



## LOCAL WOOD FOR THE GREATER GOOD



# HOW TO CHOOSE THE BEST FINISH FOR BUTCHER BLOCK COUNTERTOPS

Butcher blocks have been used for food preparation for centuries. Today these solid wood surfaces are a popular choice for countertops in kitchens, bathrooms & laundry areas, islands & workstations, bar tops, desks, tables, shelving and more! Wood surfaces adds warmth, texture and beauty that connects us to nature. Our butcher block is a local, sustainable and renewable material.

Wood surfaces need to be sealed with a protective finish to prevent water, wine, and daily use from damaging or staining it. There are many products available that are appropriate to seal and protect your new investment.

### *Choosing the best finish depends on how you plan to use it.*

Butcher block intended for chopping should be sealed with a food grade finish designed to be reapplied frequently to re-seal the knife cuts. We love Walrus brand cutting board oil, which is a blend of coconut oil, beeswax, mineral oil, and vitamin E. <https://walrusoil.com/> There are countless brands and combinations of ingredients that are designed to seal and protect chopping surfaces to find the right one for your project.

Wood surfaces that will be used like a piece of furniture can be sealed with a variety of products, each with pros and cons, unique protective characteristics, ingredients, and care & maintenance.

### **POLYURETHANE vs OIL**

**Polyurethane** is a liquid coating that dries into a plastic-like protective film. Poly finishes provide thorough water protection, require little maintenance, and can withstand high traffic abuse. This finish is a petrochemical resin that contains ingredients known to cause health issues. It provides great protections and withstands chemical cleaning, but it feels and looks like a layer of plastic covering your pretty new wood. Poly finishes generally have to be removed completely before any scratches or worn spots can be repaired, meaning the countertop will need to be sanded entirely clean before any new finish can be reapplied.

**Oil finishes** penetrate the wood, bringing out the color, luster, and natural beauty, providing direct contact with the warmth and texture of the wood. They provide good protection and are silky to the touch. Oil finishes can be spot-repaired without the need to refinish the entire surface. They do require regular maintenance, which is usually just a reapplication a couple times of year, possibly more often in high use areas, around sinks and food prep zones. Oil finishes are sensitive to harsh chemical cleaning and may not be ideal for commercial applications.

We stock and recommend **Rubio Monocoat Oil Plus 2C**, a penetrating, hard-wax oil finish for butcher block tops that are **not** used for chopping. Oil Plus 2C is a zero voc, seed based oil, that is food contact compliant. It forms a molecular bond with the fibers of the wood, resulting in a durable finish with great water resistance, while keeping the natural look of the wood. It is easy to apply and maintain and is available in a variety of colors. We stock Pure, Natural, Charcoal and Chocolate. All other color options can be ordered directly from Rubio

<https://www.rubiomonocoatusa.com/>

## WHAT PRODUCT TO CHOOSE

We recommend doing your own due diligence and research in choosing a finish based on your intended use, the required maintenance, and the desired look and feel of the finished piece, as well as food contact safety. We've used lots of products over the years on our samples and displays, and have polled our woodworker community for their top choices.

Here are some of the common choices and the pros & cons of each:

PRODUCT	PROS	CONS
<b>Mineral Oil</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Easy to find</li><li>- Inexpensive</li><li>- Easy to apply</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Made from petroleum</li><li>- Low level of protection</li><li>- Sticky after application</li><li>- Must be applied frequently</li></ul>
<b>Walrus Cutting Board Oil</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- All food safe ingredients</li><li>- Easy to apply</li><li>- Made in USA</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Some petroleum based mineral oil in product</li></ul>
<b>Rubio Monocoat Oil Plus 2C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Zero voc,</li><li>- Plant based oil</li><li>- Durable &amp; long lasting</li><li>- Easy to apply &amp; maintain</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- More expensive than some options</li><li>- Product from Belgium</li><li>- Not for chopping surfaces</li></ul>
<b>Waterlox</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Great water resistance</li><li>- Durable &amp; long lasting</li><li>- Low VOC</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Paint thinner cleanup</li><li>- 30-90 day cure time</li><li>- Petroleum ingredients</li></ul>
<b>Walnut Oil</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Easy to apply</li><li>- Natural, food based</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Potential nut allergies</li><li>- Needs to be applied frequently</li></ul>
<b>Tung Oil</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Easy to find</li><li>- Easy to apply</li><li>- Brings out color &amp; luster</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Petroleum based additives</li><li>- May need to be diluted before use</li></ul>

## STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

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