



Care and Maintenance

Get to Know Your Stone

The first step in proper stone care and maintenance is to understand your stone's geological classification and composition. This information will help you to identify what cleaning products to use and how best to care for your natural stone.

Natural stone is categorized into three basic geological classifications by their respective formation processes: Sedimentary, Metamorphic and igneous. Additionally, stones in each category can be either Calcareous or Siliceous.

Calcareous stone is composed mainly of calcium carbonate, a chemical compound commonly found in natural stone, shells and pearls. Calcium Carbonate is sensitive to acidic solutions so mild, non-acidic cleaners are recommended.

Siliceous stone, as the term implies, is one composed primarily of silicates, such as quartz, feldspar, mica, etc. as such, a siliceous stone is generally resistant to most acids found in kitchen settings, although acidic cleaners are still not recommended, as these stones may contain trace levels of minerals that are acid sensitive.

The following chart will be a helpful guide:

	Sedimentary	Metamorphic	Igneous
Calcareous	Limestone Travertine Onyx	Marble Serpentine	
Siliceous	Sandstone	Slate Quartzite Soapstone	Granite

Easy Care Tips

To get the longest life and preserve the beauty of your natural stone, follow these simple tips:

Coasters: Use coasters under all glasses, particularly those containing alcohol or citrus juices.

Trivets: While many stones can withstand heat, the use of trivets or mats is recommended.

Spills: Blot the spill with a paper towel immediately. Don't wipe the area, it will spread the spill. Flush the area with water and mild soap and rinse several times. Dry the area thoroughly with a soft cloth. Repeat as necessary.

Cleaning:

- Clean stone surfaces with a neutral cleaner, stone soap, or a mild liquid dishwashing detergent and warm water.
- Similar to any item cleaned in your home, an excessive concentration of cleaner or soap may leave a film and cause streaks. Follow manufacturer recommendations.
- Use a soft cloth for counter surfaces for best results.
- Rinse the surface thoroughly after washing with the soap solution and dry with a soft cloth.
- 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 some stone types.

Cleaning Products:

- Many suppliers offer products used for stone cleaning.
- Products containing lemon, vinegar or other acids may dull or etch calcareous stones.
- Scouring powders or creams often contain abrasives that may scratch certain stones.
- Many commercially available rust removers (laundry rust stain removers, toilet bowl cleaners) contain trace levels of hydrofluoric acid (HF). This acid attacks silicates in addition to other minerals. All stones, including granite and quartzite, will be attacked if exposed to HF.
- Do not mix ammonia and bleach. This combination creates a toxic and lethal gas.

Sealing

Sealing is a common step taken on some stones as an extra precaution against staining. In fact, the sealing products used in the stone industry are "impregnators" which do not actually seal the stone, but more correctly act as a repellent rather than a sealer. Sealing does not make the stone stain proof, rather it makes the stone more stain resistant. When consulting with your stone supplier, you may find that many stones do not require sealing. However, applying an impregnating sealer is a common practice.

Consult with your supplier or sealing manufacturer specific to the type of sealer and frequency of use recommended.

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:

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/). 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; repolishing 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.

Water Spots and Rings

(surface accumulation of hard water)

Buff with dry 0000 steel wool.

Fire and Smoke Damage

Older stones and smoke or firestained 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 repolishing 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 repolished by a professional.

Using a Poultice

Go to www.marble-institute.com/consumers/poultices/ 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.

MAINTENANCE & CARE FOR NATURAL STONE COUNTERTOPS

A specialized stone sealer had been applied to your stone counter. Please allow this sealer to cure into your stone for 10 to 12 hours free from water, oil & debris. We have provided for your convenience a special cleaner that can be used weekly.

The following are care instructions for your natural stone countertop:

1. **Do not** use abrasive or thick cleaning products.
2. **Do not** use any other general household cleaning products.
3. For cleaning; Please use the special cleaner on your countertop surface that has been provided for you at time of install. Use a clean cloth or shammy to dry; this will help with the prevention of streaking.
4. An alternate to the commercial cleaner is a solution of warm water and mild Palmolive liquid soap. Rinse thoroughly with warm water. Again, use a clean cloth or shammy to dry.
5. Common staining items such as red wine, mustard & oils etc. should **NOT** be left on your counter for any length of time, immediate clean up is best. **Do not** allow any oil or ink based rubber products to sit for any length of time on your countertop.
6. Refrain from cutting directly on your stone counter, **use a cutting board**.
7. Refrain from placing hot pots directly on your stone countertop, **use trivets**.
8. Stone sealer and or maintenance cleaner can be purchased from Di Pietra Design and should be only used as directed. By following the directions stipulated on the stone sealer product should leave you with an easy, low maintenance surface. Regular cleanings, based upon the use your countertop receives, are necessary to keep your countertop's luster for life.

***** Please note that your stone countertop will need to be resealed annually and bi-annually if you have an alternate finish from the standard polished finish, (ie: Honed or textured surface finish). *****

If you have purchased a 15 year sealer with your countertop you will only need to perform weekly maintenance on your stone countertop.

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at (705)727-0096 or email us at info@dipietradesign.com