

Soapstone is a *metamorphic* rock composed primarily of talc, with chlorite and magnesite. It is naturally non-porous, acid-resistant, and heat-resistant — chemically the most durable countertop stone available. Soapstone is also *soft*, so it scratches easily; the trade-off is that scratches buff out and the stone develops a beautiful patina with use. Soapstone **does not** need or accept conventional sealers — instead, it is traditionally treated with food-grade mineral oil to even and deepen its color.

DAILY CARE

- **Clean with anything** — soap, dish detergent, vinegar, ammonia, even bleach are all fine on soapstone. There is no acid concern.
- **Wipe with a damp cloth.** Hot water and a sponge handle most daily messes.
- **Cut directly** if you must — soapstone won't crack, but knives will leave faint silver lines (sand them out, see below).
- **Place hot pans directly** on the stone. Soapstone absorbs and dissipates heat without thermal shock — this is the stone in wood-stove surrounds for a reason.
- **Apply mineral oil** on schedule (see Sealing column) to keep the color even and rich.

WHAT TO AVOID

- × Conventional impregnating sealers (STAIN-PROOF, Tenax, etc.) — they will not penetrate soapstone and may leave a sticky film.
- × Aggressive scrubbing with metal abrasives — fine 0000 steel wool is fine, coarser pads will leave bright scratches.
- × Dragging heavy ceramic or cast iron across the surface — leaves ridges.
- × Vegetable oils (olive, canola) as a substitute for mineral oil — they go rancid.
- × Coloured wax "soapstone enhancers" sold by some retailers — they build up unevenly and look blotchy.

STAIN REMOVAL

Stain	Treatment
Scratches & gouges	Sand with 220-grit, then 320-grit, then 400-grit sandpaper. Wipe clean and re-oil. Soapstone is the only countertop you can repair with sandpaper at home.
Oil / grease	Wipe with dish soap and water. Oil cannot truly stain non-porous soapstone — it temporarily darkens and evens the color.
Water rings	Re-oil. Water spots are temporary on soapstone.
Metal marks (knife, pot)	Buff with 0000 steel wool, then re-oil.
Uneven darkening / patina	Wipe down evenly with mineral oil — the stone returns to a uniform tone.

Poultice method: Poultices are rarely needed on soapstone because the stone is non-porous. For a stubborn embedded mark (e.g. permanent marker), make a paste of acetone + diatomaceous earth, apply ¼" thick, cover, dry 12–24 hrs, scrape and rinse. Re-oil after.

SEALING

Soapstone **does not** need conventional sealing — it is naturally non-porous and stain-resistant out of the saw. Instead, the traditional and only correct treatment is **food-grade mineral oil** applied periodically to deepen the natural color and even the patina. This is cosmetic, not protective.

Food-Grade Mineral Oil (USP / pharmaceutical grade)

The standard treatment. Wipe a thin film with a clean cloth, let absorb 20 minutes, then buff off all excess with a dry cloth. Available at any drugstore. Do not use motor oil, baby oil with fragrance, or vegetable oils.

Re-seal: Initial: weekly for the first month · Then monthly for the first year · Long-term: every 1–3 months as the stone darkens permanently

Soapstone Wax (e.g., Dorado Soapstone Wax)

A blend of mineral oil and beeswax sold as a longer-lasting alternative to plain mineral oil. Some users prefer it; others find plain mineral oil simpler.

Re-seal: Every 3–6 months

Skipping oil is fine — untreated soapstone develops a natural patina at its own pace, and is no less protected. Oil is purely aesthetic.

HOW TO SEAL

1. Clean the stone with hot water and dish soap. Rinse and dry.
2. Pour a small amount of mineral oil on a clean lint-free cloth.
3. Apply in a thin, even film over the entire countertop.
4. Let absorb 20–30 minutes; the stone will darken markedly.
5. Buff off *all* excess with a dry cloth — no oily residue should remain.
6. Repeat the next morning if dark patches return — pores are still drinking. Build up to an even tone over the first month.

SEASONAL MAINTENANCE

- **Weekly (first month):** Apply mineral oil; the stone is saturating.
- **Monthly (first year):** Top-up oil application.
- **Long-term:** Re-oil every 1–3 months, or whenever the stone looks dry/uneven.
- **As needed:** Sand out scratches with progressively finer sandpaper (220 → 400 grit) and re-oil.