

Stone Care Guide

New natural stone is an investment in lasting beauty that will give many years of wear. This care guide gives a few tips on how to properly care for natural stone and help extend its life and beauty. Following some simple precautions, properly sealing, and using the correct cleaning methods and products, will insure a lifetime of use from natural stone.

Igneous stones such as granite are mainly formed through volcanic material such as magma. Underneath the Earth's surface, liquid magma cooled and solidified. Mineral gases and liquids penetrated into the stone and created new crystalline formations with various colors.

Granite: Primarily made of Quartz (35%), Feldspar (45%) and Potassium. It usually has darker colors. Granite contains very little calcite, if any. Provides a heavy crystalline and granular appearance with mineral grains. Granite is a very hard material and easier to maintain than marble, yet, it is still porous and will stain. There are different types of granite depending on the percentage mix of quartz, mica and feldspar. Black granite is known as an Anorthosite. It contains very little quartz and feldspar and has a different composition than true granite. Finer grained granites are often more absorbent than others; however, they are all extremely durable. Granites should be sealed to protect against water and oil-based spills.

Sealing Your Stone

Natural stone has been formed over millions of years but improper care can ruin nature's beauty. Although we usually think of stone as "hard," it is a porous material that can absorb spills and stains if left untreated. Sealing stone with a quality impregnating sealer will prevent most spills from damaging it. Your stone will come sealed from the fabricator, but sealer will need to be applied yearly, or if under heavy use, every 6 months.

There are a wide variety of sealers available, so you need to select one for your specific needs and natural stone type. Impregnating sealers penetrate the stone and help protect it against water and oil-based stains.

Once sealed properly, stone is protected against everyday dirt and spills. Proper cleaning will help the sealer last longer and keep stone protected without damaging the stone's natural beauty.

Cleaning Procedures & Recommendations

Keeping stone free of dust and dry, sandy soil will minimize the scratches and wear-patterns that can develop from everyday use of some natural stone, such as marble, limestone and sandstone. Sweep or dust all natural stone surfaces regularly to remove loose soil and dust.

Clean natural stone on a regular basis with warm water and a clean, non-abrasive cloth, sponge or mop. In addition, using a neutral cleaner specially formulated for natural stone will help remove soils that normal dusting or damp mopping leave behind. We recommend a cleaner developed especially for natural stone and tile care. Their unique blend of neutral cleaning agents make it gentle on your stone while leaving behind an impregnating protective shield every time you clean. Use a cleaner on a regular basis to remove residues from cooking oils and everyday food spills as well as hairspray or other cosmetics. Many common foods and drinks contain acids that may etch or dull the stone surface. Also, some common toiletries (e.g., perfume, toothpaste, mouthwash) contain acids and other ingredients that may damage the stone surface or degrade the sealer.

Do not use general-purpose cleaners or you may damage the stone or the sealer applied. Do not use products that contain lemon, vinegar or other acids as these may etch the stone surface and damage the polish. Do not use scouring powders or creams; these products contain abrasives that may scratch the surface.

What To Do When A Spill Occurs

No matter how careful you are, spills are going to happen. A quick response and the right solutions can keep spills from damaging stone or the sealer. Professionals recommend that you only use the cleaning products recommended for granite.

Etch Marks

Substances that are highly acidic, such as orange juice, coffee, vinegar, wine, tomato products, mustard and many soft drinks, will "etch" most marble, limestone and travertine -- whether the stone is sealed or unsealed. Although sealing allows you time to wipe up a spill, it cannot stop the chemical reaction that may leave a dull area or etch mark in the stone.

In addition, cleaners not specifically designed for natural stone are not recommended. These may etch away the polish, discolor the surface, scratch the stone or degrade the sealer. That's why selecting the correct cleaning products is so important to the lifetime beauty of your natural stone. Professional refinishing is the best way to permanently remove etch marks and restore your natural stone's even finish.

Food Spills

Scoop up the food with a plastic spoon. Blot with dry, white cloth. Spray the area with cleaner and wipe dry with a clean cloth.

Liquid Spills

Blot away the excess with a clean, dry, white cloth; turning the cloth frequently. Spray the area with cleaner and wipe dry with a clean cloth.

Mud

Let the mud stain dry completely. Remove dried mud with a soft plastic or nylon brush. Spray affected area with cleaner. Wipe dry with a clean cloth.

Oily Stains

If you identify the stain as having an oil base (from foods like salad and cooking oils, butter, or some cosmetics) you may be able to remove the stain using a cleaner. We recommend a stain removal product designed for natural stone. These easy-to-use products are designed to slowly remove oily stains from natural stone surfaces. Follow the directions on the label.

Do's & Don'ts

- **DO** use coasters under glasses, especially if they contain alcohol or citrus juices.
- **DO** use trivets or mats under hot dishes or cookware.
- **DO** use place mats under china, ceramics, silver or other objects that may scratch your stone's surface.
- **DO** dust countertops, islands, vanities and floors frequently.
- **DO** blot up spills immediately to minimize permanent damage to the stone.
- **DO** clean surfaces by wiping with clean water or spraying with cleaner, then wiping dry with a clean cloth.
- **DON'T** use vinegar, bleach, ammonia or other general-purpose cleaners.
- **DON'T** use cleaners that contain acid such as bathroom cleaners, grout cleaners or tub and tile cleaners.
- **DON'T** use wet or dry abrasive cleaners such as dry cleansers or soft cleansers.
- **DON'T** use alkaline cleaners not specifically formulated for natural stone.

