

# The Care and Cleaning of Engineered Stone and Quartz Surfacing Countertops

One of the biggest reasons people decide to go with engineered stone or quartz surfacing for a kitchen countertop is that they are durable and easy to care for. Engineered quartz is a nonporous material and does not require sealing, unlike its natural stone counterpart.

Routine cleaning of quartz surfacing can be accomplished with only a damp cloth and a mild detergent. Other commercial cleaners safe for use are mild spray cleaners such as glass and surface cleaner.

It is recommended to stay clear of bleach, acid-based cleaners, high alkaline cleaners and solvents. While they will not destroy the durability of the quartz, they can harm the polish and luster. If any of these substances do come into contact with the surface, thoroughly rinse with water as soon as possible.

With engineered marble, etching and staining are a very real danger. Engineered quartz however, is much more resistant but it is advised that spills or drops of the usual high-staining liquids such as coffee, tea, fruit juice, vinegar or wine be wiped up right away.

For hard to remove or dried spills, a non-abrasive scrub pad with a mild detergent will generally clean up the surface. Specialized stone cleaners can also be used. Although countertops made of quartz surfacing will generally have seams (particularly in long runs of counter space), the seams should be tight and inconspicuous. That said, any seam can be a potential place for bacteria build-up and care should be given to keeping seams clean, just as with granite, laminate or other countertop materials.

Quartz surfacing is highly heat resistant and short-time exposure will usually not damage or scorch the surface, although extreme temperatures or prolonged exposure to high heat may. A small open flame such as a cigarette or match may not leave a trace. However, sudden extreme temperature changes can compromise the integrity of the surface and as with all kitchen countertops, a trivet or other insulation should always be used for hot pots and pans.

The scratch resistance of quartz surfacing is among the best, but it is still not scratch proof. A deliberate or accidental cut from a knife blade can mar the surface and it is not recommended that cutting be done directly on the countertop but on a cutting board.

The durability of engineered quartz is said to be more than twice that of natural granite, but chipping can still occur from a heavy impact. Quartz is also very difficult, if not impossible, to repair, just as natural stone, and highly damaged surfaces will need to be replaced. However, because quartz surfacing is uniform in appearance and color, replacement sections of countertop can often be exactly matched.

Without subjecting engineered quartz countertops to extreme abuse and keeping them clean, they can easily last a lifetime and retain their polish.



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