

Maintenance Guide



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**This is just a basic to get you started on some of the areas that you may have questions on. Please reach out to an authorized Stoneware Sales Rep for better assistance and more accurate response.*

1. What is the stability of natural stones against acidic chemicals?

Ans.

If the natural stone is acid-sensitive (limestone, marble, many sandstones, argillaceous stone), then those chemicals are not to be used. Generally, soft stone (such as limestone, marble, many sand stones, argillaceous stone) are acid-sensitive and are therefore not to be treated with acidic chemicals. Hard stones (such as granite), on the other hand, are acid-proof. However, the general classification of granite includes some gabbro and basalts which are not acid-proof, such as, the Indian star galaxy or the South-African Nero Absoluto and Impala, as well as well as different kinds of diorites such as the Brazilian stone Tijuca. These "relatives" of granite consist of a wholly different chemical composition and can therefore not be classified as granites. Additionally, what is commonly referred to as black granites include natural stones which are not granites at all and which, therefore, are also not acid-proof.

2. Which are the well-established cleaning methods?

Ans.

Sweeping

The old-fashioned broom is still a valuable part of everyday maintenance of any floor surface - natural stone included. It is very important to remove soils from flooring surfaces. Soils are abrasive. The more often soils are removed, the longer the floor will retain the original appearance. Use a broom with a bristle that matches your surface. A soft broom or brush is recommended for smooth surfaces like marble, sandstone

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Maintenance Guide



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BUILT TO LAST

and limestone. A medium to soft bristle is ideal for textured surface.

Vacuum

A good vacuum cleaner works better and more efficiently on textured surface than a broom. Use a vacuum on any horizontal surface when large areas are involved, since it is, in most cases, faster than sweeping.

Damp Mopping

A damp mop is capable of picking up microscopic abrasive soils and potential staining agents. Damp mopping is recommended for most smooth surfaces on a regular basis.

Best done after sweeping or vacuuming.

Cleaning

It is essential to clean a floor regularly. The working conditions will dictate its frequency. The most widespread problems encountered with stone floors are related to the floor simply not being regularly cleaned.

Rinsing

Rinsing is one of the most critical steps in regular floor maintenance. Dirty mop water residue is common and a cause for much complaint. A two-bucket rinse method is highly effective in keeping floors from graying out due to soil residues.

Abrasive mechanical cleaning

Abrasives are sometimes useful as a cleaning agent but should be limited to non-polished surfaces. Abrasives may be combined with detergents or soaps for scouring a surface and removing thin layers from the surface. There are many different types of materials used as abrasives - soft abrasives may be composed of nutshells or feldspars, hard abrasives can be silica quartz, carbide or even diamond.

Maintenance Guide



STONEWARE
BUILT TO LAST

3. *What can ruin or cause damage to a stone?*

Ans.

Acid:

Spills from drinking liquids or food containing acid will etch (dull mark) marble and limestone surface. Also, the wrong declaration of some group of natural stones can cause irreparable damages. The so called "black granites" which are partially basalt such as Tiger Black or Chinese G684 or Gabbro as Star Galaxy, Nero Absolute, Impala or in the case of Belgian granite, which is limestone, all of them are sensitive against acid. In such cases, lemon juice, orange juice, carbonated beverages, cranberry juice, apple juice, wine, tomato, etc. may cause a dull mark that may be of a coin size or spread over the surface.

Alkaline:

In addition to chemicals containing acid, chemicals that contain high alkaline or bleach can damage floors to lose its shine and elegance.

Moisture:

Local water may contain chlorine, salts, magnesium, potassium and other minerals. When water is used continuously to clean the marble and limestone floor it may ruin certain type of marble or limestone by causing pitting, spalling and yellowing. This is why it is important to protect the floor with a sealer (impregnator).

Scratches:

Sand and grit carried from outside by shoes can easily scratch and abrade the marble surface like a sandpaper. Unprotected furniture legs may leave scratches too. Dragging heavy objects or sharp items on the floor can cause very deep scratches or gouges that may be permanent.

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Stains:

Even a hard, natural stone such as granite is still porous and can easily be discolored by spills from food, sitting pots, metal furniture legs, oil, ink, water damage, etc.

Improper Maintenance procedure:

Continuous use of water as the sole cleaning agent (without chemicals), or using dirty mops, or not changing the cleaning solution frequently enough, can cause soft and hard stone to look dingy, streaky and unattractive.

