

Natural Stone - Routine Care

Natural Stone Care & Maintenance

To insure your natural stone products will provide you with a lifetime of aesthetics and utility, a proper maintenance program is crucial. Natural Stone products are porous by nature and require a different maintenance program than traditional ceramic tile.

Natural stone requires a different maintenance routine than traditional, man-made ceramic tile. Many of the cleaners acceptable for use on ceramic tile can stain, damage or dull stone. Dirt and dust will scratch the surface of stone. Therefore, stone floors should be vacuumed or dust mopped frequently to remove abrasive agents from the stone surface. Natural stone should be cleaned with neutral cleaners. Stone cleaners should never contain acid or bleach. Acids, even a light solution of vinegar and water, will etch and eventually damage natural stone.

Stone Cleaners:

Only use cleaners specifically designed for cleaning stone. These cleaners contain no acids and are concentrated neutral pH cleaners that will not affect existing sealers or wax-type coatings. The surface of the stone should be dampened with clear water. This will keep the cleaning solution on the surface so it can be effective. A solution of the cleaner and water missed to manufacturer instructions should be applied to the stone surface with a sponge or mop. On walls, kitchen counters or vanity tops, a spray bottle can be used to apply the cleaning solution. Allow sitting for manufacturers specified amount of time (usually 3 to 5 minutes). Agitate with a sponge, synthetic mop, soft bristle brush or through the use of a floor-scrubbing machine. Mop up dirty solution and buff dry.

Once the stone has been cleaned, you can periodically apply a Spray-Buffer wax-type floor finish to enhance the beauty and luster of polished stone (including countertops). Apply the finish with a spray applicator and buff immediately with a white nylon pad. Reapply as often as needed, depending on volume of surface traffic and consistency of routine maintenance program. This product is not designed to restore the original shine, but is intended to maintain and protect the original shine. This can be purchased from most Home Centers or through your local Professional Floor Covering Dealer.

Heavy-Duty Stone Cleaning:

When some areas have been neglected, you will need to use a heavy-duty stone cleaner and degreaser to effectively remove dirt, grease, grime, waxes and floor finishes. These cleaning products are concentrated and designed to deep clean the stone without damaging it. Apply the solution of the cleaner and water mixed to manufacturer instructions to the stone surface with a sponge or mop. Allow setting for manufacturer-specified amount of time. Agitate with a sponge, synthetic mop, and soft bristle brush or through the use of a floor-scrubbing machine. Mop up dirty solution and buff dry. Be sure to change out the cleaning solution every 100 square feet to avoid reintroducing dirty water during the cleaning process. Rinse thoroughly with clean water when finished. After cleaning you may apply the Spray-Buffer wax-type floor finish to enhance the natural shine.

Stain Removal:

Stone poultice will remove stains and grout haze from stone. Poultice is a fine, nonacidic, absorptive clay cleaning powder that removes deep-set oil stains, grease and light cementitious grout haze from polished and unpolished natural stone.

CAUTION: Poultice may dull the shine of the polished stone. If this occurs you will need to use a marble polish to restore the natural shine.

Restoration:

If a marble finish has become dull, scratched or etched, you can restore the natural shine through the use of a marble polish. Some marble polishes are available in kits. The process can be enhanced with the use of floor buffing machines. The process is generally a re-crystallization process to remove fine scratches and restore the original shine and polish to the stone. This is not an application of a topical sealer or wax to cover-up damaged or worn surfaces.

Grout Care

Grout is the material used to fill the spaces between the individual tiles. Grout comes in many colors. While color is important to the final finished look of the tile installation, it has little effect on the functionality of the grout. The purpose of grout is, simply, to fill the joint between the tiles and becomes a permanent, integral component of the finished installation.

Penetrating/Impregnating Sealer:

Most tile installations use cementitious grouts. This type of grout should be sealed after installation to prevent the color from staining. The grout should be sealed with a penetrating/impregnating sealer (often called grout sealers) which does not contain silicone, as silicone can shorten the useful life of the sealer. Epoxy grouts, conversely, are chemically cured and acid resistant and, as a result, do not require a sealer. The application of a good quality penetrating/impregnating sealer into the grout joints of a cementitious grout will not change the natural color of the grout, but will prevent the penetration of moisture, simplify maintenance, and help prevent staining or discoloration. Only the grout needs to be sealed, not glazed floor or wall tiles. Grout can be sealed seventy-two hours after installation.

There are different grades of penetrating/impregnating sealers, therefore the useful life and price will differ between a low quality and high quality sealer. You may need to reapply the sealer on an annual basis depending on the sealer quality, traffic patterns, and maintenance routine. Some sealers have multiple year warranties for useful life. Refer to the manufacturer warranty, technical & product information for specific details on product installation, useful life, and product applications (including any warnings) before use.

Grout Maintenance:

Neither sealing the grout nor using a 100% Epoxy Grout will guarantee against surface build-up or discoloration of the grout. Grout needs to be cleaned on a periodic basis to remove any surface build-up. Routine grout cleaning can be done with a daily concentrated household or commercial cleaner depending on the application. When heavy duty grout cleaning is required, you will need to use a professional strength Tile & Grout Cleaner that is capable of removing grease, soap scum, body oil, mildew stains, algae, and synthetic or acrylic waxes from the grout joints. This type of product can be purchased from most Home Centers, or through your local professional Floor Covering Dealer.

-As recommended by Daltille Tile & Stone