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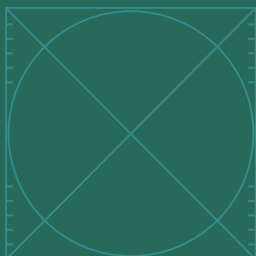
Artisans' skill



Residential Remodeling:



- Additions
- Kitchens
- Bathrooms
- Bedrooms and  
Master Suites
- Attic Conversions
- Home Offices, Studies,  
Studios and Libraries
- Family Rooms
- Porches
- And more...



*"Celebrating 30 years of service to Twin Cities Homeowners."*

# The Silver Bulletin

Helpful and Interesting Information for Homeowners

## Some of What's Inside

- ▶ How Do I Clean My New Countertop?
- ▶ Seasonal Reminders
- ▶ Ideas in Window Treatments

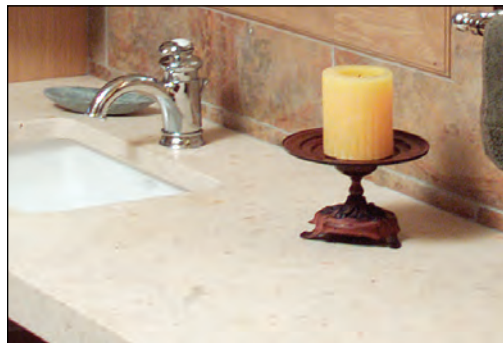


**LATE FALL 2006  
INSIDE**

- ▶ How Do I Clean My New Countertop?
- ▶ Ideas in Window Treatments
- ▶ Seasonal Reminders



**How Do I Clean My New Countertop?**



To keep your new countertop looking beautiful for years to come, it's important to know how to clean and care for it. With proper care, your countertop can look as good as new for many years.

For most countertops, a mild soap is the best choice for cleaning. Typically dish soap works best (except for marble). Never use abrasive cleaners on countertops. They will scratch and damage the surface. And always dry your counters after cleaning to avoid water marks. Follow your manufacturer's instructions for more advice specific to your countertop.

**Ceramic Tile**

Ceramic tile is extremely durable, however the grout between the tiles is porous so it stains and cracks easily. To clean the grout, scrub with a toothbrush and some mild dish soap or a water/bleach mixture. A quality grout sealer will also help prevent stains.

**Laminates**

For everyday cleaning, mild soap and a soft cloth are the best way to clean

laminates. However, it is important to rinse away any soap residue which could etch the surface if left too long. For more difficult stains, try using an all-purpose kitchen cleaner. Again, be sure to rinse well.

**Wood or Butcher Block**

Wood is naturally porous and can absorb bacteria, so it is important to maintain a well-oiled finish. Clean the wood with mild soap or a water/bleach mixture. Dry, then coat with oil specifically designed for use on wood counters. For dark stains, shake salt over the area and then rub with a lemon-half. Let set overnight and rinse.

**Solid Surface**

A mild soap mixture or ammonia-based cleaners should remove most dirt. Bleach may also be used to disinfect. (Always be careful when using bleach and ammonia. NEVER mix them. The fumes are fatal.) For difficult stains, purchase a deep cleaner specially designed for solid surface countertops such as Corian.

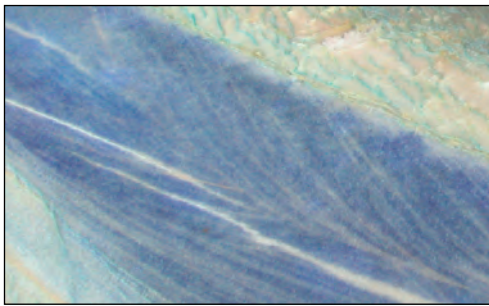
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**Member:**

National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI)

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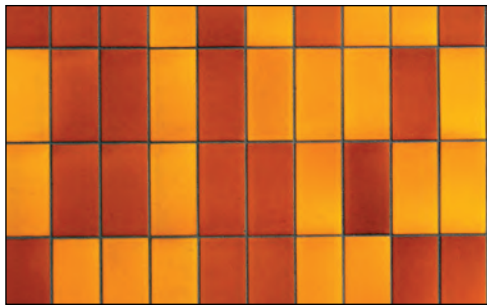


### **Engineered Stone**

As with most countertops, mild soap and water should be sufficient for routine cleaning. Difficult stains can be removed with a nonabrasive cleaning pad and a nonabrasive cleaning product. Do not use bleach, orange-based cleaners, or other strong chemicals on engineered stone; they will damage the surface.

### **Granite**

While granite is difficult to scratch, it can be stained or etched. To clean, use mild soap and a soft cloth. Stains can be removed with an ammonia/water mixture. Reseal your countertop with a sealant recommended by the



manufacturer every couple of years to prevent stains.

### **Marble**

Marble is extremely susceptible to stains so it is important to seal it and clean up any spills as soon as they touch the surface. Borax can be used to clean marble surfaces, rather than soap. There are also commercial marble cleaners available. Seal marble with stone sealer. Never use oil to seal a marble countertop.

### **Limestone**

Limestone stains more easily than marble if not properly sealed so it is extremely important to seal it regularly and clean up spills quickly. To clean dirt,



mild soap should do the job. Avoid strong chemicals and orange-based cleaners which may etch the surface.

