



NATURAL STONE TILE CARE & MAINTENANCE GUIDE

Marble, limestone, travertine and other natural stone surfaces

PROTECTING YOUR NATURAL STONE INVESTMENT

Natural stone is valued for its beauty, character and durability. Because each stone is formed by nature, porosity, mineral composition and surface finish can vary. Consistent maintenance, prompt spill cleanup and the correct cleaning products will help preserve the stone's appearance and performance for years to come. Polished marble requires particular care because acids can etch its finish and standing water can leave visible mineral spots or rings.

Quick Care Essentials

CLEAN GENTLY

Use a pH-neutral cleaner made for natural stone, warm water and a soft microfiber cloth or mop.

DRY IMMEDIATELY

Do not allow marble to air dry. Buff surfaces dry with a clean microfiber or chamois cloth to reduce water spots.

PROTECT THE SURFACE

Use coasters, trays, trivets, mats and area rugs to reduce exposure to acids, heat, grit and standing moisture.

MAINTAIN REGULARLY

Dust-mop floors frequently, address spills promptly and evaluate sealer performance as part of routine care.

Routine Cleaning Procedure

1	Remove loose debris: Dust, sand and grit can act like abrasives. Use a clean microfiber dust mop or non-scratching vacuum attachments before wet cleaning.
2	Prepare the cleaner correctly: Use a pH-neutral, non-acidic product labeled for natural stone. Follow the manufacturer's dilution instructions to avoid film or streaking.
3	Clean with soft materials: Use warm water with a soft cloth, non-abrasive sponge or clean microfiber mop. Avoid stiff brushes and scouring pads.
4	Rinse thoroughly: Remove cleaner residue with fresh water and change rinse water frequently so soil is not redeposited.
5	Buff dry: Dry immediately with a soft microfiber or chamois cloth, especially on polished marble and in hard-water areas.

Spill Response

Blot - do not wipe. Use a clean white cloth or paper towel to absorb the spill without spreading it. Rinse the area with clean water and a small amount of pH-neutral stone cleaner, then dry thoroughly. Acidic liquids such as wine, citrus juice, soda, vinegar and some beauty products can etch marble quickly even when the stone has been sealed.

Recommended Care Practices and Actions to Avoid

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	ACTIONS TO AVOID
• Use coasters and trays under drinks, cosmetics, oils, soaps and other products that may contain acids or pigments. • Use trivets or protective mats beneath hot cookware, appliances and decorative objects. • Use stone-safe cleaners that are pH-neutral, non-acidic and clearly labeled for natural stone. • Wipe with warm water and soft materials including microfiber cloths, non-abrasive sponges and clean rag mops. • Buff dry immediately with a microfiber or chamois cloth to reduce water spots and streaks. • Dust-mop floors frequently and place walk-off mats at entrances to capture grit before it reaches the stone. • Use a penetrating stone sealer when appropriate following the stone, sealer and installer recommendations.	• Do not air dry polished marble because evaporating water may leave mineral spots, rings or streaks. • Do not use vinegar, lemon or acidic cleaners including many bathroom, grout, rust and toilet-bowl products. • Do not use bleach or ammonia as routine cleaners unless a stone-care professional or product manufacturer gives specific treatment instructions. • Do not use abrasive powders or pads which may scratch the stone, dull the finish or reduce sealer performance. • Do not allow spills to remain especially wine, coffee, oil, cosmetics, citrus, tomato products or colored liquids. • Do not drag furniture or heavy objects across stone floors; use felt protectors and lift items whenever possible. • Never mix bleach and ammonia because the combination produces dangerous toxic gas.

Sealing Natural Stone

A penetrating or impregnating sealer can improve resistance to staining by slowing the absorption of liquids. It does not make stone stain-proof, and it does not prevent acidic substances from etching marble. The stone's polished, honed or textured finish determines its sheen; most penetrating sealers do not add gloss.

- **Follow the sealer manufacturer's instructions**, including surface preparation, cure time and ventilation requirements.
- **Test first** in a discreet area to confirm appearance and compatibility.
- **Reapplication schedules vary** according to stone type, finish, location, use and the specific sealer. Do not rely on a fixed annual schedule unless the manufacturer recommends one.
- **A qualified installer** or stone-care professional should evaluate uncertain products, wet-area conditions or existing coatings.

Special Considerations for Polished Marble

Polished marble is a calcium-based stone and is sensitive to acids. An etch mark is a chemical change to the surface finish, often appearing as a dull, light or rough spot. Etching is different from staining: a stain is discoloration absorbed into the stone, while an etch affects the finish itself. A sealer may reduce staining, but it cannot stop an acid from etching the surface.

Before Using a New Cleaner or Sealer

READ THE LABEL Confirm the product is specifically identified as safe for natural stone and for the stone type and finish being treated.	TEST FIRST Apply the product in a small, inconspicuous area and allow the test area to dry completely before evaluating the result.
FOLLOW DIRECTIONS Use the stated dilution, dwell time, rinsing method, ventilation and cure period. Stronger is not necessarily safer or more effective.	USE ONE PRODUCT AT A TIME Never combine cleaning chemicals. Rinse away residue before changing products and contact the manufacturer when compatibility is uncertain.

Common Stone Care Concerns

ISSUE	WHAT IT MAY LOOK LIKE	RECOMMENDED RESPONSE
Water spots	Rings, cloudy marks or mineral residue after moisture dries.	Use routine stone-safe cleaning and dry promptly. Persistent mineral buildup may require a professional stone-safe treatment.
Etching	Dull, pale or rough areas, often after acidic contact.	Do not apply more sealer as a repair. Contact a stone restoration professional for polishing or refinishing.
Staining	Darkened or discolored areas that remain after cleaning.	Identify the likely source before treatment. Deep or unknown stains may require a professional poultice procedure.
Scratches or wear	Fine lines, dull traffic paths, chips or loss of polish.	Stop abrasive cleaning and protect the area. Deeper damage generally requires professional honing, polishing or repair.

Wet Areas, Showers and Floors

- **Use a squeegee** after showering to reduce standing water, soap film and hard-water deposits.
- **Maintain ventilation** and allow wet areas to dry between uses. Investigate recurring moisture, darkening or efflorescence with the installer.
- **Use only non-acidic** soap-scum products labeled safe for the installed stone and grout.
- **On floors**, use clean entry mats, felt furniture protectors and a non-treated microfiber dust mop. Verify that vacuum wheels and attachments cannot scratch the stone.

GENERAL CARE NOTICE

This guide provides general maintenance recommendations. Natural stone varies, and cleaners, sealers, grout, adhesives and installation conditions may require product-specific instructions. Always test new products in an inconspicuous area and follow the manufacturer's directions. When damage is extensive, the cause is uncertain or the installation is in a wet area, consult a qualified stone-care or restoration professional.

Thank you for choosing natural stone. With thoughtful daily care and the correct maintenance products, your stone can retain its distinctive beauty for many years.

Sincerely,

THE BUILDER DEPOT