

# COUNTERTOPS

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COUNTERTOP TYPE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	CARE/MAINTENANCE	COST
<b>TILE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impervious to moisture, stains, heat</li> <li>• Artistic look, can use special hand-painted designs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The grout may stain</li> <li>• The tile surface won't be smooth enough for cutting or rolling dough. Corner chipping common</li> </ul>	<p>The safest cleaning method will depend heavily on the type of tile you've used, so be sure to consult your manufacturer's instructions. For glazed ceramic, clean with a damp cloth and non oil-based household cleaner. Do not use ammonia, which can discolor grout</p>	\$\$-\$\$\$
<b>CONCRETE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be worked into different shapes, such as integral sinks and decorative edge treatments</li> <li>• Custom details like integral drain boards can be incorporated</li> <li>• Resists scratches and heat</li> <li>• Comes in a variety of colors and textures</li> <li>• Custom cast to your exact specifications</li> <li>• Much stronger than any other natural surface</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be sealed properly to resist stain</li> <li>• Though sealing protects the concrete, waxing is required to protect the sealer. Most manufacturers recommend applying wax to your product every one to three months, which will help to maintain its sheen and repel liquids</li> <li>• Cutting on it will leave marks</li> <li>• Quick temperature changes can cause curling or warping to newly installed slabs</li> </ul>	<p>Though your specific manufacturer's instructions reign supreme, cleaning with a neutral pH soap, is recommended. Be careful to avoid abrasive cleaners. Promptly rinse all spills from surface. Wax every one to three months and reseal every one to two years, based on your manufacturer's instructions</p>	\$\$
<b>LAMINATE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produced in hundreds of colors and patterns and a variety of finishes. Certain designs replicate the look of granite, solid surface, engineered stone and hardwood, among others, providing an in-demand look at an undemanding price</li> <li>• Easy upkeep</li> <li>• Impact resistant</li> <li>• A coved design, where the laminate eliminates the countertop's back edge by curving slightly up the wall, makes for easy cleanup</li> <li>• Cost savings, due to reduced labor and more inexpensive material compared to other surfaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Layers make it difficult to repair chips</li> <li>• Hot items and water seeping into seams may cause layers to break apart</li> <li>• Kraft paper leaves a dark line at the edges, unless it runs wall to wall or is trimmed with a decorative material such as wood or stainless steel</li> <li>• You'll need to use cutting boards</li> <li>• You can't clean it with abrasives</li> </ul>	<p>A damp cloth and mild soap should be adequate for most spills. For more resistant stains, create a paste from baking soda and a mild household cleaner, and give a brisk 15-20 strokes to the area using a nylon bristle brush. Always follow your manufacturer's specific instructions</p>	\$
<b>MARBLE</b>	<p>Classic look, smooth and cool to the touch, marble is the traditional favorite for rolling dough and making pastries</p>	<p>Marble lacks the durability of granite and requires sealants to be applied more frequently to prevent stains</p>	<p>Stone is a natural product, and cleaning is fairly simple, though be sure to follow specific instructions for your stone. Can be cleaned with a few drops of a neutral cleaner, stone soap or mild liquid dishwashing detergent. Always avoid products containing abrasives, lemon, vinegar or other acids, as well as scouring pads</p>	\$\$
<b>QUARTZ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classic look, does not require sealants</li> <li>• Scratch-resistant with diamondlike hardness, you can cut on quartz (excessive force can damage it, however)</li> <li>• Consistent color</li> <li>• Its non-porous makes it virtually stain-free</li> <li>• Can be worked into a decorative edge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Though it can briefly tolerate moderate temperatures for a brief time, you'll want to use a hot pad or trivet when placing a hot pan on it.</li> <li>• Integrated sinks are not available, as with solid surfacing</li> </ul>	<p>Though it's important to always follow your manufacturer's specific instructions, washing with warm water and a pH neutral, non-abrasive cleaner is recommended</p>	\$\$-\$\$\$

COUNTERTOP TYPE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	CARE/MAINTENANCE	COST
<b>GRANITE</b>	Luxurious look, durable, chip and scratch resistant. You can cut, roll dough, and place hot pots directly on granite	Because stone is porous, it requires special sealants annually	Can be cleaned with a few drops of a neutral cleaner, stone soap or mild liquid dishwashing detergent. Always avoid products containing abrasives, lemon, vinegar or other acids, as well as scouring pads	\$\$\$
<b>SOLID SURFACE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because it's solid, chips, dents and scratches can be repaired easily</li> <li>• Comes in a variety of colors and finishes ranging from gloss to matte; it can look and feel like stone</li> <li>• Flexible enough to form decorative shapes and an integral sink</li> <li>• Can be molded into a single seamless piece. If seams are necessary, they're inconspicuous and non-porous, preventing the growth of bacteria</li> <li>• A high gloss countertop can be buffed back to its original luster</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May crack as it cools down after a hot item has been on it</li> <li>• Will stain. However, because it's nonporous (that is, nothing soaks too far into it), spots can be scrubbed out</li> <li>• Could become discolored if a heavy object falls on it</li> <li>• You'll need to use a cutting board, though scratches can be sanded out</li> </ul>	Most dirt can be removed with soapy water or an ammonia based cleaner. You can disinfect the surface with a solution of diluted household bleach (one part water/one part bleach)	\$\$
<b>WOOD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Won't dull knife blades</li> <li>• Provides a convenient, built-in chopping/food prep area</li> <li>• After heavy usage, in many cases knife marks can be removed by sanding and re-oiling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows knife marks</li> <li>• Prone to water damage so requires sealants</li> <li>• Should be periodically re-oiled</li> <li>• Shouldn't be placed near the sink without several coats of sealant</li> </ul>	Important to periodically apply a non-toxic mineral oil appropriate for kitchen use with a rag. Never use harsh detergents to clean, Follow your manufacturer's guidelines	\$
<b>STAINLESS STEEL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can handle hot pots</li> <li>• Won't stain</li> <li>• Easy to wipe clean</li> <li>• Smooth and cool to the touch</li> <li>• Flexible enough to make an integral sink</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows scratches and dulls knives</li> <li>• Shows fingerprints, so it might not be the best choice if you have young children</li> <li>• Can dent and be noisy if not attached to a strong base</li> <li>• Difficult and costly fabrication</li> </ul>	A quick wipe with warm water and soap should be sufficient. Be sure to avoid abrasive pads, as they'll scratch the surface	\$\$

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