

How do I get rid of white buildup on my marble shower seat?

Q. I have an (intentionally) distressed marble seat in my shower. After years of use, there is a build up of white on top of it. How do I get rid of it? Thanks.

A. What you're describing is likely soap scum, mineral deposits from hard water, or efflorescence. These are all common causes of marble turning white in wet areas over time.

Here's how you can tell what's causing the white buildup on your marble. Look closely at its appearance, texture, and location.

Soap scum usually feels slippery or filmy and sits on top of the surface, often in areas where water mixes with soap or shampoo.

Mineral deposits are a hard, chalky, or crusty white layer.

Efflorescence is a powdery, white dust. It usually brushes off easily but can recur if the stone is exposed to ongoing moisture.

If the white substance comes off easily when scrubbed with a soft, damp cloth, it's likely soap scum or efflorescence.

If it's hard and resistant, it's probably a mineral deposit.

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

The following methods can be used to remove the white buildup, whether soap scum, efflorescence, or mineral deposits.

Use a soft nylon brush to remove loose powdery residue. Rinse with warm water. Apply a pH-neutral, stone-safe cleaner. Allow it to dwell for five to ten minutes. Use a soft brush or non-abrasive pad to gently scrub the surface. Soap scum should lift easily, but if you're dealing with efflorescence or mineral deposits, this step will simply loosen the buildup.

To tackle stubborn mineral deposits you may need to use gentle abrasion with a stiff, nylon brush. Work slowly and carefully to avoid damaging the distressed texture. Chemical cleaners can be used only if recommended for marble. Do not use acids, because they can etch the stone. Rinse thoroughly and dry with a microfiber cloth. Repeat this process as needed.

Efflorescence may reappear, because it is caused by water carrying salts through the marble. Obviously, the stone will be exposed to moisture in a wet environment like a shower, but you may want to check for leaks that introduce moisture under the stone. Squeegee and dry the seat between uses.

It may be worthwhile to hire a stone restoration professional to remove the buildup on your marble shower seat. They have professional tools and solutions that can accomplish more than DIY methods, leaving your shower seat in like-new condition. To find a vetted PRO in your area, visit www.surfacecarepros.com and click on **Find a PRO**.

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