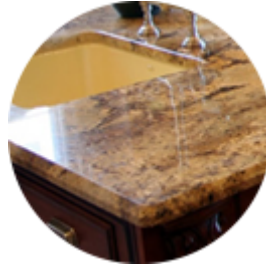


CARE GUIDE FOR YOUR STONE AND TILE



Tile, Stone and Grout Care

Do's and Don'ts of Ceramic Tile Care

- Do not combine ammonia and household bleaches.
- Do not use harsh cleaning against (such as steel wool pads) which can scratch or damage the surface of your tile.
- Do test scouring pads in a small area first.
- Do use a silicone sealer on grout joints if continuous staining is a problem.
- Do read and follow label directions for all cleaners.



Care and Maintenance of Tile Grout

Grout may present a special cleaning problem because it is susceptible to many staining agents. Apply a silicone sealer to grout joints several times a year for maximum protection (or as sealer directions suggest).

In addition to keeping the grout clean, be sure to keep grout joints in good repair. Scrape out loose, cracked or powdery joints and refill with a good grout.

One common grouting trouble spot is the joint between the tub and the wall in your bathroom. As the house or tub settles, the grout may crack and crumble. It's relatively simple to remedy. Remove the old grout with a sharp pointed tool, being careful not to scratch tile or tub. Then dry the joint thoroughly and fill with a flexible caulking compound, such as silicone rubber caulking.

Cleaners



There are many excellent household cleaners on the market today. They should all do a good job for you, so use your favorite. Remember, read and follow the manufacturer's instructions and recommended usage. They will perform as promised, if you use them as directed.

You can find at your supermarket all-purpose cleaners including such products as Scrub Free, Mr. Clean, Top Job, Fantastic, Ajax Liquid, Liquid Comet and Dow Bathroom Cleaner.

"Soapless detergents" are also commonly found on supermarket shelves. They include such cleaners as Spic & Span and Formula 409. Tile Distributors of America offers "soapless detergents" such as Hilliard's Super Shine All, Tile & Grout Renovator or TEC's LikeNew and EveryDay Stone & Tile Cleaner.

Scouring powders which are readily available include Comet, Bon Ami and Ajax. Nylon scouring pads may also be used (such as Scotch Brite), but steel wool pads are not recommended.

Commercial cleaners such as Aqua mix or Hilliard's Assurance, are suitable for heavy duty cleaning in commercial applications. These products are available at Tile Distributors of America.



Stain Removal

- Grease and Fats Remove using soda and water or commercial spot lifter.
- Inks and Colored Dyes Remove using household bleach.
- Blood Remove using hydrogen peroxide or household bleach.
- Coffee, Tea, Food, Fruit, Lipstick, Juices Remove using neutral cleaner in hot water followed by hydrogen peroxide or household bleach.

Caution: Vinegar may damage some tile glazes. Be sure to test this solution first in a small area to see if it etches the tile or erodes the grout.

Natural Stone

Marble, Granite, Slate, Travertine, Limestone, Onyx, etc.

What type of natural stone do you have inside your home, on your patio, in your entryway or in your exterior landscaping? Although natural stone provides an excellent upgrade from many of today's synthetic alternatives, it must still be recognized that it is neither maintenance free nor stain proof. Grout, even latex-modified, is also very porous and subject to sub-surface staining if not properly protected and maintained. Here are some excellent tips that will help insure the ongoing beauty, long life, cleanliness and slip resistance of your stone installation:

Do Seal your stone and grout installation to improve the stain resistance and ease the ongoing maintenance. It is very important that the proper sealer be used based on the type of stone, surface finish and location. A good rule of thumb is that with denser stone, including polished surfaces, is that only penetrating-type sealers should be used. If you have a stone with a very porous (absorbent) or textured surface such as slate, then you have an option of using a "coat" or surface sealer that will generally provide a degree of surface sheen or a penetrating-type sealer that will leave a completely natural look. Be careful when selecting coating-type sealers on exterior areas as many of the coating-type sealers currently available do not work well in exposed exterior environments.

Don't Allow liquid contaminants to stand indefinitely on stone and grout surfaces, even if they are sealed. It is important to remove liquid contaminants as soon as possible. They will very quickly penetrate into unsealed stone and grout surfaces, making them difficult to extract, and eventually seep into even sealed surfaces if allowed to dwell for extended periods of time. a sealer should be viewed as providing reaction time to remove the contaminant before it penetrates and stains the stone or grout.

Don't Directly wipe a liquid contaminant off the stone or grout surface. This will simply cause the stain to be spread over a larger area, and even drive the contaminant deeper into the stone or grout, especially if unsealed.

Do Quickly utilize an absorbent paper towel or rag to blot up any liquid contaminant remaining wet on the surface before scrubbing the surface with a proper cleaner.



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Don't Use acidic cleaners for routine stone maintenance. Although many stones are acid resistant, there are many stones (most noteworthy - Marble), which are sensitive to acids. Even a light solution of vinegar and water will quickly etch and dull polished marble surfaces. It is also important to note that acidic cleaners do not function as degreasers, but work by chemically attacking cement and calcium found in grout and some varieties of stone, thus damaging the structural integrity of the grout and stone.

Do Use neutral PH cleaners for everyday routine cleaning of stone and grout surfaces. In situations where periodic heavy duty cleaning is needed, use an alkaline (high PH) cleaner. These are excellent degreasers, working well on grout and most stone surfaces without chemically damaging these surfaces. IT is recommended that whatever cleaner is used on fine polished marble, that it is always first tested to insure that it does not dull the polished surface.

Don't Clean textured stone surfaces and grout using only a mop. A highly textured or uneven surface such as slate and sanded grout is rough finished and tends to grip and hold surface contaminants. A simple moping is not going to create sufficient surface agitation to release these clinging contaminants.

Do After applying a neutral PH or high alkaline cleaner, utilize a scrub brush to create sufficient surface agitation to release the surface contaminants so they can be easily removed in the rinsing process.