Improper Maintenance program:

Not having a steady use of dust mop and damp mop cause a decrease of the gloss. In addition, a yearly maintenance may be required to revive the gloss especially when the floor is exposed to medium or heavy traffic.

4. What are the recommendations for a successful initial (basic) cleaning?

Ans.

A. For floor/stairs(indoor)

1. Soft stone such as marble, limestone (not stable against acidic cleaner) - For contaminates such as basic dirt, dirt layers, thin layers of wax, superficial oil and grease stains, soot, rubber and tar stains, even efflorescence and cement rest clean with a light alkali cleaner (pH=10), Don't start with the concentrate form. Depending on the dirtiness, start with a water dilution 1:5 to 1:25

2. Hard stone such as granite, gneiss (stable against acidic cleaners) - Clean with alkali cleaner as well as with acidic cleaner (pH=1). Because many of the hard stones such as the so-called "black granite" (Tiger Black, G684) are not stable, it is necessary to conduct a pre-treatment test with the acidic cleaner on an inconspicuous area.

Maintenance Guide



STONEWARE
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Do not use immediately in concentrated form and pre-wet the surface. Acidic cleaner based on hydrochloric acid react with many hard stones to cause rust. Other hard stones as Labrador lose their gloss immediately. Acidic cleaner based on acetic acid attacks the fittings.

B. For facade, wall terrace (outdoor)

- 1. Soft stone such as marble, limestone (not stable against acidic cleaner). Clean with a light alkali cleaner (pH=10), algae & mildew remover, which is a slightly alkali cleaner (pH=11) based on active chlorine compounds. Use undiluted. Do not allow contact with plants, metal, wood and cloths.*
- 2. Hard stone such as granite, gneiss (stable against acidic cleaners). It is possible to clean with alkali cleaner as well as with acidic cleaner or/and algae & mildew remover*

C. Kitchen-countertop, wash basin, sanitary items

- 1. Soft stone such as marble, limestone (not stable against acidic cleaner). Clean with an alkali cleaner (pH=10)*
- 2. Hard stone as granite, gneiss (stable against acidic cleaners. Clean with a strong alkali cleaner (pH=12))*

5. What are the recommendations for a successful daily cleaning ?

Ans.

It is usually not necessary to clean daily unless it is a high traffic area like hotel lobby, etc. For all floors the daily cleaning should be carried out by a cleaning product with pH= 7 neutral and water-based. Clean with a neutral cleaner (pH=7) or stone soap. Surfaces are to be slightly moisted with a wiper to remove the dirt. Dilute the concentrated cleaner in water 1:50 to 1:100 and clean the surface with a slightly

Maintenance Guide



STONEWARE
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moistened cloth. Let the surface dry for 10 minutes. The products can also be used in a brush cleaning machine with a sucking device. It is important to prevent the product from creating layers or stripes on the floor to support the protective effect of the impregnation. The water solution of the cleaning product should be applied with a mop. Dirty solutions should be mopped up regularly. Remove loose debris by sweeping or vacuuming before applying the cleaning solution.

6. Which are the recommendations for a successful periodical cleaning?

Ans.

Periodical initial(basic) cleaning- Due to heavy traffic or other circumstances it can be necessary to carry out periodically an initial cleaning with a slightly alkaline cleaner. The application period depends on the grade of pollution; it can be carried out every 3-12 month. The product has to be diluted with water approximately 1:20 up to 1:50 depending, on the degree of pollution the product must not affect the impregnation of the stone. The cleaning solution should be applied with a mop. Dirty solution should be mopped up regularly.

7. How to protect natural stones used for highly strained surfaces as such as kitchen top, table top, bar counter etc.?

Ans.

Protection: The surface of the natural stone has to be clean, stain free, dry and with enough absorption properties. Nowadays most of the natural stones are already treated in the factory. As a result, the stones show altered absorption properties. Therefore it is recommended to use an oil- and water-repellent, solvent-based impregnation. In any case is recommended to prepare a sample area in order to examine the efficiency of the impregnation. Due to the permanent contact of impregnation with foods, is essential that the protection is approved as being of food-safe quality.

Maintenance Guide



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8. *How to clean and care for natural stones used for highly strained surfaces as kitchen tops, table tops, bar counter etc.?*

Ans.

