

## Marble shower etched by bathroom cleaners? Here's what to do.

**Q. I just finished putting in a new black marble shower wall... literally giving it its first cleaning. I had no idea that some bathroom cleaners would immediately etch into it. Please, for the love of God, tell me there's something I can do... it looks horrible.**

**A.** We're so sorry for your unfortunate mishap. Don't worry, though. Natural stone is unique in that it can usually be completely restored to a like-new condition after surface damage happens.

If the etched area is large or the surface feels rough to the touch, then professional restoration is likely the best option. Roughness usually indicates that there's significant chemical damage on the surface. A professional stone restoration specialist can hone the stone to remove the damage and then polish to restore the luster of the finish. They can make the finish of the repaired area look identical that of the surrounding stone. This is especially important when large sections are affected or when the damage is visibly uneven.

Believe it or not, there's an upside to this situation. Since your marble surface is already being worked on, this is the perfect time to rethink its finish. Changing the finish now adds minimal effort and cost. So go ahead and select the finish you want—whether it's a soft matte, a classic honed look, or a high-gloss polished surface. Since the marble is already being restored, it's the ideal moment to customize it.

Just so you know, you're not alone in this conundrum. Etching on marble is commonly caused by acidic or harsh cleaning products. In shower environments, many everyday bathroom cleaners—including tile sprays, limescale removers, mold and mildew sprays, and even some all-purpose bathroom foams—contain ingredients that are acidic. While these may be safe

for ceramic or porcelain surfaces, they react chemically with calcium carbonate in marble, resulting in dull spots, rings, streaks, or even a chalky white appearance. Unfortunately, this reaction happens almost instantly and can be permanent unless properly addressed.

If the affected area is small or the surface still feels smooth, then the etching may be only superficial—affecting the polish, but not the stone itself. In these cases, you may be able to restore the finish using a marble polishing powder or an etch remover specifically designed for natural stone. The thing is, your current stone finish should be polished if you plan to try this method. Here's why. If your stone finish is matte, then using a polishing compound may result in a spot that is free of acid etch damage, but more polished than the surrounding stone. Polishing compounds are formulated to gently repolish the surface and can often bring back the shine with minimal effort on stone that already has a polished finish. Make sure to use a high quality product recommended by your stone and tile professional. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and avoid household remedies, as they may worsen the damage.

If you do not already have a stone PRO, we recommend you contact one, as your marble shower will need professional attention from time to time. To find a vetted PRO in your area, visit [www.surfacecarepros.com](http://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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