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Care and Maintenance of an Oiled Butcher Block

Our oiled butcher block tops are recommended for people who choose to use the surface as a cutting board. People choosing this option should be aware that special care and maintenance are required for this type of countertop or carving board.

Michigan Maple Block Co. and Bally Block Co. oiled butcher block should be cared for as if it was a cutting board. Sanitizing and re-oiling the top is imperative. Raw meat, chicken or fish should not share the same cutting surface as items such as vegetables and bread prior to thorough sanitation. Regular and ongoing sanitization is required. On all countertop and cutting board materials, including butcher block, the risk of cross contamination is a very real possibility. Special care must be taken by the owner since the top cannot be picked up and sink washed.

As needed the top should be sanitized with commercially available cleaners or a mild solution of water and bleach. First clean the top with a damp rag, removing any excess food matter. Mix two tablespoons of bleach per gallon of water in a container. Apply this mixture directly to the cutting surface and allow to soak in for several minutes. The surface should then be thoroughly dried with and clean, dry rag. The top should then be allowed to air dry. Once completely dry a fresh coat of Mineral Oil or Emmet's Elixir should be applied to re-seal the pores and to bring back the natural beauty of the wood. The oil should be liberally poured onto the boards and spread with a clean dry rag coating the entire surface, including edges. Allow the oil to seep into the wood and after several minutes wipe off the excess oil with a clean, dry rag.

We do not recommend the use of any vegetable or animal oils for resealing the top. It should also be noted that once large grooves appear in the top, it will be necessary to refinish or replace the top. In order to refinish the countertop, a light sanding of the entire top is recommended. Once sanding has removed the cut marks, the top should immediately be re-sealed with Mineral Oil

Even if the oiled butcher block top is not used for a cutting surface it will, on a regular basis, need to be resealed with mineral oil. This helps inhibit moisture gain or lose that can effect the longevity of the countertop. As to when an oiled top needs re-oiled it varies widely, but when in doubt re-oil the top. The general rule is whenever the top looks dry- perhaps as often as every 2 weeks.

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