

Maintaining Zinc Countertops

Zinc is a pure metal that darkens naturally over time. Zinc changes color and shows a white or dark gray mark when exposed to fingerprints, moisture, acids, and foods. This color change is an inherent property of zinc.

Marks and minor scratches on bare zinc can be rubbed out by rubbing lightly with a fine abrasive pad like 3M Scotchbrite or 0000 steel wool. Deeper scratches can be removed with sandpaper ending with 220 grit and then blending with Scotchbrite or steel wool. We hand rub the entire top in a circular motion to add a very nice feathered pattern. Semi-gloss finish requires finer grit sanding up to 600 grit. All of these sanding operations are most easily accomplished with a power random orbital sander, but can also be done by hand. Bright polish can be achieved with automotive polishing compound on a rotary buffing machine. We add our feathered pattern by hand.

The affected area will initially look shiny, but will quickly darken and eventually blend in with the rest of the countertop. Most of our customers prefer to do no maintenance and just let the marks stay and slowly become part of the finish. Others prefer to clean the marks off as they happen. A few even prefer to polish the whole countertop back to brand new condition periodically. All of these approaches are possible with our hand rubbed natural zinc finish, and are part of the appeal of this metal.

We apply a layer of carnauba wax to our bare zinc countertops to reduce fingerprints. After installation, we suggest an occasional application of wax, similar to the way you would maintain fine wood furniture.

It is also possible to totally protect zinc and preserve any original finish by the use of impervious polyurethane coatings or epoxy coatings. Handcrafted Metal generally avoids tight plastic-based sealants because they obscure the delightful feel of the metal. However, if your application requires a totally sealed surface, we can apply