

How to remove wine stain, clean, and seal limestone floors?

Q. How do I remove a wine stain from my limestone floors. Also, how do I clean and seal my floors? I've had them for 10 years and they need cleaning in high traffic areas.

A. Limestone is a beautiful but delicate calcium-based stone, and its porous structure means it readily absorbs liquids, especially anything high in pigment or acidity. Red wine, in particular, is a challenge for limestone because it contains natural plant compounds called tannins that are not only deeply pigmented, but also chemically capable of bonding with the stone. It takes very little time at all for red wine to leave a stubborn mark on limestone. General cleaning methods usually aren't enough to tackle a red wine stain. Homeowners often reach for detergent and water, not realizing it can actually set tannin stains in stone.

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

Here are some basic cleaning instructions to start with. Use acetone, the kind you can purchase at a paint supply store, not nail polish remover (unless it says 100% acetone) to clean the stain. Apply it using a clean white cloth. This will help break down residues without introducing water. Dab or blot the area. Do not spread the stain around. Switch out fresh, clean cloths as the stain lifts. Keep doing this until the entire stain is removed.

If the stain remains, your next step will be to use a poultice. 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](#). Your poultice ingredients will be a quality poultice powder or diatomaceous earth mixed with 20–50% hydrogen peroxide,

available at beauty supply stores. Don't use regular, brown-bottle hydrogen peroxide. It isn't strong enough. The peroxide in your poultice will break down the wine's tannins while the dry ingredient pulls the contaminants out of the stone's pores.

For particularly stubborn or older stains, poultice with a solvent such as mineral spirits.

Regarding your question about general cleaning and sealing, you can find simple but important care instructions in our free, downloadable [Stone and Tile Care Guide](#). The appearance and cleanliness of high-traffic areas will definitely improve with a professional deep cleaning and resealing will help inhibit staining. To find a vetted PRO in your area, visit www.surfacecarepros.com and click on **Find a PRO**.

Homeowners who prefer to handle maintenance themselves should use only pH-neutral stone cleaners for routine care, avoid anything acidic or abrasive, and reseal with a penetrating sealer specifically designed for calcite-based stone.

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