

Care and Maintenance for your New Stone

The very best way to take care of your new stone is to take a moment to understand its geological classification and composition. This will help you choose the most well suited cleaning products for your particular stone and assess just how much maintenance your stone may need on a daily basis.

Natural stone is categorized into three basic classifications. Sedimentary, Metamorphic and Igneous. Within each of these three categories, stone can be either Calcareous, or Siliceous.

- **Calcareous:** stone that is predominantly composed of calcium carbonate. Calcium Carbonate is sensitive to acid, has a higher absorption rating than siliceous stone, and is softer and more likely to etch or stain. Mild, non-acidic cleaners are best for these stones.
- **Siliceous:** stone that is predominantly composed of silicates, such as quartz, feldspar and mica, making them extremely hard, durable stones. These stones are generally resistant to most acids. Mild cleaners are still best for these stones, however they are able to tolerate a much higher level of use, compared to calcareous stones.

	<u>Calcareous</u>	<u>Siliceous</u>
<u>Sedimentary</u>	Limestone, Travertine, Onyx	Sandstone
<u>Metamorphic</u>	Marble, Serpentine	Slate, Quartzite, Soapstone
<u>Igneous</u>		Granite

Now that you've identified what category your stone falls into, you can accurately determine what kind of maintenance is required.

Sealers: Sealing all new stone is a must and is considered standard practice for the stone industry. Most of the sealers available to stone professionals are "impregnating" sealers. Contrary to popular belief, these sealers do not create a stain proof barrier between staining agents and your stone. They act merely as a repellent to staining agents, offering the owner a bit of time to clean up a spill before it becomes a stain. **SEALING THE STONE DOES NOT MAKE IT 100% STAIN PROOF.**

When sealer has been applied in a food prep area, be sure to use a barrier such as a cutting board.

Frequency of application is at your own discretion. An application during fabrication and an application during installation has already been applied. Applying the sealer every couple of years or when you feel comfortable is recommended.

Cleaning: Most daily cleaning of all stones listed above can be done with a mild dish soap and warm water. Rinse the surface thoroughly after washing, and dry with a clean cloth to avoid streaks. Harsh chemicals, especially rust removers should be avoided at all costs. Products containing lemon, vinegar or other acids may dull or etch calcareous stones such as marble. Scouring powders or creams containing abrasives can also scratch the surface of the stone. Regular use of cleaners containing ammonia should be avoided as this can break down most sealers. Stones falling into the siliceous category are much less prone to etching and surface scratches, but still do not require anything more than a mild soap for cleaning.

Stain identification and removal: Stains happen. Yes, even with a sealer! The best chance for removing a stain is to first identify what caused it. Surface stains can often be removed by cleaning with an appropriate cleaning product or household chemical. While chemicals and harsh cleaners should be avoided for everyday use, they are generally accepted in the case of stain removal. There are several kinds of stains that can occur, most commonly, oil-based, water and organic (food).

Oil-based	Ink
Organic (food)	Water spots & rings
Metal	Etch Marks
Biological	Scratches and Nicks

Oil Based – In all stones, oil-based stains will appear as a dark spot on the stone. Most of the time, an oil spot can be dissolved with mineral spirits or acetone. Once the oil is dissolved, the source of the stain can be flushed away with a mild liquid cleanser and warm water.

Organic – Food such as coffee grounds, wine or fruit may leave a brownish stain on the stone and disappear after the source of the stain has been removed. If these stains do not come out with a mild liquid cleanser, 12% hydrogen peroxide and a few drops of ammonia can be applied.

Metal – Stains caused by metal generally follow the shape of the staining object, such as a nail, bolt or tin can. Metal stains must be removed with a poultice. Rusty, deep-seated stains are often extremely difficult to remove and may be permanently stained.

Biological – Mildew, moss or algae are examples of some biological stains that can occur. These are usually seen in ponds or other stone water receptacles. They can be cleaned by draining the water and spraying the stains with a solution of ½ cup of ammonia or bleach and a gallon of water. Never mix ammonia and bleach.

Ink – Permanent marker or pen are common household items and can often come in contact with your new stone. If your stone is light colored, whether siliceous or calcareous, this stain can be cleaned with bleach or hydrogen peroxide. On dark stones, you can try cleaning with acetone. Being mindful again, that these chemicals can etch the surface of the stone, after which the stone may need to be resurfaced.

Water spots & rings – This is typically a surface accumulation of hard water. This can be buffed with dry 0000 steel wool. Most water will naturally evaporate from stone if given a short amount of time. If the stone next to your sink is constantly wet, it will appear darker than the rest of the stone. This is usually just because you haven't given the stone a sufficient amount of time to dry out.

Etch marks – Etches on the surface of the stone are generally caused by an acidic substance that was left on the stone. Some materials will etch the finish of your stone without leaving behind a stain. Some materials will etch and stain the stone. If this has occurred, you should contact us for possible restoration or refinishing of the etched areas.

Scratches and nicks – Slight surface scratches may be buffed out with dry 0000 steel wool. Deeper scratches and nicks will need to be repaired and/or refinished by our team of professionals.