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## CARE & MAINTENANCE GUIDE

Soapstone has incredible natural characteristics that make care and maintenance easy. Unlike granite and marble it does not require sealing, and scratches do not require professional attention.

### OVERVIEW

Soapstone is:

- **HEAT RESISTANT.** You can take a pan right from the stove to the countertop.
- **NON-POROUS.** Two huge benefits. Soapstone is bacteria resistant because it does not absorb food or liquid. Any residue sits on top of the stone and is cleaned away with simple soap and water. Also, unlike granite and marble, soapstone does not need to be sealed with chemical agents. In fact, we recommend that it not be sealed.
- **NO PROFESSIONAL REPAIRS.** Unlike granite and marble, scratches do not require professional attention.
- **ACID RESISTANT.** You can spill anything on soapstone and it will be fine. In fact, soapstone is required in many laboratories and acid rooms.
- **COLORING EASILY MAINTAINED.** Some people want to darken their soapstone tops or tiles. If you want to retain the stones natural coloring, no treatment is required. Just clean with soap and water and you're good to go. If you want to darken the stone, you treat it annually just like you would with marble and granite. Unlike marble and granite, you do the treating not a professional and rather than a chemical-based product you use a natural wax or oil. As we describe below the annual treatment is simple and very cost effective.

### CLEANING

Simple soap and water. Nothing more required. You can use any household cleaner but soap and water is the easiest and best way to go.

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**DARKENING/TREATING**

Some people like to keep the stone's natural coloring. If that's the case, you don't need to do anything. The stone will darken with age but not significantly. It will patina. If you want to darken the stone, there are three basic options: mineral oil, dry wax and chemical treatment (e.g., Tenax Tiger Ager).

We recommend using a dry wax. Alberene Soapstone sells a locally-made, custom wax.

## DRY WAX V. MINERAL OIL

These two products are natural, food safe and easily obtained. Alberene sells a custom, locally- made dry wax and mineral oil is sold in almost any hardware store.

Here are a few basic reasons why we recommend dry wax:

1. Easier application.

- a. Mineral oil: You need apply mineral oil once a week for six-to-seven weeks to get sustainable darkening and then about every three months after that.
- b. Dry wax: You need to apply dry wax once a week for three weeks and then 8-12 months after that for a sustainable rich color.

2. Better look.

- a. Mineral oil: the oil leaves a splotchy finish because it evaporates unevenly. Even after multiple applications this will happen. Not the greatest look.
- b. Dry wax: the wax leaves an even luster. The affect is actually a deeper, richer, almost smoother finish.

3. Not messy.

- a. Mineral oil: quite simply... mineral oil is oil. Just touching the bottle often leaves your hands greasy. We find that the oil will stain paper that's left on it even after a week of application.
- b. Dry wax: the name suggests the affect... it's dry. Dry wax is not a powder but it goes on quickly with little residue. It is simply a cleaner product.

4. Hypoallergenic. a. Both products are all natural and food safe.

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## CHEMICAL AGENTS

There are two easily-obtained chemical products. We do not recommend chemical agents for treating countertops. They are great for wall tiles, fireplace surrounds, vanity tops, etc.

We recommend the Tenax Tiger Ager.

1. Tenax Tiger Ager (buy from Grandquartz, Hardrock Tools, or other stores). Apply once in the beginning and then every 5 years or so. This is NOT a natural product however it darkens the stone in a similar way mineral oil does without the need to re-apply frequently.
2. Akemi Dark and Super. Apply once in the beginning and then every 5 years or so. This is NOT a natural product however it darkens the stone in a similar way mineral oil does without the need to re-apply frequently.

We recommend the dry wax for countertops because it is natural, lasts a long time, and produces dark color people desire. For those who want zero maintenance use the Tiger ager.

## REPAIRING SCRATCHES

Repairing soapstone scratches is simple and does not require expensive professional attention.

Almost all scratches go away with a small application of dry wax (or mineral oil) if you've used those products on the countertop previously.

Deeper scratches require some sanding (yup, simple sanding just like wood).

You can follow the instructions provided in the Youtube video that's linked below or these steps (both are the same):

1. You'll need three different grits of sandpaper or sanding pads, which can be obtained from almost any hardware store (grit denotes the coarseness of the paper). You'll need 80, 120 and 200 grit paper (better yet, sanding pads).
2. Start with 80 grit. Lightly rub on and around the scratch until you see most of the scratch is worn away. Be careful not to sand so much as to create a divot or depression.
3. Use the 120 grit to finish sanding down the affected area.
4. Finish with the 200 grit to smooth out the area.
5. Apply dry wax or mineral oil if that's what you've used to treat the stone.

Youtube link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJlGkG4l4Vo>