

# COUNTERTOPS – CERAMIC TILE

## MAINTENANCE TIPS

- Wipe the surface of your tiles with a damp cloth to remove water marks. For stains, simply wipe with soapy water or ammonia-based cleaners. You may use an abrasive cleaner with a green Scotch-Brite pad to remove stubborn stains.
- To maintain a 'like-new' appearance, occasionally rub tiles with a pad and warm water. To disinfect, wipe surface with solution of diluted household bleach (1 part water / 1 part bleach).
- Always use a hot pad or trivet equipped with rubber feet to protect the surface from hot pans and electrical appliances.
- Avoid exposure to strong chemicals. If countertop is exposed to a harsh chemical, quickly flush with plenty of soapy water.
- Ceramic tile is brittle and can easily be broken by a sharp blow from a heavy object. The best way to avoid broken tiles is to use a cutting board and other protection on your ceramic tile tops when working in the kitchen. Wipe spills away promptly to prevent staining your grout.



### HOME CARE TIP

#### Ceramic Tile

Use warm water and soap to wash the new surface. Rinse then polish dry with tea towel or Turkish towel. Repeat this step every 2-3 days for the first month.

After the first month, simply wash tile with a damp cloth or sponge for daily upkeep.

#### Grout Maintenance and Care

Ceramic tiles in bathroom showers, floors and countertops are a beautiful addition to any home, but they are located in high-traffic areas and are subject to possible household abuse. Tile requires some simple homeowner maintenance to keep it in top condition. Cracking is an inherent characteristic of ceramic tile and grout. Cracks in tile are common in any home, and the grout joints pose the biggest potential problem areas.

Grout is a cement product and may vary in color and shade from a single grout sample. Shading variations may occur in the grout after it is installed. Colored grouts tend to lighten in color as they cure. Around sinks, where water is prevalent, and around stove tops where cooking oil and grease is present, the grout may appear darker than in other areas of the kitchen counter.

Though the installed grout joint may appear dry and hard even after one day, grout continues to hydrate (cure) in the presence of retained water, developing the majority of its designated strength within 28 days. The grout manufacturer suggests at least a 28-day curing time before any sealers are applied. Applying sealers prior to 28 days can stop the curing process of the grout, resulting in 'soft' or 'powder' grout joints. Complete satisfaction of the color and the desired hardness of the grout joints should be in place 28 days after installation. If you choose to use a "grout sealer", allow complete "curing" to take place before their application.

NOTE: Application of any "sealer" products to the grout will void any warranties on the grout. Once a "sealer" is applied, warranties against efflorescence are voided.

To clean your grout, use clean, warm water, with a teaspoon of vinegar or ammonia to break up grease, and then follow with a clean rinse.