### **Stainless Steel**

Stainless steel can be easily cleaned with mild soap. Tougher dirt should be removed with a cleaner specifically designed for stainless steel. Avoid bleach, which can permanently damage the surface.

### **Concrete**

Clean concrete with mild soap. Avoid strong chemicals and orange-based cleaners which can etch the surface. Properly seal the surface to avoid stains. ■

## **Ideas in Window Treatments**

Many homeowners choose window treatments for the practical purposes of privacy and sunlight control. However, they neglect to take into account the aesthetic aspects. Why leave your windows bare when a beautiful window treatment adds so much to the room and your home?

While you are considering your possible window treatments, here are some ideas to help you in your decision:

### **Color**

Colors have a strong influence on emotion. You can take advantage of this to create the mood for your room. For example, bright yellows and oranges can inject energy and excitement, whereas soft blues and greens can create a sense of calm and

serenity. Never be afraid to use color!

### **Texture**

Texture is another great way to add emotion and interest to a room. Soft fabrics can sooth and relax, while woven reeds and bamboo can make the room feel more dynamic. However, when using texture, keep in mind the theme of the room to ensure they compliment each other.

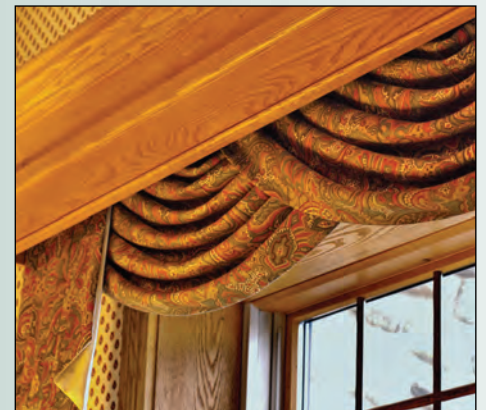
### **Layers**

Layering can help place the windows as a focal point in the room. An ordinary view becomes something special that guests will take notice of. Combine sheers and decorative panels to create a dramatic look that will enhance the room.

### **Light & Shadow**

Use light to your advantage to set the tone for a room. Don't be afraid to let light filter through. Controlling the level of light and shadow is an easy way to quickly change the mood of the room.

*Continued*



## Ideas in Window Treatments *Continued*

### Impact

Window treatments can make small uninspiring windows look larger than they really are. Visual illusions such as using tie-backs to draw the eyes outward give the impression of a much larger, more impressive window. Guests remember the impact of the window treatments rather than the actual dimensions of the window.

You can also find books or seek a professional designer to help you choose the window treatments that would look best for your home. ■



## Seasonal Reminders

**Change Furnace or HVAC Filters.** If filters are not changed often enough, they can become clogged. This forces your furnace or HVAC system to work harder and less efficiently to maintain airflow. Change or clean filters monthly or following the unit's instructions.

**Snow and Ice Melt Tips.** If your sidewalks and driveway get covered with snow and ice each winter, keep a bag of kitty litter, sand, or poultry grit in an easy to reach location. (These products do not damage your concrete like salt.) You don't want to have to walk across ice or snow to reach your bag.

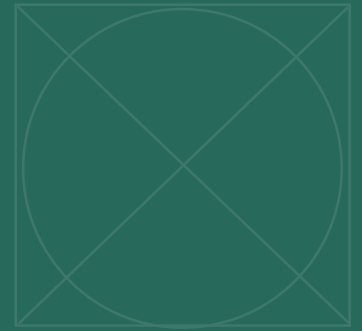
**Check Your Smoke Detector Batteries.** Whenever you turn your clock forward or back, it is also a good time to replace your smoke alarm batteries. More than 90 percent of homes have smoke detectors, but millions of these detectors either have dead or missing batteries. (Reuse the partially used batteries in toys or other non-critical devices or recycle them.)

**Check Chimneys and Flues.** Chimneys and flues should be checked and cleaned annually to prevent buildup. (More if used frequently.) Residue on the inner surface of the flue can catch fire. Also check that no animals have made a nest inside.

**Clean Gutters.** Remove debris and leaves from your gutters to prevent clogging. Water trapped in your gutters can cause major damage to your roof and walls. For most homes, gutters should be cleaned about every 6 months.

**Put Up Storm Windows.** Before winter arrives, replace your screens with storm windows if your home has them. Remember to clean your screens before you put them away. Storm windows will protect your home and help it retain heat during the cold winter months, saving you energy.

**Turn Off Water to Outside Spigots and Drains.** Shut off the valve to your outside spigots to prevent ice from freezing inside them. Disconnect your garden hoses and store them in your garage or shed for the winter. ■



## Thank You

We'd like to thank Levi Downs and Shawn Silver for choosing Silver Bullet to expand and remodel their master bathroom.

We'd also like to thank Steve and Susie Fry for asking Silver Bullet to build their fourth project with us, a whole house remodel currently underway.

Thank you Tom and Kathy Conlin for asking us to design and build their living room addition and front facade remodel, both also underway.

In addition, we'd like to thank Laura Park and Eric Jordan for referring us to Kathy and Don Park, and Karen Daly for referring us to Kim and Lou Mansky.

The majority of projects for new clients that Silver Bullet does every year come from past clients and company friends referring new homeowners to us. We are very grateful for your referrals. When you refer someone to Silver Bullet who becomes a client of ours, we will show you our appreciation with an American Express Gift Card worth \$250. ■