

Is it possible to remove a bleach stain from a green slate worktop?

Q. Is it possible to remove a bleach stain from a green slate worktop? This is a Cumbrian slate from the north of England.

A. Yes, it is possible to remove a discoloration on slate that was caused by bleach.

To be clear, bleach doesn't actually stain stone. Bleach is a high-alkaline substance that can chemically react with stone. It can strip color from the surface or lighten the appearance of stone. It can etch the surface, leave a residue or haze that looks like a stain but is actually surface damage or chemical residue. If your slate had a topical sealer or coating, the bleach may have stripped that finish away.

Here's how to approach this problem. First, determine whether the discoloration is a residue or haze deposited on the surface of the stone or if there is true color loss. If the spot looks cloudy, chalky, or textured, it's likely residue or surface etching. If it looks lighter but the surface texture is unchanged, the bleach probably pulled color from the stone or its finish.

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

For residue or haze, clean the area with a pH-neutral stone cleaner or a mild stone-safe alkaline cleaner. Rinse thoroughly and dry. If the residue persists, gently rub it with a fine non-scratch pad and the cleaner. This usually restores the appearance of the stone.

If the bleach actually lightened the stone, you may be able to restore the appearance of the surface by using a stone color enhancer made for natural

slate. This darkens the surface slightly and often hides lightened spots.

If the bleach stripped a topical sealer or coating off your slate, reapply the same sealer or finishing product. This can often even out the appearance of the stone.

If your DIY efforts do not resolve the problem, hire a professional stone restoration contractor. To find a vetted **PRO** in your area, visit www.surfacecarepros.com and click on **Find a PRO**. Your PRO can hone and refinish the area to blend it in.

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