

How to clean off spots and ring-shaped marks on marble?

Q. I have a problem with a marble tabletop and need to get some advice on what may have caused it. The marble has lots of spots plus a few ring-shaped marks. The marks cannot be cleaned off. The table was delivered in pristine condition. Is it possible for something to be amiss with the stone, or is it caused by the lifestyle in my home? The stone has nice coating and just a lightly polished finish.

A. It sounds like you're dealing with etch damage, which is quite common with marble surfaces that get a lot of use. If the area is small and not too severe (you can't feel roughness with your fingertips), then you can probably resolve the problem by using a good quality marble polish and a white cloth. Be sure to ask your professional stone and tile restoration contractor for product recommendations.

For the record, polishing out minor etch damage is technically different from cleaning the stone. When you clean natural stone, you're removing surface-level dirt, dust, spills, or residues — things that are on top of the surface. A stone-safe cleaner (pH-neutral) or warm water and a soft cloth are usually enough to remove contaminants on the surface of stone. We recommended polishing since you said that cleaning does not remove the marks. This is typical of etch damage.

Widespread or significant etch damage will require professional stone honing and polishing services. The honing will take off a very thin layer of stone, virtually erasing damage. The polishing helps restore the shine. In fact, you can request whatever type of finish you want, from matte to semi-polished to a highly reflective, glossy finish. To find a vetted PRO in your area, visit www.surfacecarepros.com and click on **Find a PRO**.

For more simple but important care instructions, download our free [Stone and Tile Care Guide](#).

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