delivery or installation and we reserve the right to make repairs entirely at our own discretion with the use of chemical or resinous fillers.

Timber Worktops

Solid hardwood worktops are beautiful, warm and above all resilient. Cared for well, they will last more than a lifetime.

Your worktop has been protected using *Fiddes Hard Wax Oil*, which offers the highest level of protection available with little or no need for maintenance. That said, it is still possible that prolonged direct contact from iron, steel or copper vessels may stain the surfaces. Scuffs and scratches are the most likely problem you will encounter. Provided they are not too deep, a light application or two, of Hard Wax Oil to the damaged area will remedy these. More severe damage should be protected from moisture until assessed and dealt with by *It Woodwork Ltd*

Care

It is essential that any scratches, chips etc. in the worktop are sealed with oil immediately. This is especially important around the sink and other wet areas. Exposed wood will absorb water leading to possible deformation of the worktop and staining of the timber.

- Always mop up spills of water and other liquids straight away. Do not allow liquids to stand on wooden surfaces for any period of time. This will, over time stain the timber and possibly deform it. If left to get bad it may be impossible to remove the damage without sanding a significant amount of timber off.
- Always use pan stands and trivets to protect the wood from rough, hot, wet or dirty pots and pans.
- Always use chopping boards to cut and slice food. Do not cut directly onto the worktop surface.
- Any damage to the surface of the worktop or to the oil protecting it must be rectified immediately. Suitable oil must be applied to the damaged area to prevent the ingress of water.
- Dryness of the worktop (when water beading no longer occurs) must also be rectified immediately with the application of suitable oil. This is particularly important around the sink, draining board and other areas prone to moisture contact. (See **Maintenance** section for details).
- Clean the tops with a sparing amount of warm water, a drop of washing up liquid and a cloth.
- Regularly check around the sink (especially important with under-mount sinks) for areas where the oil has worn thin. This will be fairly obvious as there will be a colour difference and the wood may appear exposed. It is vitally important to oil these areas as soon as wear/damage becomes apparent.

Maintenance

Most worktop finishes need regular re-applications to remain water repellent. Fiddes Hard Wax Oil does not. When and how often more oil is needed will vary depending on worktop use and cleaning methods employed. An easy way to find out is to gently flick wet fingers at the worktop. The droplets of water should sit like beads on the surface. The smaller the bead, the greater the need for oil. Oil can be

applied at any time to the entire work surface or to small areas that are scuffed or losing water beading properties. Pay particular attention to the condition of the oil on your worktops around high traffic areas, especially the edges around the sink, tap and drainers. It should be fairly obvious if the oil has got too thin; look out for discoloration or 'dry' looking timber and treat immediately.

If you wish to oil the worktop yourself, it is fairly simple and here's how;

1. Apply thinly with a good quality, synthetic bristled brush in the same direction as the grain. Ensure total and even coverage.
2. Leave to dry for approximately 6hrs. Repeat if necessary (if beading doesn't occur).
3. Do not apply too slowly or over work the oil; running the brush along the surface of oil that is starting to dry will have a detrimental effect on the finish and protective quality of the oil.