

How to Clean Countertops



Kitchen and bathroom countertops are a focal point—and the most frequently used surface in your home. Keep them clean and well-maintained so that your home is neat and attractive, and your family is kept safe from germs. This guide highlights a few easy steps to clean your countertops and keep surfaces looking spotless. Plus, get tips on stain removal and regular maintenance.

1. Pre-Clean

Remove dust and crumbs from your countertop for a deeper clean. Use a paper towel, cotton cloth or microfiber cloth to remove any visible dirt. Alternatively, reach for a **counter brush** to quickly sweep debris directly into the trash. Look for a brush designed specifically for your type of countertop material to prevent scratches.

2. Cleaning Different Countertop Surfaces

Wood, marble, granite, quartz, engineered wood and stainless steel require gentle cleaning to avoid damage. With its neutral pH, [dish soap](#) is right for the job.

- Moisten a microfiber or cotton cleaning cloth with warm water. Add a dime-sized amount of dish soap. Fold the cloth in your hand and rub it back and forth two or three times to encourage lathering.
- Wipe down the counter with large swipes of your hand. For large countertops, add more soap when you no longer see bubbles transferring to the surface.

3. Rinsing and Drying

Even the recommended cleaning products for countertops could cause damage if they're allowed to remain in place for very long. To protect the surface, rinse away the cleaner thoroughly after scrubbing. Use a fresh cleaning cloth dampened with warm water. Thoroughly wipe down the counters to remove cleaner residue. Rinse a second time if you can still see the cleaning product on the surface of the counter. When it's rinsed, dry off the countertop using soft, dry cloth.

4. Removing Stains on Granite

Here's how to treat stains on granite countertops.

- Make a paste made of baking soda and warm water.
- Allow the paste to rest for 5 to 10 minutes, then scrub into the countertop stain very gently. Baking soda is abrasive, and hard or prolonged scrubbing may damage some materials.
- Rinse with warm water and a reusable cleaning cloth.
- For stubborn stains, prepare and apply the baking soda paste as described above. Cover the area with plastic wrap. Secure it in place with masking tape. Allow the paste to work overnight. In the morning, rinse with warm water and a reusable cleaning cloth.

Tip: Baking soda paste is best for oil-based stains. For water-based stains, use hydrogen peroxide.

5. Removing Stains on Quartz and Engineered Stone

Quartz and engineered stone are highly stain-resistant. If discoloration lingers after rinsing, try wiping the countertop down with glass cleaner and a soft cloth.

Tip: Grout cleaner is best for removing stubborn stains in the grout between tiles and on visible countertop seams. Follow the directions for use to ensure best results.

6. Disinfecting Countertops

Cleaning lifts away some germs that pose a risk for household illnesses, but they may not eliminate all viruses, bacteria and microorganisms. Disinfecting is the process of killing potentially harmful microbes. Highly effective disinfectants may eliminate 99.9 percent of germs. The best way to disinfect varies based on countertop type:

- For granite, soapstone and wood, use bleach. Dilute household bleach with warm water according to the directions on the bleach. Wipe the countertops down with the solution using a reusable cleaning cloth. Rinse with warm water and a fresh cloth.
- With engineered stone and quartz, use alcohol. Dilute isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol with water. Wipe the countertops down with the solution using a reusable cleaning cloth. Rinse with warm water and a fresh cloth.

Tip: Wear rubber gloves while disinfecting to protect your skin.

7. How to Un-Scorch a Countertop

At times, there may be surface issues with a countertop that demand more than simple cleaning. There are a few ways to take care of light surface damage to a countertop.

Stains on Granite

Soap and oil are the most common stains for granite counters. These stains can be lifted with a stone poultice. Gather some stone poultice, plastic wrap, a toothpick, a plastic spoon, painters tape and granite sealer.

- Spread some stone poultice over the stained area with the plastic spoon.
- Cover the poultice with plastic wrap, and use a toothpick to poke a few holes in the plastic. This will allow moisture to escape.
- Tape around the edge with painters tape. Then, leave it to soak for 24 hours.
- Once the poultice has soaked up the stain overnight, scrape the excess up with the plastic spoon. Wipe the area clean.
- Apply a granite sealer to prevent future stains.

The best method for cleaning, disinfecting and sealing your kitchen countertops depends on the type of material. By using the tools and materials recommended for your countertops, you can keep them clean and looking their best through years of daily use.