First-Aid Kit!

Your Emergency DIY Guide to Stone, Tile and Grout

Easy, proactive steps will keep your stone, tile and grout looking great over time. It's paramount to clean your floors often and correctly! Cleaning high traffic areas more often will help maintain all areas. Damp mop at least once a week (or more often for heavy traffic areas). Make certain that any cleaner you choose is formulated specifically for stone, tile and grout cleaning (neutral pH). Water alone will not suffice as it will leave behind oil and mineral build up. Never use a detergent or soap because it can dull the surface, promote a residue build up or degrade your floors sealer. Routine cleaners should never contain acids, vinegar, chlorines or ammonia, as these chemicals can damage and discolor the grout or the surface of the stone or tile. Use neutral cleaners specially formulated for tile and grout that are low VOC, non-hazardous and non-polluting. Higher traffic areas should be cleaned more often than areas with much less traffic. For example a kitchen and entry corridor would be cleaned three to four times as often as a formal living room. Kids, pets, animals and lifestyle will all influence the need for more aggressive periodic cleanings.

Weekly cleaning recommendation

We recommend DuPont™ StoneTech® Professional Stone & Tile Cleaner.

Cleaning process:

1. Dilute your Stone & Tile Cleaner concentrate in warm water. (Note: Always dilute concentrated solutions per manufactures label instructions. More detergent does not mean a deeper clean, it will more than likely leave a soil-attracting residual.)
2. Apply properly diluted cleaning solution with a damp mop, sponge or appropriate professional cleaning equipment. Ensure your mop is clean and free of contaminates. A banded string mop (available for purchase at any janitorial supply) can be used then laundered leaving the mop head good as new after every laundering.
3. Clean entire area with mop, changing mop water often to ensure that soil is not re-deposited. Always work toward the kitchen so as to avoid re-depositing cooking oils throughout hard surface areas. Wipe or rinse cleaned area.
4. Let area dry completely before using. Be cautious as damp surfaces can be very slippery!!

Aggressive periodic cleaning recommendation

Ideal tools:

- Neutral Ph Stone & Tile Cleaner (we recommend Stone Tech's All Purpose Stone & Tile Cleaner)
- 2 gallon pump up sprayer (size of sprayer can vary depending on area to be cleaned)
- Hoover Floor Mate

Cleaning Process:

1. Fill and dilute the sprayer with enough cleaner to spray the area to be cleaned.
2. Spray area (begin with an area no larger than 10 x10) to be cleaned with enough cleaner to slightly puddle in grouted areas and let sit for 10-15 minutes.
3. Fill Hover Floor Mate with pure water and flush floor.

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Tile, Stone & Grout Tips:
Professional refinishing is the best way to permanently remove etch marks and restore your natural stone's even finish.

Use coasters under glasses, especially if they contain alcohol or citrus juices.

Use trivets or mats under hot dishes or cookware.

Place a small rug or mat at entryways to trap dirt and sand from normal foot traffic.

Dust counter tops, islands, vanities and floors frequently.

Blot up spills immediately to minimize permanent damage to the stone.

Clean surfaces by wiping with a properly diluted cleaning solution, then wiping dry with a clean cloth.

Don't use vinegar, bleach, ammonia or other general-purpose cleaners.

Don't use cleaners that contain acid such as bathroom cleaners, grout cleaners or tub and tile cleaners.

Don't use abrasive cleaners such as dry cleansers or soft cleansers.

Don't use alkaline cleaners not specifically formulated for natural stone.

Dust mop. Dust mop interior floors frequently using a clean, non-treated dry dust mop. Sand, dirt and grit are abrasive and can damage natural stone.

Use mats/rugs. Mats or area rugs inside and outside an entrance will help to minimize the sand, dirt and grit that may scratch the stone floor. Be sure that the underside of the mat or rug is a slip resistant surface.

Use vacuum cleaners. Be sure the metal or plastic attachments or the wheels are not worn as they can scratch the surface of some stones. If you have larger hard surface areas, a backpack style vacuum with a soft bristle floor attachment can be very helpful.

Add protective pads to furniture. Protect your tile by affixing felt or similar pads to the legs of any metal, iron, wood, or plastic furniture that will be placed on it. Exterior metal furniture, which rests on tile floors or patios, may rust and cause staining.

Use a squeegee. 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.

Overall soap scum buildup can be diminished by switching from bar soap to a liquid body wash.

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Re-seal and protect. For interior surfaces, resealing should be performed every 3-5 years. For exterior surfaces, resealing should be performed every 1-3 years. We recommend the use of a heavy-duty sealant that is low in VOC content and does not contain any hazardous materials. 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 clean easier.

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, or acid based. If you don't know what caused the stain, consider likely staining agents that may have been present. Here are some questions to consider:

Stain Removal Steps: The following stain removal steps are to be used at your own risk. Always pre-test these products before application over large areas, look for further staining or etching which can look like a cloudy or flat spot in the material. Always wear gloves and follow appropriate safety precautions.

When a spill occurs: 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. Surface stains can often be removed by cleaning with an appropriate cleaning product.

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% clear hydrogen peroxide (hair bleaching strength) and a few drops of ammonia.

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.

Fire and smoke damage

Older stones and smoke or fire stained 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.