Care & Maintenance

Natural Stone

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Sweep and vacuum floors regularly to remove any gritty particles, dust, or debris, which can be abrasive to the tile surface.Sweep and/or vacuum floors regularly to remove any gritty particles, dust or debris as this can be abrasive to the tile surface

Don't use vinegar, lemon juice, or cleaners containing acids on marble, onyx, limestone, or travertine surfaces.

Don't use cleaners containing acids, such as bathroom, grout, or tub and tile cleaners.

Don't use abrasive cleaners like dry cleansers with aggregate, scouring, or steel wool pads.

Never mix bleach and ammonia, creating a toxic and lethal gas.

Seal grout joints after installation if necessary to prevent moisture absorption, staining, and discoloration.

Ensure the cleaning product selected is compatible with cleaning the grout joints.

Thoroughly read & follow all manufacturer warnings and instructions for all cleaning products before use and test all cleaning solutions and materials in a small inconspicuous area before complete application.

After using cleaning solutions, rinse and wipe down the entire area with a clean cloth or mop and clear water to remove any residue that may have been left behind.

Do not use cleaning wax, oil-based cleaners, ammonia, sealants, or products containing acid or bleach as a part of routine maintenance

Use felt or protective rubber pads under furniture to prevent scratching surfaces.

Place high quality floor mats in high-traffic locations and areas that are susceptible to moisture and soil, such as entrances and exits.

Spills

Immediately blot the spill with a paper towel. Don't wipe the area; it will spread the spill. Instead, flush the area with plain water and a mild liquid dishwashing detergent. Rinse several times. Dry the area thoroughly with a soft cloth. Do not use products that contain lemon, vinegar, or other acids on marble or limestone.

Kitchen Applications

All natural stones used for kitchen countertop applications must be regularly maintained and resealed to prevent staining. Use water with a drop of the mild soap dish and hydrogen peroxide or a neutral PH mild soap cleaner for routine cleaning. Do use a cutting board in all kitchen countertop applications. Use coasters or placemats under all glasses, particularly those containing alcohol or citric juices. Use trivets under china, ceramics, silver, or other objects that might scratch or scorch the surface. Don't place hot items directly on the stone surface.

Bathroom Applications

In the bath basin or other wet areas, soap scum can be minimized by using a squeegee after each use and by using liquid soaps instead of bar soap. To remove soap scum, use a non-acidic soap scum remover or a solution of ammonia and water (about 1/2 cup ammonia to a gallon of water). Note frequent or over-use of an ammonia solution may eventually dull the stone's surface.

Exterior Pool & Patio Applications

Flush with clean water in an outdoor pool, patio, or hot tub areas, and use a mild bleach solution to remove algae or moss.

Flooring Applications

Dust interior floors frequently using a clean, dry dust mop. Sand, dirt, and grit damage natural stone surfaces most due to their abrasiveness. Mats or area rugs inside and outside an entrance will help to minimize the sand, dirt, and grit that will scratch the stone floor. Be sure that the underside of the mat or rug is a non-slip surface. Do not use worn vacuum cleaners; the metal or plastic attachments or the wheels may scratch the surface. Clean surfaces with a mild detergent or PH Neutral stone cleaner, and thoroughly rinse and dry the surface after washing.

Vanities & Other Countertops

Vanity tops may need to have a penetrating sealer applied. Check with your installer for recommendations—clean spills immediately, as above. Use water with a drop of the mild soap dish and hydrogen peroxide or a neutral PH mild soap cleaner for regular cleaning. A good quality marble wax or non-yellowing automobile paste wax can be applied to minimize water spotting.

Stain Removal

Biological

Algae, mildew, lichens, moss, fungi, etc. Clean with diluted (1/2 cup in a gallon of water) ammonia, or bleach, or hydrogen peroxide.

Do not mix Ammonia and Bleach, this creates a toxic and lethal gas.

Organic

Coffee, tea, fruit, tobacco, paper, food, etc. Outdoors, with the sources removed, typical sun and rain action will generally bleach out the colors. Indoors, clean with 12% hydrogen peroxide and a few drops of mild dish soap or ammonia.

Ink

Clean with bleach, hydrogen peroxide (light-colored stone only), lacquer thinner, or acetone (dark stones only)

Oil Based

Grease, tar, cooking oil, milk, cosmetics, etc. Clean gently with a soft, liquid cleanser with bleach, household detergent, ammonia, mineral spirits, or acetone.

Metal

Iron, rist, copper, etc. Metal stains must be removed with a poultice. Deep-seated, rusty stains are tough to remove, and the stone may be permanently stained.

Water Spots and Rings

Surface accumulation of hard water. Buff with dry (0000 grit) steel wool.

Fire and Smoke Damage

Contact professional stone restoration contractor.

Paint Removal

Small amounts of oil-based paint can be removed with lacquer thinner or scraped off carefully with a razor blade.

Latex paint can be softened and removed with warm soapy water.

Heavy paint coverage should be removed only with a commercial "heavy liquid" paint stripper available from hardware stores and paint centers. These strippers typically contain caustic soda or lye.

Do not use acids or flame tools to strip paint from stone. Paint strippers can etch the rock's surface; if re-polishing is necessary, contact a professional stone restoration contractor.

