

How to remove a puppy poo stain on limestone?

Q. My puppy pooped on our limestone hearth, and it left a stain. What should I use to remove the stain? A vinegar and peroxide solution?

A. Vinegar might seem like a natural cleaner, but it's actually one of the worst things to use on limestone because of its acidic properties. Limestone contains calcium carbonate, which reacts with acids. When vinegar or any acidic cleaner touches the surface, it can cause etching. This is a type of damage where the surface becomes dull, rough, or discolored. Etch damage isn't something that can be wiped away. It permanently changes the finish of the stone.

Start by gently cleaning the area with a stone-safe, pH-neutral cleaner and a soft, white cloth or sponge. These cleaners are specifically formulated not to damage natural stone and will safely remove surface residue without making the stain worse.

Pet poop is an organic stain. Organic stains can often be lightened or removed with a peroxide-based treatment. In this case, you'll want to use a peroxide poultice, that is, a paste made from hydrogen peroxide and an absorbent material like baking flour or diatomaceous earth. 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. Be sure to use the right strength of peroxide. Look for 30 or 40 volume clear hydrogen peroxide, the type sold at beauty supply stores. The regular household peroxide from the drugstore is only about 3.5 volume and too weak to be effective on stone.

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

You may need to repeat the poultice process several times for deeper stains. Once the stain is removed, contact a professional stone restoration contractor to apply a sealer appropriate for your stone. This can help inhibit future staining.

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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