



*Marble*

Care & Maintenance



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## ➔ MARBLE, LIMESTONE & TRAVERTINE CARE & MAINTENANCE



### ➔ NATURAL STONE CLEANING RECOMMENDATIONS

Natural stone surfaces can be cleaned with a small amount of neutral cleaner, stone soap or a mild liquid dishwashing detergent and warm water. A rag mop can be used on floors and a soft cloth for other surfaces. Too much cleaner may leave a film or cause streaks.

Do not use products that contain lemon, vinegar or other acids on any natural stone surfaces. Rinse the surface thoroughly after cleaning and dry with a soft cloth. Do not use products that contain abrasives because they may scratch the surface.

Soap scum can be minimized by using a squeegee after each use. 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). Frequent or over-use of an ammonia solution may eventually dull the surface of the stone.

### ➔ NATURAL STONE SEALING & MAINTENANCE

Cleaning your countertops after each meal is the best recommendation for avoiding cleaning issues with your natural stone!

If a homeowner cleans their countertops after each meal, they will rarely, if ever, have staining or cleaning issues with their natural stone. Granite countertops receive additional benefit from being sealed. That benefit is the further reduction of moisture migration into an already moisture resistant surface.

Once properly sealed, the stone will be more resistant against everyday dirt and spills. Sealing is a simple process that takes no more time than cleaning. Simply wipe a small amount of sealer over the entire stone's surface, leave it to set for a minute or two, and wipe the surface again with a clean, dry cloth to ensure the sealant is even.

SCI - Surface Center recommends using coasters under all glasses, particularly those containing alcohol or citrus juices. Many common foods and drinks contain acids that can dull the surface of natural stone. Do not place hot items directly on the stone surface. Though granite will not scorch, the heat can be harbored in the stone. We recommend always using trivets under hot dishes and place mats under china, ceramics, silver or other objects that can cause scratches.

Recommended cleaning products are on display and available at our Countertop Showroom!

### ➔ NATURAL STONE CLEANING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPILLS & STAINS

If a spill occurs on a natural stone surface, dab the spill with a towel immediately. Don't wipe the area, it will spread the spill. Flush the area with plain water and mild soap and rinse several times. Dry the area thoroughly with a soft cloth. Repeat as necessary.



## → STAIN REMOVAL

Surface stains can often be removed by cleaning with an appropriate cleaning product or household chemical. Stubborn stains may require using a poultice or calling in a professional. The type of stain will determine the removal technique.

Oil-based stains such as grease, tar, cooking oil, milk, or cosmetics will typically darken the stone and will usually need to be chemically dissolved so the source of the stain can be flushed or rinsed away. Clean gently with a soft, liquid cleanser with bleach. A household detergent, ammonia, mineral spirits, or acetone will work.

Organic stains such as coffee, tea, fruit, tobacco, or food may cause a pinkish-brown stain and may disappear after the source of the stain has been removed. Outdoors, with the sources removed, normal sun and rain will generally bleach out any stains. Indoors, clean with 12% hydrogen peroxide and a few drops of ammonia.

Metal stains caused by iron or rust are orange or brown in color and follow the shape of the staining object such as nails, bolts, screws, cans, flower pots, or metal furniture. Copper and bronze stains appear as green or muddy-brown and result from the moisture on, nearby, or embedded bronze, copper or brass items. Metal stains can usually be removed with a poultice (see the section on making and using a poultice). Deep-seated, rusty stains are extremely difficult to remove and the stone may be permanently stained.

Biological stains caused by algae, mildew, lichens, moss, or fungi can be removed with diluted ammonia OR bleach (1/2 cup in a gallon of water), or hydrogen peroxide. **DO NOT MIX BLEACH AND AMMONIA! THIS COMBINATION CREATES A TOXIC AND LETHAL GAS!**

Ink stains from magic markers or pens can be removed with bleach or hydrogen peroxide (light colored stone only!), lacquer thinner, or acetone (dark stones only!)

Paint stains; if in small amounts, can be removed with lacquer thinner or scraped off with a razorblade. Larger paint stains should be removed only with a commercial "heavy liquid" paint stripper available at hardware stores and paint centers. Do not use acids or flame tools to strip paint from stone. Paint strippers can etch the surface of the stone and re-polishing may be necessary. Use only wood or plastic scrapers for removing the sludge and curdled paint.

Water spots and rings can be buffed with dry 0000 steel wool.

Fire and smoke damage on older stones or smoke and/or fire stained fireplaces may require a thorough cleaning to restore their original appearance. Commercially available "smoke removers" may save time and effort.

Etch marks are caused by acids left on the stone's surface. Some materials will etch the finish but not leave a stain while others will both etch and stain. Once the stain has been removed, wet the surface with water and sprinkle on marble polishing powder (available at hardware or lapidary stores). Rub the powder onto the stone with a damp cloth. Continue buffing until the etch mark disappears and the marble surface shines. Not all etch marks can be removed and a repair may need to be scheduled.

Scratches and nicks may be buffed with dry 0000 steel wool. Deeper scratches and nicks in the surface of the stone should be repaired and re-polished by a professional.

## → POULTICES

A poultice is a liquid cleaner mixed with a white absorbent material to form a paste. The poultice should be spread over the stained area to a thickness of about 1/4 to 1/2 inch with spatula. Then covered with plastic, tape the edges down to seal it, and leave it to draw out the stain for 24 to 48 hours. After about 24 hours, remove the plastic and allow the poultice to dry. Poultice procedures may have to be repeated to thoroughly remove a stain, but some stains may never be completely removed.

Poultice materials include kaolin, fuller's earth, whiting, diatomaceous earth, powdered chalk, white molding plaster or talc.

## → ORGANIC STAINS

Poultice with baking soda and water OR one of the powdered poultice materials and mineral spirits.

## → OIL-BASED STAINS

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



➔ **ORGANIC STAINS**

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

➔ **IRON STAINS**

Poultice with diatomaceous earth and a commercially available rust remover. Rust stains are particularly difficult to remove. You may need to call a professional.

➔ **COPPER STAINS**

Poultice with one of the powdered poultice materials and ammonia. These stains are difficult to remove. You may need to call a professional.

➔ **BIOLOGICAL STAINS**

Poultice with dilute ammonia, bleach, or hydrogen peroxide. The drying process is what pulls the stain out of the stone and into the poultice material.