

What can I do about my soapstone countertops darkening around certain areas?

Q. My Pietra Cardosa countertops are darkening around the sink and other areas that are not covered for example around the toaster oven. I tried a paste that removes oil stains but it didn't work. What do you suggest?

A. There are several reasons why your soapstone (Pietra Cardosa) countertops might be darkening in certain areas. Some materials, like leather or wood, naturally darken and develop a richer, more worn-in look over time, a process called patina. Soapstone gradually darkens when exposed to oils, water, or regular use. Stains or darkening can also occur from spills, cleaning products that aren't suited for soapstone, or uneven sealing.

If your countertops have *never* been sealed or treated, you might consider applying mineral oil to even out the appearance. Keep in mind this will darken the stone overall, so if you prefer to avoid a darker look, you may want to skip this suggestion. However, the oil will help minimize the shade variations you're seeing.

If your countertops *have* been sealed or treated in the past, sealants can wear off unevenly over time, especially in high-use areas like around the sink or toaster oven. This uneven wear can lead to darkening or staining as some areas absorb oils and moisture more readily. Reapplying a mineral oil can help restore a more consistent appearance.

Water spots, grease buildup, or residue from food and liquids can also cause darkening or staining. Regular cleaning can help maintain the appearance of the surface, but be mindful about what type of countertop cleaner you use. Harsh or inappropriate cleaners can sometimes cause discoloration. A pH-neutral cleaner, specifically designed for natural stone is recommended.

Certain types of stains may not respond to cleaners, and your soapstone could require specialized cleaning. To find a vetted PRO in your area who can provide these services, visit www.surfacecarepros.com and click on **Find a PRO**.

For more simple but important care instructions for your soapstone countertops, download our free [Stone and Tile Care Guide](#).

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