

[Your Natural Stone Surfaces](#)

After your natural stone countertops, full height splashes, tub decks, and/or shower wall panels are fabricated and installed, keeping your stone clean should be an easy job.

FCM's Complimentary Countertop Sealer

For initial protection, FCM offers a complimentary sealer as part of our stone countertop installations at no charge. This impregnating sealer is not permanent and ***no warranty is implied***. The sealer is applied to the stone and left on the surface to form a micro-coating. Once cured, the sealer helps to keep substances on the surface of the stone, allowing you more time to clean it up than if the stone was not sealed. Stains may occur even when the stone is sealed, so cleaning spills as soon as they occur will give you the best chance to minimize stains. FCM recommends re-sealing your stone countertops every 1 – 2 years.

Cleaning Recommendations

FCM recommends that you clean your stone with a neutral pH cleaner specifically designed for stone. These types of neutral cleaners can be purchased at most retail tile outlets and stores such as The Home Depot and Lowe's. A mild dishwashing detergent and warm water can also be effective. Finish with a soft cloth for best results. Glass cleaners, acidic based cleaners such as lemon or vinegar, scouring powders and other harsh chemicals can permanently damage granite causing pitting and dulling of the surface, and may remove the complimentary sealer, thus eliminating its ability to help minimize stains.

Stone Sealers

A common misconception is that granite sealers protect, shield or otherwise prevent stone from absorbing moisture or from being stained. Stone slabs can still be stained even when sealed. Sealers simply help decrease the absorbency rate of the stone, so it won't stain as easily.

General Slab DO's and DON'Ts:

- **DO** protect countertop surfaces with coasters, trivets, placemats and cutting boards. Many common foods and drinks contain acids that can dull or etch the surface of many stones.
- **DO** clean surfaces with mild detergent or stone cleaner.
- **DO** thoroughly rinse and dry the surface after cleaning with soap.
- **DO** blot up spills immediately and rinse the area with clean water.

- **DON'T** place hot items directly on the stone surface.
- **DON'T** use vinegar, lemon juice or other cleaners containing acids such as grout cleaners or tub and tile cleaners.
- **DON'T** use abrasive cleaners such as dry cleansers or soft cleansers.
- **DON'T** mix bleach and ammonia as a cleaner; this combination creates a toxic and lethal gas.

Your Quartz Surfaces

There are many man-made countertop products such as Cambria, Viatera, Zodiaq, and others. These engineered products consist of approximately 95% quartz, which is one of the most common minerals found in the earth's crust. The other 5% is a mixture of polymer resins and coloring. The combination makes quartz countertops highly dense, practically non-porous, and more resistant to cracks, scratches, and stains than natural stone. *Engineered quartz products are tough, but they are not indestructible and can be easily damaged if not properly cared for.*

Please follow the simple care and maintenance steps below, along with some general precautions to enjoy your quartz surfaces for years to come.

Cleaning Recommendations

- For routine cleaning, use a damp cloth and mild detergent. Thoroughly rinse off the detergent with water after use and dry with a soft cloth or paper towel.
- For more difficult stains, use **non-abrasive** household products such as "Soft Scrub Liquid Gel". Always use non-abrasive products to avoid scratching or dulling the surface of your countertop.
- Be certain to rinse all areas thoroughly when applying any type of cleaning agent.
- Avoid using cleaning products other than a neutral pH cleaner. Products outside this range may damage the surface. Some of the cleaning products to avoid on your Quartz countertops are: bleach, ammonia, oven cleaners, floor strippers, paint removers and/or strippers, toilet bowl cleaners, oil soaps, drain products, vinegar, and lemon juice.
- Many of the manufacturer's websites offer more specific recommendations on what to use and what not to use on your quartz countertops. When in doubt, look to the manufacturer of your quartz countertops for more specific information regarding your brand of quartz countertop.