Always follow the manufacturer's directions and flush the area thoroughly with clean water. Protect yourself with rubber gloves and eye protection, and work in a well-ventilated area.

Use only wood or plastic scrapers to remove sludge and curdled paint. Usually, latex and acrylic paints will not cause staining. Oil-based paints, linseed oil, putty, caulks, and sealants may cause oily stains. Refer to the section on oil-based stains.

Scratches

Scratch marks and abrasions appear on the surface over time with exposure to sand and other abrasives. The finish will patina or dull over time due to this scratching.

If a material with a low abrasion resistance is used, use walk-off mats at entrances and expect the material to patina rapidly.

Slight surface scratches may be buffed with dry lowest grit (0000 grit) steel wool.

Deeper scratches and nicks on the stone's surface should be repaired and re-polished by a professional.

Making a Poultice

A poultice is a liquid cleaner or chemical mixed with an absorbent material to form a paste. The poultice is spread over the stained area to a thickness of about 1/4" to 1/2" with a wood or plastic spatula, covered with plastic wrap, and left in place for 24 to 48 hours. The liquid cleaner or chemical will draw out the stain into the absorbent material. Poultice procedures may need to be repeated to remove a stain thoroughly.

Poultice Materials

Poultice materials include baking soda, talc, kaolin, fuller's earth, whiting, powdered chalk, diatomaceous earth, or white molding plaster. Approximately one pound of prepared poultice material will cover one square foot. Do not use whiting or iron-type clays such as fuller's earth with acid chemicals. The reaction will cancel the effect of the poultice. A chemical poultice can be prepared by soaking white cotton balls, paper towels, or gauze pads.

Organic Stains

Poultice with one of the powdered materials and 12% hydrogen peroxide solution (hair bleaching strength) or acetone.

Iron or Copper Stains

Poultice with diatomaceous earth and a commercially rated rust remover. We recommend the assistance of a professional stone restoration contractor.

Biological Stains

Poultice with diluted ammonia or bleach, or hydrogen peroxide.

Preparing & Applying a Poultice

If using powder, mix the cleaning agent or chemical into a thick paste for the consistency of peanut butter. If using paper, soak in the chemical and let drain. Don't let the liquid drip.

Wet the stained area with distilled water.

Apply the poultice to the stained area 1/4"-1/2" thick, extending application an inch beyond the edge of the stain. Use a wood or plastic scraper to spread the poultice evenly.

Cover the poultice with plastic and tape the edges to seal it.

Allow to dry thoroughly; usually about 24 to 48 hours. The drying process pulls the stain out of the stone and into the poultice material. After about 24 hours, remove the plastic and allow the poultice to dry.

Remove the poultice from the stain. Rinse with distilled water and buff dry with a soft cloth. Use the wood or plastic scraper if necessary.

Repeat the poultice application if the stain is not removed. It may take up to five applications for difficult stains.

If the chemical etches the surface, apply polishing powder and buff it with a burlap or felt buffing pad to restore the texture.

Acid Etching & Surface Erosion

Marble, travertine, limestone, and onyx will react to acidic foods like lemons or tomatoes, and acidic liquids such as some cleaners or acid rain. This reaction will result in a dull surface sheen and a texture change, otherwise called "acid etching." In addition, some highly pigmented liquids, like wine, will etch the finish and stain the stone. Remove the stain with a poultice before attempting to address acid etching.

Polished Surface

We Recommend Fila Marble Restorer or similar.

Honed Surface

We Recommend a mild neutral or alkali detergent and then buffing it with dry (0000 grit) steel wool.

Efflorescence & Surface Film

Efflorescence in natural stone is caused by water-carrying mineral salts below the stone's surface rising to the exposed face. In porcelain, tile efflorescence appears on the surface of grout joints or unglazed tiles and is caused by moisture reacting with impurities in the mortar.

Natural Stone

If the installation is new, brush, dust mop, or vacuum the powder. You may have to do this several times. Do not use water to remove the powder; it will only temporarily disappear. If the problem persists, contact your installer to help identify and remove the cause of the moisture.

Natural Stone with Minimal Acid Sensitivity Rating

We Recommend Fila Deterdek.

Polished and Honed Surfaces

General Routine Cleaning

We Recommend: Natural Stone Neutral Cleaner
Stoneclean by FILA

Heavy Duty Cleaning for Ground-In Dirt

We Recommend: Multi-functional Alkaline Detergent
PS 87 by FILA

Dirty Grout Joints

We Recommend: Multi-functional Alkaline Detergent
PS 87 by FILA

Oil Based Stains

We Recommend: Spray Poultice
NOSPOT by FILA

Stains

We Recommend: Multi-functional Alkaline Detergent or Stain Remover
PS 87 by FILA, or SR95 by FILA

Iron Stains

We Recommend: Non-Acidic Gel Cleaner for Acid Sensitive stone, or Acidic Detergent
NORUST by FILA, or Deterdek by FILA

Acid Etching

We Recommend: Restoration Kit
Marble Restorer by FILA

General Practice Disclaimor

The suggestions mentioned in this document above are for general practice. In the case of a particular project, it is recommended that a professional installer, fabricator, or restorer is consulted.

It is also recommended that cleaning solutions are tried in an isolated area to check for desired results. Stone Source disclaims any liability related to our recommendations or the use of any care & maintenance products.