Cleaning and care: If cleaned immediately, many food stains can be taken care of with a simple damp cloth. Once dried up or involving fat, stains and soiling can no longer be cleaned so easily. For such residues, mild cleaning products with oil- and fat-solvent qualities should be used. Products that are extremely alkaline or highly degreasing can, over the long-term, damage the stone's impregnation. Many manufacturers offer spray cleaners that are easily applied. They have a cleaning and protecting component and therefore provide a removal of stains and protection of the stone in one single working step. If used regularly, the spray cleaners can prolong the interval time between subsequent impregnations. At the first sight of dark stains caused by oil- and fat-containing food, an immediate reaction is essential. Among the most effective solutions are oil removal pastes. These cleaning products guarantee a long application time, an essential factor if pollutions need to be dissolved that are deep-seated within capillary structures of the stone. After the removal of stains the protective impregnation needs to be renewed.

9. *How to remove stains from the surface of natural stone?*

Ans.

1. Soft stone such as marble, limestone (not stable against acidic cleaner).

If there are contaminants such as; basic dirt, dirt layers, thin layers of wax, superficial oil and grease stains, soot, rubber and tar stains, or even efflorescence and cement residue -

Remove with a light alkaline cleaner (pH=10). What to do if there are superficial rust stains produced by ferrous substances or objects, such as fertilizers, tools, iron pasts etc.: Remove with a slightly alkaline rust remover (pH=9)

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2. Hard stone such as granite, gneiss (stable against acidic cleaners)

If there is rust and inorganic discoloration: to remove inorganic discolorations, such as rust stains, use Rust remover, a product based on phosphoric acid. It is important to make a test patch in an inconspicuous area to ensure that the surface is acid resistant.

If there are lime residues, rust marks and heavy soap residues: They can be removed with an organic acid based disinfectant cleaner with (pH=1) Mortar, lime residue, efflorescence, cements films and other stubborn deposits on tiles or slabs: They can be removed with an acid-based concrete film remover, which is free of hydrochloric acid.

10. What are the main mistakes in maintenance?

Ans.

- 1. Cleaning only with water*
- 2. Not replacing the cleaning solution*
- 3. Cleaning mop head is not kept clean*
- 4. Floor is not vacuumed or dusted enough*
- 5. Not using a door mat*
- 6. Using the wrong cleaning chemicals.*

11. Not having a planned program for maintenance: Are there some tips to avoid mistakes during maintenance?

Ans.

Here are some useful tips

Use walk - off mats:

To reduce the possibility of unsightly scratches and/or dulling of the marble or limestone floor, install walk off mats inside and outside all entry doorways. Good quality walk-off mats will remove sand and grit from the bottom of a person's shoe that could otherwise badly scratch and dull the marble floor.

Maintenance Guide



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Dust Mop & Sweep Regularly:

Walk-off mats will reduce the amount of abrasive soils that can enter from shoes, however, they cannot completely eliminate all materials that can scratch or dull a stone surface. Many abrasive soils are generated inside the house like very small pieces of broken glass or porcelain, metal chips or flakes, or sand and dirt brought in/on clothing or other materials. Dust mopping and sweeping will help remove these abrasive contaminants. Use a clean, untreated and dry dust mop or fine bristle broom and dust pan to remove all dust, dirt and loose debris daily or as needed. This is the most important thing you can do to keep the stone surface looking new.

Utilizing a neutral non - residual water based stone cleaner or a slightly alkali cleaner, damp mop regularly. Spot cleaning can be accomplished by simply applying a small amount of this neutral cleaner to a soiled spot, lightly rubbing to dissolve the spot and remove with a clean damp sponge.

Don' t clean only with water

This can be very detrimental to your soft stone. Water contains chlorine, salts and other minerals that will diminish the shine if used on a regular basis. In addition, water doesn' t have the ability to cut through dirt and mainly dust will be removed. Utilize neutral, non-residual water based stone cleaner, damp mop regularly. Spot cleaning can be accomplished by simply applying a small amount of this neutral cleaner to a soiled spot, lightly rubbing to dissolve the spot and removing with a clean damp sponge.