General Precautions

- Although durable, quartz countertops can scratch if items are dragged across their surface.
- Quartz can be damaged by sudden and rapid temperature changes. Hot pads and trivets are recommended, especially when using cooking units such as electric frying pans, crock pots, or roaster ovens. **Do not put hot cookware directly on a quartz countertop surface.**
- Avoid using sharp objects such as sharp knives or screwdrivers directly on the surface. The use of a cutting board is always recommended.
- Be cautious when exposing your quartz surface to any chemical or solvent. **Always use a neutral pH cleaner.**
- Should your quartz countertop accidentally come into contact with any potentially damaging products, rinse immediately with water to try and neutralize the effect.
- Quartz surfaces such as honed, textured, and/or patterned require more daily maintenance than polished finishes. Metal marks, fingerprints, and other signs of daily living are more apparent and are not covered by the manufacturer's warranties.
- Please refer to the manufacturer's website for additional information on their warranty and care & maintenance.

[Your Piedrafina Surfaces](#)

Piedrafina marble is an eco-friendly, engineered product that brings beauty and durability to your home. It is composed of 95% natural marble with polyester resin binders and pigments. The resin binders and pigments give the marble strength and consistency.

Maintaining a Piedrafina marble surface is easily achieved. Following simple care and maintenance steps along with some general precautions will allow you to enjoy your Piedrafina surface for years to come.

Cleaning Recommendations

- Water spots will occur with standing water on the surface. Simply dry your Piedrafina countertop before walking away to avoid this issue.
- For routine cleaning, utilize a damp cloth or paper towel. A soft cloth is always preferable.
- For more difficult stains, use a small amount of a mild, liquid soap.
- For the most stubborn stains, incorporate a neutral pH cleaner and a **non-abrasive** scrub pad.
- Be certain to rinse all areas thoroughly when applying any type of cleaning agent.
- Piedrafina's website offers more specific recommendations on what to use and what not to use on your countertops. When in doubt, look to the manufacturer's website for more specific information regarding your Piedrafina countertop.

General Precautions

- Piedrafina marble is a soft stone and will scratch if items are dragged across its surface.
- Be cautious when exposing your marble surface to any chemical or solvent.
- Many commonly used household cleaning products may have negative effects on the marble surface. When selecting a cleaning product, never use any product that contains a high acidity level, such as vinegar, or a high alkaline level, such as ammonia. **Always use a neutral pH cleaner.**
- Never expose your surface to any chemical that contains trichlorethane or methylene chloride such as paint removers and furniture strippers.
- If accidental exposure to any damaging products should occur, thoroughly rinse the affected area with water as soon as possible.
- Please refer to the manufacturer's website for additional information on their warranty and care & maintenance.

Your Solid Surface Surfaces

Solid surface is a man-made material usually composed of marble dust, bauxite, acrylic or polyester resins, and pigments. It is completely non-porous, keeping bacteria away and promoting a cleaner and more sanitary countertop. It is strong and, unlike laminate, the plastic goes all the way through, and thus resists impact better. It can also be relatively easy to refurbish if it gets scratched or begins to dull.

The inherent qualities of your solid surface promote easy care and renewability. Following some simple care and maintenance steps along with some general precautions will allow you to enjoy your countertops for years to come.

Cleaning Recommendations

- Soapy water and ammonia-based cleaners will remove most dirt and residue from your solid surface countertops. Avoid window cleaners because they can leave a waxy build-up that may dull the surface. Be sure to rinse your countertops thoroughly and wipe them completely dry.
- To prevent hard water stains, wipe your solid surface dry immediately after spills or after cleaning. Removing hard water stains can often be done with vinegar. You might also try a cleaner such as CLR or Lime Away if needed.
- For tougher stains, a mild abrasive such as Soft Scrub may be needed. Be careful as abrasives can alter the appearance of a glossier finish. We recommend consulting your solid surface manufacturer's website and following their guidelines for the removal of any tougher stains **prior** to attempting anything on your own.
- Household bleach diluted in water can be used to disinfect your solid surface countertops. Rinse with clean water and wipe dry.
- If you have solid surface sinks they can be cleaned as outlined above but we recommend you consult your manufacturer's website for special instructions specific to cleaning and disinfecting your solid surface sinks.

