

How can I remove mud stains from Travertine patio?

Q. Hi! We have outdoor noce travertine - unsealed - on our pool patio deck. We had a "dog party" last week and one dog loved to swim. He repeatedly jumped in our pool and then ran through our plant beds, tracking mud all over our travertine. The mud won't come off with water or hosing. How can dirt stain like this?? Can you give us any recommendations on how to clean the stains? We have read about many: pressure cleaning, Dawn detergent, hydrogen peroxide, but don't know which one is the best and safest. Thanks...

A. Unfortunately, it may not be just the dirt. There could be chlorine residue, possibly fertilizer from the plants, etc. However, it should come off with a good alkaline cleaner and some elbow grease or water pressure. You don't want to use dish soap because it would be a bear to rinse it completely off. If even a little bit of soap residue remained, it would attract soiling. If after you do your cleaning, some small stained areas remain, you can try using a poultice with hydrogen peroxide on those spots.

Do avoid using acidic cleaners so you don't etch the stone. Any good quality stone safe cleaner should prove helpful. If it still doesn't come clean, I would recommend that you have a professional come out. They will have the equipment and brushes and know-how to get it done.

You mentioned that this was 'unsealed' travertine. Travertine is a very dense stone and most often does not need to be sealed. However, because the mud or something in it did apparently penetrate the surface and stained the stone, it would be a good idea to test the stone to see if it should be sealed.

But first a caveat. I am assuming from your description that the stone is installed on a raised platform such as a deck or balcony. If it is directly on the ground, you don't want to seal it because you don't want to impede the stone

from being able to breathe or preventing the moisture from below to escape.

Ok, so assuming it is not directly on the ground: do this simple test to determine if your stone should be sealed. Pour a few drops of water on the stone and let it sit for up to 1/2 hour or so, then wipe the water away. If after a second or two a darkened 'wet' spot remains, then that would suggest your stone is absorbent and you should have it sealed.

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