Replace the cleaning solution frequently

Otherwise, it will leave streaks all over the stone surface and the grout joints (especially if they are light colour) will get dirty very rapidly. Whenever you notice that the

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cleaning solution becomes cloudy and dirty, immediately replace it with a fresh new solution

Keep the cleaning mop head always clean

By using mop or cloths that are soiled and dirty, you are actually tracking the dirt back into the floor and grout joints. Dirty mops can create streaks and an unattractive look. Keep the cloth or mop head clean all the time. Wash them thoroughly after you have finished the cleaning with neutral soap and warm water

Use the right cleaning chemicals

In case you use the wrong cleaning chemical you can ruin your stone floor very easily. Especially soft stones made from calcium carbonate are very sensitive to any acid or high alkaline chemicals. Do not use any tile cleaners, vinegar, ammonia, alcohol etc. Use only neutral cleaners that have pH 7.00 or slightly higher and were made specially for cleaning stone. In this way you prolong the stone life.

Make a planned program for maintenance

Designate the cleaning days and polishing dates and the days that you want to re-apply the protection depending on the abuse and foot traffic. Doing that will keep the floor well maintained.

Some Additional FAQs

12. What is the difference between granite, marble, limestone, sandstone, slate ?

Ans.

The difference between miscellaneous types of natural stone starts right with the origin of its creation, Granite is an indigenous rock with at least 20% quartz and up to 65% alkali feldspar by volume.

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Marble is a non-foliated metamorphic rock, composed of recrystallized carbonate materials, mostly common calcite or dolomite. Marble, in other words, is a metamorphosed limestone. Limestone is a non-foliated metamorphic rock (sedimentary rock) composed, mainly of skeletal fragments of marine organisms such as coral, forams and mollusks. Its major materials are the minerals calcite and aragonite, which are different crystal forms of calcium carbonate (CaCO₃). Sandstone is a sedimentary rock composed mostly of sand sized minerals or rock grains. Slate is a finely grained, foliated homogeneous metamorphic rock, derived from the original shale-type sedimentary rock, composed of clay or volcanic ash, by means of low-grade regional metamorphism. Each of these different varieties has their own properties and appearance, and requires therefore an individual approach and differing applications.

13. What is the stability of natural stones against acidic chemicals ?

Ans.

If the natural stone acid-sensitive (limestone, marble, many sandstones, argillaceous stone}, then those chemicals are not to be used. Generally, soft stone (such as limestone, marble, many sand stones, argillaceous stone} are acid-sensitive and are therefore not to be treated with acidic chemicals. Hard stones (such as granite}, on the other hand, are acid-proof. However, the general classification of granite includes some gabbro and basalts which are not acid-proof, such as, the Indian star galaxy or the South-African Nero Absolute and Impala, as well as well as different kinds of diorites such as the Brazilian stone Tijuca. These "relatives" of granite consist of a wholly different chemical composition and can therefore not be classified as granites. Additionally, what is commonly referred to as black granites include natural stones which are not granites at all and which, therefore, are also not acid-proof.

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14. *What is hard and soft stone ?*

Ans.

Generally, stones are categorized into hard and soft stones. Hard stones include granite, gabbro, syenite, and diabase. The materials subsumed under this category are wear-resistant and in most cases suitable for all forms of installation. Commercially, these stones are mistakenly referred to as 'Granite'. Equally classified as hard stones are porous vulcanite and slate stones. These, too, are suitable for any kind of installation. Soft stones' range from so-called sedimentary rock such as limestone and argillaceous shale to metamorphic rocks such as marble. In most cases suitable for flooring, these stones are mostly used for paneling and less demanded areas. Commercially, these stones are commonly referred to as 'marble' or 'limestone'. Sandstones too, offer a variety of possible applications if used as soft stones, preferably as flooring material.

15. *How to choose the right natural stone for a project?*

Ans.

Besides the appearance, colors and design of the natural stone the most important criteria for choosing the appropriate product for indoor and outdoor applications are: frost resistance, abrasiveness, water absorption, acid resistance, suitability for flooring and cladding, polishing possibility. Contact your architect or a Stoneware Sales rep to find the right fit for your application.

16. *Additional videos to watch (On Youtube)*

- *How to make Anti-slippage floorings*
- *How to apply an oil- and water repellent protection on a kitchen top*
- *How to apply a color enhancing protection*

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Homeowners' Product

THE STONEWARE CHOICE AND
COMMITMENT

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- *How to renew the gloss of a stone floor*
- *How to remove acidic stains and lime scale*
- *How to remove organic discolorations*
- *How to repair small holes and scratches (fine cracks) without having to regrind and re-polish the whole surface*
- *Some of the videos can be found on*
<https://youtube.com/channel/UCunQ5z9M6reQqKjtaabOfKg>

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