

**The natural stone you've purchased is an investment that will give many years of beautiful service. Stone is a product of nature. Simple care will keep it looking lovely.**

### **Know your stone**

Natural stone can be classified into two general categories: siliceous stone or calcareous stone. Knowing the difference is critical when selecting cleaning products.

Marble, Travertine, and Limestone are examples of calcareous stone. They are mainly composed of calcium carbonate. Therefore, they are sensitive to acidic cleaning products.

Granite is a type of siliceous stone. It is composed mainly of silica or quartz-like particles. Granite tends to be very durable and relatively easy to clean with mild acidic cleaning solutions.

### **Stone Colors & Appearances**

Granites and marbles are quarried throughout the world. They are available in a variety of colors and varying mineral compositions. In most instances, marbles and granites can be identified by visible particles at the stone's surface.

Marble will normally show veins whereas the minerals in granite will typically appear as small flecks in the stone. Each type of stone is unique and therefore, will vary in color, marking and texture.

### **Care & Precautions**

Use coasters under all glasses especially those containing alcohol or fruit juices. Many common food and drinks contain acids that will etch or dull the surface of the marble.

Popular products that may damage stone surfaces, especially marble, include: juices, shaving cream, alcoholic beverages, soda, perfume/cologne, nail polish remover, ketchup, mustard, vinegar, hair perm chemicals, rock salt, sand, drain openers and toilet bowl cleaners.

### **Cleaning Procedures & Recommendations**

**Floor Surfaces:** Dust mop interior floors frequently using a clean non-treated rayon or sponge mop head. Always remove loose debris, i.e. sand, dirt, as their abrasiveness may scratch the natural surfaces. Do NOT use vacuum cleaners that are worn. The metal attachments and/or the plastic wheels may scratch the surface.

**Bath & Other Wet Areas:** In the bath, soap scum can be minimized by using a squeegee after each use. To remove soap scum, use a non-acidic soap scum remover.

**Vanity Top Surfaces:** Vanity tops may need to have a penetrating sealer applied. Check with your installer. A good quality marble wax can be applied to minimize water spotting.

**Food Preparation Areas:** In food preparation areas, a penetrating sealer may need to be applied to the stone. If a sealer is applied, be sure it is non toxic.

### **Making & Using a Poultice**

A poultice is a liquid cleaner or chemical mixed with a white absorbent material to form a paste about the consistency of peanut butter. The poultice is spread over the stained area to a thickness of about ¼” to 2” with a wood or plastic, covered with plastic and left to set for 24 to 48 hours. The liquid cleaner or chemical will draw out the stain into the absorbent material.

Poultice materials include kaolin, fuller’s earth, whiting, powdered chalk, white molding plaster or talc. Approximately one pound of poultice material will cover one square foot. A poultice can be prepared using white cotton balls, white paper towels, or gauze pads.

**Oil Based Stains:** Poultice with baking soda and water OR one of the powdered poultice materials and mineral spirits.

**Organic Stains:** Poultice with one of the powdered poultice materials and 12% hydrogen peroxide solution OR acetone.

**Iron Stains:** Poultice with a commercially available rust remover. Rust stains are particularly difficult to remove. You may need to call a professional.

**Copper Stains:** Poultice with one of the powdered materials and ammonia. These stains are difficult to remove. You may need to call a professional.

**Biological Stains:** Poultice with one of the poultice materials and dilute ammonia OR bleach OR hydrogen peroxide.

### **Applying the Poultice**

1. Prepare the poultice. If using powder, mix the cleaning agent or chemical to a thick paste the consistency of peanut butter. If using paper, soak in the chemical and let drain. Do not let the liquid drip.
2. Wet the stained area with distilled water.
3. Apply the poultice to the stained area about two inches thick and extend the poultice beyond the stained area by one inch. Use a wood or plastic scraper to spread the poultice evenly.
4. Cover the poultice with plastic and tape the edges to seal it.
5. Allow the poultice to dry thoroughly, usually 24 to 48 hours. The drying process is what pulls the stain out of the stone and into the poultice material. After about 24 hours, remove the plastic and allow the poultice to dry.

6. Remove the poultice from the stain, rinse with distilled water and buff dry with a soft cloth. Use the wood or plastic scraper if necessary.
7. Repeat the poultice application if the stain is not removed. It may take up to five applications for difficult stains.
8. If the surface is etched by the chemical, apply polishing powder and buff with burlap or felt buffing pad to restore the surface.

