

Caring and Maintenance for Laminate Countertops

As with everything else in a home, laminate countertops require proper care and maintenance to keep them looking and performing their best. Countertops are made to be used, but by following a few guidelines, the impact of that use can be kept to a minimum.

Laminate is made to be scratch resistant and burn resistant, but this does not mean they are scratch and burn proof. Laminate countertops are affordable and durable, not impervious. A forceful cut will dig a gouge in laminate that cannot be repaired. For this reason, a cutting board or chopping block should always be used. This also goes for meat tenderizers. The use of a cutting board can help prevent a misplaced blow that can crack the surface of laminate.

Laminate will also melt. Objects at temperatures of 140 degrees F or higher can have severe detrimental effects. A one-time slip for a short duration is tolerable at temperatures less than 275 degrees F, but prolonged exposure to heat can cause laminate to separate from the substrate material to which it is bonded or melt the laminate itself. A trivet or insulated pot holder is recommended to be used at all times for hot objects.

On the plus side, because of its non-porous surface, laminate can be cleaned quickly and easily. All that is necessary, in most cases, is a non-abrasive cloth, water and a mild detergent. Scratch pads and abrasive materials can leave scuff marks on laminate and possibly allow moisture to penetrate which can lead to visible discoloration from mold and accelerate bacterial growth.

If a mild detergent has not cleaned the laminate effectively, a household cleaner or glass cleaner can be used in moderation. As little moisture as possible should be used and the countertop should never be flooded. This may weaken the seams and make the laminate susceptible to separation in the future.

When choosing a cleaner, acids and alkaline products are to be avoided. A pH close to 7 (neutral) is recommended. Acids and alkaline products include drain cleaners, oven cleaners, rust removers, toilet bowl cleaners, lime remover and chlorine bleach.

Some products that can be used in moderation for cleaning laminate include: Fantastik brand cleaner, Formula 409 or a diluted Pine-Sol solution.

Sometimes a new laminate countertop can have residual glue stains (red spots) on the surface. If the above recommendations do not work, an adhesive solvent can be used sparingly and away from the edges. Formica actually makes its own Nonflammable Contact Adhesive Solvent just for this purpose.

By following these guidelines, a laminate countertop will provide years of satisfaction with very little discoloration, fading or marring of the surface.



Get more information about ISFA Certified Professionals & Fabricators by visiting www.ISFANow.org
(877) 464-7732 • info@isfanow.org
COPYRIGHT 2009 - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.