General Precautions

- Darker solid surface colors tend to require more attention than lighter colors.
- While solid surface countertops are heat resistant, it is important to minimize direct heat exposure. Do not place hot pots, pans, etc. directly on the countertop surface. Make use of trivets or hot pads when placing hot objects on any solid surface.
- It is a recommended practice to run cold water from the faucet when pouring boiling water into a solid surface sink.
- Avoid getting strong chemicals such as paint removers, oven cleaners, etc. on your solid surface countertops. If accidental exposure occurs, promptly flush the surface with clean water to rinse off the chemical.
- Do not cut directly on your solid surface countertop. Use a cutting board.
- It is possible for you to remove minor cuts and scratches from your solid surface countertop by following instructions that can be found on your manufacturer's website. **Do not attempt to remove damage without first referring to your manufacturer's website.** Deeper scratches, cuts, and other damage may also be removed but it is recommended to consult a professional solid surface refinisher.
- Please refer to the manufacturer's website for additional information on their warranty and care & maintenance.

[Repairing Your Surfaces](#)

No countertop product on the market today is indestructible and sometimes, life happens. The good news is that often times your countertop can be repaired, but your expectations for that repair need to be realistic. Following are some general guidelines to keep in mind when your countertop is in need of repair.

Natural Stone Repairs

- Stains can often be removed from your natural stone through the use of a poultice. The poultice can draw the staining agent back out of the stone thereby lessening the appearance of or removing the stain altogether. Knowing what caused the stain in the first place can help determine what type of poultice should be used. Please note that poultices aren't often a one and done process. They sometimes require several applications to significantly remove a stain and sometimes they won't work at all.
- Minor/fine scratches can often be repaired by polishing your countertop. There are various polishing compounds and equipment on the market today for removing this type of damage. Some only require a little elbow grease while others require what we call a wet polish (polishing with water) of your countertop. This type of damage can generally be made to go away but you need to realize that the damage is not being repaired as much as the material around the damaged area is being removed.
- Large/deep scratches can also be repaired by polishing your countertop and sometimes by filling the scratch itself. Polishing is done as described above but often wet polishing is the only option. Again, with the wet polishing, we are removing the stone around the damaged area and then we work to feather the damaged area back into the remaining top. You will essentially have a minor dip in your stone surface but the more you are able to feather it back in to the surrounding areas, the less noticeable the dip will be. These types of repairs will sometimes stand out more on darker, more uniform colored stones that have a highly polished finish. If the scratch is deep/wide enough, we can sometimes use a stone repair kit to fill the scratch with a clear fill. This type of fill can be highly successful on a lot of stones, making the scratch very difficult to see, but on white stones and dark/black stones, this type of repair can often be difficult to pull off. On white stones, the fill can often create a shadow effect where the scratch is and on darker stones, the fill can look milky/cloudy compared to the surrounding area.
- Chip repairs can be done with varying degrees of success and much of that has to do with the size and location of the chip. Small chips in the surface of the stone, or on the edges of the stone can often be corrected with a stone repair kit to fill the chip with a clear fill. Just as described above, these repairs can be highly successful on a lot of stones but can be difficult to pull off on white stones and dark/black stones. If the clear fill cannot be used, the service technician will often mix up a color matched epoxy to fill the chip with. Large chips are more difficult to repair. They are essentially filled the same way as smaller chips but the problem is that the fill used to repair the chip is often one solid color, and because the repair is larger, it does not disappear into the surface as well as a small chip repair will. Even though the chip may be filled and be flush with the surface of the stone, it can stand out because it does not contain the nuances of color and particulate that mother nature incorporated into the surrounding stone. Whenever possible, the service technician will try and replace a large chip that has come out of the stone in order to lessen the amount of fill needed to repair the damage so it is important not to throw away the piece of stone that was chipped out of your countertop.