## **Spills & Stains**

Pick up spills immediately to prevent staining and etching. Blot the spill with a paper towel. Do not wipe – it will spread! Flush the area with plain water and stone soap and rinse several times. If the stain remains, a chemical poultice may be necessary.

**Stain Removal:** Identifying the type of stain on the stone surface is the key to removing it. Surface stains can often be removed by cleaning with an appropriate cleaning product. Deep-seated or stubborn stains may require using a poultice or calling a professional.

**Oil Based:** (grease, cooking oil, milk or cosmetics) an oil-based stain will darken the stone. Normally, it must be chemically dissolved so the source of the stain can be flushed or rinsed away. Clean gently with a soft, liquid cleanser with bleach OR household detergent OR ammonia OR mineral spirits OR acetone.

**Organic:** (coffee, tea, tobacco, paper, food, urine, leaves, and bark) an organic stain may cause a pinkish-brown stain and may disappear after the source if the stain is removed. Clean with 12% hydrogen peroxide (hair bleaching strength) and a few drops of ammonia.

**Metal:** (iron, rust and copper) Iron or rust stains are orange in color and follow the shape of the staining object, such as nails, bolts, screws and cans. Copper stains appear as green or muddy brown and result from the action of moisture on nearby or embedded copper items. Metal stains must be removed with a poultice. Deep-seated, rusty stains are extremely difficult to remove.

**Biological:** (algae, mildew and fungi) Clean with a diluted ammonia OR bleach OR hydrogen peroxide solution (cup per gallon of water.) **DO NOT MIX BLEACH AND AMMONIA!!**

**Ink:** (magic marker, pen and ink) Clean with bleach or hydrogen peroxide (light colored stone only) or lacquer thinner or acetone (dark stones only.)

**Paint:** Small amounts can be removed with lacquer thinner or scraped off carefully with a razor blade. Normally latex and acrylic paint will not cause staining.

**Water Spots & Rings:** (surface accumulation of hard water) Buff with dry 0000 steel wool.

**Fire & Smoke Damage:** Older stones and fire stained fireplaces may require a thorough cleaning to restore their original appearance. Commercially available “smoke removers” may save time and effort.

**Etch Marks:** These are caused by acids left on the surface of the stone. Wet the surface with clear water and sprinkle on marble polishing powder. Rub the powder onto the stone with a damp cloth or by using a buffing pad with a low speed power drill. Continue until the etch mark disappears and the marble surface shines.

**Scratches & Nicks:** Slight surface scratches may be buffed with dry 0000 steel wool. Or, refer to the section on etch marks and follow the polishing procedure. Deeper scratches and nicks in the surface of the stone should be repaired and repolished by a professional.

## **Daily Maintenance**

**Dust mop!** Dust mop! Dust mop! Sand, dirt and grit do the most damage to natural stone surfaces. Use a clean non-treated dry dust mop at least two or three times a day in high traffic areas. Walk-off mats inside and outside an entrance will help to minimize sand, dirt and grit that will scratch and dull the stone's surface.

**Cleaning:** Clean polished and unpolished natural stone surfaces daily in high traffic areas. Use a clean rayon or cotton string mop with cold or warm water and neutral cleaner. Follow cleaner directions carefully.

**Protection:** Stone floor exposed to water and spills should be protected with a silicone penetrating sealer. Table and counter tops should also be protected with a penetrating sealer and paste wax to protect the stone against water rings and spotting.

**Spills & Stains:** Blot the spill with a paper towel; do not wipe- it will spread! Flush the area with plain water and stone soap and rinse several times. If the stain remains, a chemical poultice may be necessary.

**Restoration:** With regular maintenance, natural stone surfaces may not have to be restored or refinished for several years. But when it is time for a new life for your natural stone surfaces, call upon a professional in stone restoration and refinishing.

## **Maintenance Tips**

DO- Dust mop floors frequently.

DO- Clean floors with stone soap.

DO- Blot up spills immediately.

DO- Thoroughly rinse and dry the surface after washing.

DO- Protect floor surfaces with non-slip mats or area rugs, and countertop surfaces with coasters, trivets and placemats.

DO- Call a stone professional about restoration problems.

DO NOT- Use vinegar as a cleaner; the acid will etch the stone.

DO NOT- Use cleaners that contain acid such as bath room cleaners, grout cleaners or tub and tile cleaners.

DO NOT- Use abrasive cleaners such as dry cleaners or soft cleaners.

DO NOT- Mix bleach and ammonia; this will create a toxic and lethal gas.