

Butcher Block Care and Maintenance

Solid hardwood butcher block tops can be affected by temperature and humidity. To get the greatest use and long term performance from your top, please read the following:

Initial Installation

Allow the top to reach ambient room temperature prior to installation. It may take up to (48) hours for the top to acclimate to the surrounding environment.

Holes in the steel framework used to secure the top must be approximately 3/8" larger than the bolt or fastener. Pre-drill pilot holes for lag screw fasteners and only tighten the fastener slightly as the top needs to be able to expand and contract.

If final mounting requires cutting the top, all exposed raw wood surfaces should be resealed. Polyurethane is an excellent sealer for lacquered tops, while mineral oil should be used for oil finished tops.

Warping

A top that becomes warped from environmental or seasonal heating dryness is a temporary condition. This condition can be corrected by un-mounting the top and turning it over so that the bottom surface is up and allowing equalization. The top can then be reinstalled as originally mounted. Avoid positioning top direct next to heat sources.

Surface Maintenance

Lacquered tops should avoid excessive amounts of water, oil and strong cleaning agents. The top should be immediately wiped clean when the surface has been exposed to such excesses. For oiled tops oiling them every 4 – 6 weeks depending on usage is recommended.

Also note that most carburetor cleaners and similar products may damage the surface finish.

When necessary reseal any exposed raw wood surfaces to avoid expansion and swelling caused by water and humidity.

Problem	Description	Cause	Repair
End Checks	Separation of the joints along the end of top or block.	Excessive dryness, not oiled frequently.	Melt a 1 to 4 mixture of paraffin and mineral oil and fill all checks. Make sure paraffin seals the check thoroughly. Continue oiling.
Splits	Separation of joint along full length of top.	Excessive dryness.	Proceed as above to seal split.
Wind Shakes	Small portion of wood grain lifting up from top.	Grain separation, excessive dryness.	Clean and dry top. Apply small portion of white glue to piece of paper. Slip paper under the shake and remove, leaving glue for adhesion. Place heavy weight on area overnight and let dry. Remove any excess glue using sandpaper or fine steel wool. WORK ONLY WITH THE GRAIN, NOT AGAINST!
Warpage	Top cupping or bowing.	Imbalance of moisture content between top and bottom surfaces, i.e. oiling only one side.	Apply oil liberally to concave side or lacquer. If not corrected within 2-weeks, tape plastic, i.e. plastic liners, dry cleaning wrap, etc. to the convex side and oil/lacquer the reverse side. Top may adjust to new humidity and correct itself.
Rail Expansion	One rail raised above balance of top.	Raised rail expanding at faster rate than other.	Continue oiling as instructed for regular maintenance. Top will adjust to new humidity and correct itself.
Stains	Water spots, food stains, etc.	Allowing food to remain on table top too long, needs paraffin or wax.	Use light sandpaper or fine steel wool on stain. Continue regular maintenance. Stain will dissipate in wood grain.
Damage	Nicks, gouges, dents, etc.	External environment.	If top is oiled, simply sand and re-oil. If top is lacquered, lightly sand and refinish with lacquer or another compatible finish.
Mineral Streaks	Dark streaks in wood.	Natural discoloring of the wood due to mineral deposits in the tree.	No repair needed – adds to individuality of top.

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