

How to Polish Marble Countertops

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There's no disputing the fact that natural stone countertops such as marble or granite have always been popular when it comes to home design. They're not merely durable material choices, but marble or other natural stone countertops also convey a sense of opulence and elegance, which makes a statement about personal taste and social status.

That said, their value as durable and easy-to-maintain materials is a primary motivator for why so many choose to install them in their homes, with the superficial benefits being secondary. That doesn't mean they won't suffer from negligence, though.

Marble in particular can be prone to scratches and stains as well as being susceptible to dulling over time. It's a soft, porous stone so any kind of alkaline or acidic material can work to eat away at it. This is why proper maintenance and routine polishing or sealing is a good habit to have when deciding to upgrade to marble counters.

No worries, it's not a daunting task to keep that shine and luster on your marble countertops.

Cleaning Marble

The easiest way to maintain marble is to be on top of cleaning it. Acidic or abrasive liquids like citric acid (e.g., lemon or orange juice) can eat away at marble, compromising its strength over time while also dulling the surface and leaving it vulnerable to other destructive liquids.

This is why it's vital to always clean up any liquids that end up on your marble countertops. Fortunately, keeping your marble clean is easier than polishing it.

The most common way to stay on top of basic upkeep as it relates to marble counters is to simply purchase either a [stone cleaner](#), which will be formulated specifically for natural stone surfaces, or to get yourself a gentle dish soap and a soft rag.

Then, the single most valuable thing you can do is to never let anything settle on your marble countertops. If some tomato juice escapes from your cutting board, wipe it up immediately. Spilled some wine? Wipe it up immediately. A properly installed marble countertop will be sealed, but the seal only gives you a small window of time to wipe up spills that could stain if left. Due diligence and avoiding procrastination will spare your marble as well as your time and money.

Polishing Marble

In addition to cleaning regularly (or whenever your marble gets spilled on), polishing every couple weeks or at least monthly will do wonders for the long term durability and quality of your marble countertops. While polishing is more involved than cleaning, it's not complicated, difficult, or particularly time consuming – short of letting the polishing solution sit. But again, choice of tools and cleaning agents is vital. Obviously, abrasive items like steel wool are a big no-no. Now there are marble polishing kits and a wide variety of marble polishing agents, but it's important to know if they're for a specific color of marble or if they're general use.

What is general use, however, is the MacGyver-esque marble polishing guide we have for you below:

1. Surprise, you're going to want to clean your countertops before polishing. This will ensure no food or liquid residue will be mixed into the polish.
2. Mix up a Baking Soda and Water solution (3 tablespoons of baking soda to 1 quart water).
3. Using a soft cloth or rag, apply the baking soda and water solution in a circular motion, buffing from the middle out, and let it sit for a few hours before rinsing it off (3-6 hours).
4. After you've cleaned off your baking soda/water solution, crush up chalk (yes, chalk) into a fine powder. Then use a damp cloth and dip it into your powdered chalk mix. Apply in a similar fashion to the baking soda/water solution and then using a microfiber or other fine cloth, thoroughly rinse off the powdered chalk residue. No need to let it sit. Just buff on and wipe off.
5. Enjoy the restored shine of your marble.

Bonus Tip: *Only polish small sections, rather than the entirety of the countertop, at once. This will allow you to work at your own pace, rather than working against the polishing solution, which can dry and leave residue. A good rule to follow is to go quarter-by-quarter or third-by-third when you decide to polish your marble countertops.*

Keep it Sealed

Other than routine cleaning and polishing, it is wise to reseal your marble countertops every 3-6 months. It's also wise to do reseal your marble counters soon after you polish them. Keeping a fresh seal on marble is the easiest way to reduce your time spent cleaning in addition to maximizing your investment in beautiful natural stone countertops. For sealing, there are DIY options, but you can also get a professional to come do it for you.

In terms of the DIY route, it's as simple as going to your local home improvement store and buying a spray bottle of sealant. There are two types, topical and impregnator, which are named accurately given their purposes. Topical, obviously, sits on top of the marble surface while the impregnator sealant works its way deeper into the marble, filling the pores from the inside out.

For countertops, you're going to want to opt for the impregnator sealant, and then follow the simple steps below:

1. Spray your sealant onto your countertop and then wait the suggested time (usually 10-20 min) that should be listed on the directions of the bottle.
2. If your sealant is drying quicker than expected, add more sealant. All drying means is that the sealant is working, but if it dries, adding a little more will help with the final outcome. This will prevent the streaking that occurs if sealant is allowed to dry.
3. Wipe all sealant off with a dry cloth.
4. Let your countertop have the day off, or more accurately 6-8 hours (possibly 24 hours, depending on the sealant). Don't place anything on top of it or use it heavily after you applied the sealant.

After all, out of all the stone options available, marble is one whose natural veining is a big reason for its popularity. Protecting your marble and maintaining its luster is a simple way to highlight the natural character of the marble, making it both a functional and decorative addition to your home.

And if you prefer a video aid, here's a short video on how to clean your marble countertops: