

How to remove a dried polyurethane spill on granite?

Q. Started a project of refinishing my kitchen table. I put polyurethane on the table top. I must have spilled some of the poly on my granite. It has hardened. How do I remove from my granite? Thank you!

A. If the polyurethane spill is large, thick, or in a very visible spot, you might want to skip the DIY methods and hire a professional stone restoration contractor. To find a vetted PRO in your area, visit www.surfacecarepros.com and click on **Find a PRO**. They have the tools to remove the hardened finish without leaving dull spots or creating new marks that then need polishing. If the granite is honed, leathered, or very dark, or if the polyurethane seems deeply bonded to the surface, that's a good sign that a stone restoration contractor should handle the job. They can remove the poly cleanly and blend the finish so the repair is not noticeable.

Sometimes a thin film of polyurethane looks worse when dust or dirt is stuck to it. A light cleaning might enable you to see exactly what you're dealing with. Clean the area with a pH-neutral, stone-safe cleaner to remove any surface dust or residue.

If the polyurethane is raised, you can try carefully lifting it with a plastic scraper. Work slowly at a low angle to avoid marking the granite. Don't use metal blades, because they can leave marks or scratches.

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

If scraping alone doesn't work, you can use a solvent to soften the polyurethane. **NOTE:** Solvents can dissolve granite sealer, but most types of granite will be unaffected by solvents. Make sure the area is well ventilated.

Apply a small amount of mineral spirits to a cloth, press it onto the polyurethane for a minute or two, and then scrape again. Use small amounts of mineral spirits so it doesn't run across the countertop. For thicker drips, you can place a small paper towel dampened with mineral spirits over the spot and cover it with plastic wrap for around 15 to 20 minutes. This will give the mineral spirits time to soften the polyurethane without soaking the surrounding area. After removing it, scrape gently and repeat if needed.

You may acetone instead of mineral spirits for quicker results, but this chemical is more harsh and more likely to result in problems, such as stripped sealer, a dull finish, or accidentally spreading the polyurethane to a wider area.

Once the polyurethane is removed, clean the area with a stone-safe cleaner again. If the granite looks a little more absorbent or dull where you used the solvent, you may need to reapply a penetrating stone sealer to that spot. Alternatively, a PRO can select and properly apply the most appropriate sealer.

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