- Seam repairs often involve filling voids in an otherwise filled seam or repairing a fully broken seam. The first generally requires that the seam be skimmed with additional seam fill to fill any voids that may have developed in the seam. The second generally involves completely removing the existing, broken seam fill and replacing it with new. One word of caution pertaining to seams, the more you try to alter an existing seam, the larger your resulting seam may end up being. Stone seams are not intended to be invisible and people who think they can have their seam made invisible by having someone work on it over and over again often end up with a fatter seam than they originally had. The only material on the market today that is going to give you a nearly invisible seam is solid surface.

Quartz Repairs

- **One word of caution as you read on about quartz repairs...quartz countertops can be more difficult to polish than natural stone countertops. If your quartz countertop is in need of a top polish, you need to understand that it can be very difficult to match the characteristics of the shine the manufacturer puts on a slab during the manufacturing process while trying to top polish a slab in the field. Many times it cannot be matched exactly. Furthermore, if you have a black quartz countertop, you need to realize that this surface is going to show more fingerprints and smudges than other types of quartz and it is extremely difficult to top polish in the field.**
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Piedrafina Repairs

- **One word of caution as you read on about polishing your Piedrafina countertop...most significant damage on Piedrafina tops requires that the damaged area be sanded down and brought back up to a shine by using finer and finer grits of sandpaper and ultimately a marble polish to complete the process. This process can restore a shine to your countertop but it will not match the characteristics that your factory finished piece will have. You will notice on your factory finish that while the whole top has a luster, some areas seem to shine more than others due to micro-irregularities in the surface of the stone. When we field polish the stone, we take everything down to an even finish and even though we can restore the shine, we cannot restore the way some areas seem to shine more than others. On larger tops, this can sometimes be noticeable.**
- Minor/fine scratches can often be repaired by polishing your countertop. There are various polishing compounds and equipment on the market today for removing this type of damage. Some only require a little elbow grease while others require that we sand and then polish the countertop. This type of damage can generally be made to go away but you need to realize that the damage is not being repaired as much as the material around the damaged area is being removed.
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Solid Surface Repairs

- Hazing/dulling of the solid surface countertop can sometimes be repaired by the homeowner. There are various resources available on each manufacturer's website to walk a homeowner through how to make these repairs. In tougher cases, the tops may need to be lightly sanded and buffed.
- Minor/fine scratches can often be repaired by sanding and/or buffing your countertop. There are various resources available on each manufacturer's website to walk a homeowner through how to make these repairs on their own. They are fairly effective and their success has a lot to do with how glossy the finish on your solid surface countertop is.
- Deeper scratches, cuts, and chips can generally be repaired using a color matched seam adhesive and shavings of the material itself. The shavings are typically worked into the seam adhesive and the mixture is then worked into the damaged area of the top. When dry, the area is sanded and buffed, expanding the work area with each finer grit of sandpaper in order to blend the repair into the rest of the countertop. The success of the repair depends a lot on how close a match the seam adhesive is to the base color of the countertop, and on how close a match the material the shavings came from was to the original material. The solid surface material is made in dye lots and sometimes if you get too far away from your original material's dye lot, the new material can appear slightly different in color.
- Cracks in your solid surface top can be repaired in a similar manner as described above. If the cracked pieces still fit tightly together, the crack can often be repaired with just some seam adhesive. If some material was lost in the process that caused the countertop to crack, it may require that some shavings be mixed in with the seam adhesive, or in some cases, that the crack be cut out all together and replaced with a new piece of material. Cracks that can be seamed right back together will often result in a very faint, sometimes nearly invisible seam. Cracks that require additional effort to repair can sometimes be a little more noticeable. Again, a lot of how well the repair blends in has to do with how well the seam adhesive and replacement material matches the original top.