

What to do about holes in travertine tile

Q. We had travertine tile installed 1 1/2 years ago and I had a hole open up and it is gradually getting bigger and now a 2nd hole has opened up too. Don't know what has caused it? Need to know how to fix it? We had it sealed when it was done... How often should you reseal also? I cannot reach the installer any longer.....

A. This is a common and frequent problem with travertine for the following reason: Travertine has holes that are filled at the factory with a cement based filler. Over time these fillers have a tendency to erode out. They can be repaired simply by refilling. This is something that should be done by a qualified restoration contractor for optimal results.

As for re-sealing, there's a misconception that travertine is a very porous stone, while in fact it is among the densest calcite-based stones available. It absorbs very little when hone finished and virtually nothing at all when polished! It may never need to be resealed.

Do this test: pour some water on the stone and let it sit for a few minutes before wiping it away. If a darker spot remains where the water was (indicating the stone absorbed the water) then you should have it sealed.

If you do determine it should be resealed, have your holes filled, and let the filler cure for at least a couple of days, and then seal it with one application only, making sure that the impregnator/sealer is formulated for dense stones (not porous), or else it will not get absorbed by the stone. Finally, and very importantly, make sure to not leave any excess sealer on the surface of the stone.

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