

How to remove stubborn coffee stains from porcelain tile?

Q. I spilled some coffee on my tile, and it won't come off. I tried floor cleaning solution, vinegar and water, vinegar and baking soda, watered bleach, and hydrogen peroxide. Nothing seems to work. I am pretty sure it is porcelain tile.

A. Coffee contains tannin, which can leave a yellow to brown stain. If left on stone long enough, the stain can penetrate deeply into porous surfaces and be nearly impossible to remove. Fortunately for you, porcelain, especially glazed porcelain, is less likely to absorb much of the staining agent. If your tile is glazed porcelain, the discoloration is likely only on the surface or grout lines. If it is unglazed porcelain, the pores and microscopic texture may hold some residue.

First things first. Because you have used so many different types of cleaners, rinse the area very thoroughly and allow it to dry before trying anything else. Always follow the manufacturer's safety instructions when using cleaners and chemicals, and never mix ammonia with bleach.

We can suggest a few stain removal methods. Hopefully one of these will work.

NOTE: Follow the manufacturer's safety precautions when using chemicals.

First, purchase hydrogen peroxide, not the kind you buy at the grocery store, but a stronger type, sold at beauty supply stores. The one you want is 30/40 volume. Pour it directly on the stain. Add just a few drops of clear ammonia. Let it sit until the bubbling reaction stops, then rinse the area thoroughly.
NOTE: Do not use ammonia alone, as this can set the stain permanently.

If this first method does not remove the stain, you can try a poultice application. A poultice draws the stain out of the stone over time. For detailed, step-by-step instructions on how to mix and apply a poultice correctly, check out our free [Stain Management App](#). For your chemical poultice ingredient, use the same hydrogen peroxide mentioned earlier. NOTE: If the stain fades at all, that means the poultice is working. Just keep reapplying the poultice until the stain disappears completely.

If the stain remains after peroxide poultice application(s), you can prepare a poultice using mineral spirits instead. This approach is generally more effective when the coffee had cream or sugar, since those ingredients can leave oily or greasy deposits. For stains caused by plain black coffee, hydrogen peroxide treatments are typically more successful than mineral spirits.

If none of these steps succeed, the discoloration may not be a removable stain but rather an etch or a permanent discoloration in the sealer or surface. At that point, the best option is to contact a professional stone and tile restoration contractor who has specialized tools and polishing compounds. In most cases, stains can be removed. To find a vetted PRO in your area, visit www.surfacecarepros.com and click on **Find a PRO**.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Fred Hueston is the Chief Technical Director at SurfaceCarePROS.com and Director at StoneForensics.com. He is also the author of [Stone and Tile Restoration: The Manual](#), a comprehensive online manual for stone and tile restoration contractors. [[Learn more about Fred.](#)]

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