



Stone Care

Care and Precautions

Use coasters under all glasses, particularly those containing alcohol or citrus juices. Many common foods and drinks contain acids that will etch or dull the surface of many stones. Do not place hot items directly on the stone surface. Use trivets or mats under hot dishes and placemats under china, ceramics, silver or other objects that can scratch the surface.

Cleaning Procedures and Recommendations

Surfaces

Clean stone surfaces with a few drops of neutral cleaner, stone soap (available at hardware stores or from your stone dealer) or a mild liquid dishwashing detergent and warm water. Use a clean rag mop on floors and a soft cloth for other surfaces for best results. Too much cleaner or soap may leave a film and cause streaks. Do not use products that contain lemon, vinegar or other acids on marble or limestone. Rinse the surface thoroughly after washing with the soap solution and dry with a soft cloth. Change the rinse water frequently. Do not use scouring powders or creams; these products contain abrasives that may scratch the surface.

Bath and Other Wet Areas

In the bath or other wet areas; 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.

Vanity Top Surfaces

Vanity tops may need to have a penetrating sealer applied. Check with your installer for recommendations. A good quality marble wax or non-yellowing automobile paste wax can be applied to minimize water spotting.

Food Preparation Areas

In food preparation areas, the stone may need to have a penetrating sealer applied. Check with your installer for recommendations. If a sealer is applied, be sure that it is non-toxic and safe for use on food preparation surfaces. If there are questions, check with the sealer manufacturer.

Stains

Spills and Stains

Blot the spill with a paper 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. If the stain remains, refer to the section in this brochure on stain removal.

Stain Removal

Identifying the type of stain on the stone surface is the key to removing it. If you don't know what caused the stain, play detective. Where is the stain located? Is it near a plant, a food service area, an area where cosmetics are used? What color is it? What is the shape or pattern? What goes on in the area around the stain? Surface stains can often be removed by cleaning with an appropriate cleaning product or household chemical. Deep-seated or stubborn stains may require using a poultice or calling in a professional. The following sections describe the types of stains that you may have to deal with and appropriate household chemicals to use and how to prepare and apply a poultice to remove the stain.





Stone Care

Types of Stains and First Step Cleaning Actions

OIL-BASED

(grease, tar, cooking oil, milk, cosmetics)

An oil-based stain will darken the stone and normally must be chemically dissolved, so the source of the stain can be flushed or rinsed away. Clean gently with a soft, liquid cleanser with bleach OR household detergent OR ammonia OR mineral spirits OR acetone.

ORGANIC

(coffee, tea, fruit, tobacco, paper, food, urine, leaves, bark, bird droppings)

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 action will generally bleach out the stains. Indoors, clean with 12% hydrogen peroxide (hair bleaching strength) and a few drops of ammonia.

METAL

(iron, rust, copper, bronze)

Iron or rust stains are orange to brown in color and follow the shape of the staining object such as nails, bolts, screws, cans, flower pots, metal furniture. Copper and bronze stains appear as green or muddy-brown and result from the action of moisture on nearby or embedded bronze, copper or brass items. Metal stains must be removed with a poultice. (See section on Making & Using a Poultice) Deep-seated, rusty stains are extremely difficult to remove and the stone may be permanently stained.

INK

(magic marker, pen, ink)

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

PAINT

Small amounts can be removed with lacquer thinner or scraped off carefully with a razorblade. Heavy paint coverage should be removed only with a commercial "heavy liquid" paint stripper available from hardware stores and paint centers. These strippers normally contain caustic soda or lye. Do not use acids or flame tools to strip paint from stone. Paint strippers can etch the surface of the stone; re-polishing may be necessary. Follow the manufacturer's directions for use of these products, taking care to 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 for removing the sludge and curdled paint. Normally, 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.

WATER SPOTS AND RINGS

(surface accumulation of hard water)

Buff with dry 0000 steel wool.

FIRE AND SMOKE DAMAGE

Older stones and smoke 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

Etch marks are caused by acids left on the surface of the stone. Some materials will etch the finish but not



Stone Care

leave a stain. Others will both etch and stain. Once the stain has been removed, wet the surface with clear water and sprinkle on marble polishing powder, available from a hardware or lapidary store, or your local stone dealer. Rub the powder onto the stone with a damp cloth or by using a buffing pad with a low-speed power drill. Continue buffing until the etch mark disappears and the marble surface shines. Contact your stone dealer or call a professional stone restorer for refinishing or re-polishing etched areas that you cannot remove.

EFFLORESCENCE

Efflorescence is a white powder that may appear on the surface of the stone. It is caused by water carrying mineral salts from below the surface of the stone rising through the stone and evaporating. When the water evaporates, it leaves the powdery substance. If the installation is new, use dust mops or vacuum the powder. You may have to do this several times as the stone dries out. 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.

SCRATCHES AND NICKS

Slight surface scratches 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.

Do's & Don'ts

- DO** Clean surfaces with mild detergent or stone soap
- DO** Thoroughly rinse and dry the surface after washing
- DO** Blot up spills immediately
- DO** Protect floor surfaces with non-slip mats or area rugs and countertop surfaces with coasters, trivets or placemats
- DON'T** Use vinegar, lemon juice or other cleaners containing acids on marble, limestone, travertine or onyx surfaces
- DON'T** Use cleaners that contain acid such as bathroom cleaners, grout cleaners or tub & tile cleaners
- DON'T** Use abrasive cleaners such as dry cleansers or soft cleansers
- DON'T** Mix bleach and ammonia; this combination creates a toxic and lethal gas
- DON'T** Ever mix chemicals together unless directions specifically instruct you to do so

Source: Marble Institute of America





Stone Care

