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## Stone Care Information

### ESSENTIAL CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR NATURAL STONE SURFACES

#### Cleaning Procedures & Recommendations

**General Cleaning:** Clean stone surfaces with a cleaner designated safe for natural stone. Use a clean mop on floors and a soft cloth for other surfaces for best results. Don't use more than the recommended amount of any cleaning product. Too much may leave a film, causing streaks. Change rinse water frequently. Do not use products that contain lemon, vinegar or other acids on marble, travertine or limestone as these can etch the surface of the stone. Do not use scouring powders or creams; these products contain abrasives that may scratch the surface.

**Floor Surfaces:** Dust mop interior floors frequently using a clean non-treated dry dust mop. Sand, dirt and grit do the most damage to natural stone surfaces due to their abrasiveness. Mats or area rugs inside and outside an entrance will help to minimize the sand, dirt and grit that can scratch a stone floor. Be sure that the underside of the mat or rug is a non-slip surface. Do not use vacuum cleaners that are worn, the metal or plastic attachments may scratch the surface.

**Bath and Other Wet Areas:** In the bath / shower or other wet areas, soap scum can be minimized by using a squeegee after each use.

**Counter/Vanity Top Surfaces:** Clean your countertops daily with a soft cloth or paper towel and a residue free cleaner designated safe for natural stone.

**If Streaking Occurs:** Buff the countertop with a clean white terry cloth or paper towel.

**Use a Good Stone Polish Occasionally:** For additional luster on those special occasions, apply a good stone polish to the surface of your countertops.

**Seal if Necessary:** Countertops may need to have a penetrating sealer applied. If a sealer is applied, be sure that it is non-toxic and safe for use in food preparation surfaces. **Contact us** if you would like us to perform this service for you.

**Outdoor Pool & Patio Areas:** In outdoor pool, patio or hot tub areas, flush with clear water and use a mild bleach solution to remove algae or moss.

#### Do's and Don'ts

- Do dust mop floors frequently.
- Do clean surfaces with a neutral stone cleaner.
- 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 counter top surfaces with coasters, trivets or place mats, particularly under those containing alcohol or citrus juices. Many common foods and drinks contain acids that will etch or dull the stone surface.
- Don't place hot items directly on the stone surface. Use trivets or mats under hot dishes and place mats under china, ceramics, silver or other objects that can scratch the surface.
- 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.

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**Stain Treatment and Other Issues:** If possible, immediately blot spills with a clean paper towel. If something has soaked into the stone and stained it, a poultice may need to be applied. If you need our stain removal services, please [contact us](#).

**Sealing:** Your natural stone and grout may need to be periodically sealed. For small jobs, you can purchase the product and do it yourself, or [contact us](#) to perform the service for you.

**Stain Identification Tips:** Identifying the type of stain on the stone surface is the key to removing it. Stains can be oil based, organic, metallic, biological, ink based, paint based, acid based. If you don't know what caused the stain, consider likely staining agents that may have been present. Here are some questions you consider:

### 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 occurs in the area around the stain?

**Stain Removal Steps:** Surface stains can often be removed by cleaning with an appropriate cleaning product or household chemical.

### What Type of Stain is It?

The following sections describe the types of stains you may have to deal with and the appropriate household chemicals to use and how to prepare and apply a poultice to remove the stain.

#### Oil-based

(grease, plumbers' putty, 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 one of the following: household detergent, mineral spirits, or acetone.

#### Organic

(coffee, tea, wine, 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, 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 website on Using a Poultice – [www.marble-institute.com/consumers/poultices.cfm](http://www.marble-institute.com/consumers/poultices.cfm)). Deep-seated, rusty stains are extremely difficult to remove and the stone may be permanently stained.

#### Biological

(algae, mildew, lichens, moss, fungi)

Clean with diluted cleaning solution. Use a 1/2 cup of any of the following: ammonia, bleach, or hydrogen peroxide and a gallon of water. Reminder: do not mix bleach and ammonia.

#### Ink

(magic marker, pen, ink)

On light colored stones, clean with bleach or hydrogen peroxide. On dark colored stones, clean with lacquer thinner or acetone.

#### Paint

Small amounts can be removed with lacquer thinner or scraped off carefully with a razor blade. 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, 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 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.

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### **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. When the smoke is removed, there may also be some etching (due to carbonic & other acids in smoke). Commercially available “smoke removers” may save time and effort.

### **Etch Marks**

(caused by acids left on the surface of the stone)

Some materials will etch the finish but not leave a stain. Others will both etch and stain. Contact your stone dealer or call a professional stone restorer for refinishing or re-polishing etched areas.

### **Efflorescence**

(a white powder that may appear on the surface of the stone)

It is caused by the deposition of mineral salts carried by water from below the surface of the stone. When the water evaporates, it leaves the powdery substance. If the installation is new, dust mop 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.

### **Using a Poultice**

Go to [www.marble-institute.com/consumers/poultices.cfm](http://www.marble-institute.com/consumers/poultices.cfm) for more information, or call a stone professional (recommended).

### **Natural Stone Easy to Clean and Maintain!**

Call your professional stone supplier, installer or a restoration specialist for problems that appear too difficult to handle.