The STONE COUNTERTOP Care Guide

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WELCOME

Natural stone—especially calcite-based varieties like marble, travertine, limestone, and some slates—has a delicate chemical composition that can be harmed by both improper cleaning solutions and acidic spills (from substances like fruit juice or vinegar). One of the most common reasons for residential and commercial stone restoration is the use of unsuitable cleaning products. We frequently receive calls from distressed customers who followed non-professional advice—using vinegar and water or standard bathroom cleaners—only to find etched surfaces or rough, white spots on their marble or other sensitive stones.

Many natural stones are also porous, meaning they can become stained if left unprotected. Proper sealing is essential for most stone countertops. In this guide, we'll show you the best practices for maintaining and caring for your natural stone surfaces, helping ensure they remain beautiful and long-lasting.

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The Stone Countertop

Care Guide

Contents

COUNTERTOP CARE

Using vinegar and water, glass cleaner or water with a little dish soap are common but erroneous recommendations that you may hear. Vinegar, being acidic, will etch many stone types. Some glass cleaners may turn out to be too harsh to both the stone and the sealer (if one has been applied). Water and dish soap can leave a film that will build up. (Wash your hands with dish soap and then rinse them under running water; observe how long and how much water it will take to rinse properly. To get the same rinsing result–which is the only one acceptable–for your counter tops, you would have to rinse them with a garden hose!)

Your stone countertops may need to be sealed. To see if yours do, see page 8.

Caring for your countertops and vanities is really quite simple. Just refer to the following Do's and Don'ts.

Countertop Care Do's and Don'ts

DO use coasters under drinking glasses–particularly those containing alcohol or citrus juices–to avoid etching.

DON'T place hot items directly on the stone surface. Use trivets or mats under hot dishes. Many stones can withstand the heat, but some stone, especially if it has been resined, can be damaged. Play it safe.

DO use place mats under china, silver or other objects that can scratch the surface.

DO clean your kitchen countertop regularly with an appropriate stone-safe cleaner such as EASY OXY MULTI-SURFACE CLEANER, an oxygenated, non-abrasive cleaner that is safe to use on stainless steel, stone, other hard surfaces, and fabrics as well. Removes soils such as grease, ink, crayon, lipstick, coffee, soda, tea, Kool-Aid, blood, pet accidents, juice, grass stains, red wine and more. Use a higher concentration near cooking and eating areas and diluted with water for less demanding situations, such as areas of the countertop far from cooking and eating areas.

DON'T use any care products unless the label specifies it is safe for natural stone.

DON'T let any spills sit too long on the surface of your countertop. Blot up spills as soon as you can. But, if you do have dried-on spills ...

DON'T use any green or brown scouring pads for dried-on spills. The presence of silicon carbide grits in them may scratch even the toughest granite. You can safely use the sponges lined with a silvery net or other plastic scouring pads. REMEMBER: It's very important to spray the cleaner and let it sit for a while to moisten and soften the soil before scrubbing. LET THE CLEANING AGENT DO THE WORK! It will make your job much easier and will be more effective.

DO have your countertops sealed, as needed. For marble and other acid-sensitive stones, ask your stone care pro about anti-etch treatment solutions.

Vanity Tops Do's and Don'ts

DO clean your stone vanity tops regularly with a stone-safe, soap-free neutral cleaner such as EASY OXY MULTI-SURFACE CLEANER.

DON'T take chances with cleaning your mirrors over your marble vanity tops with a regular glass cleaner. The over-spray could spill onto the marble surface and may damage it.

DO clean your mirror with your neutral cleaner. Even if you over-spray it, nothing bad is going to happen to your marble. TIP: Rubbing alcohol works wonders for cleaning mirrors and won't harm marble.

DON'T use any powder cleanser or–worse yet–any cream cleanser on your stone.

DON'T do your nails on your marble vanity top or color or perm your hair near it.

DON'T place any wet bottles on it (perfume, after-shave, etc.). Keep your cosmetics and fragrances in one of those pretty vanity trays (be sure that the legs of the tray have felts tips) or other appropriate container.

DO make sure your stone tops are properly sealed and protected. (See page 9.)

DO monitor your caulk lines periodically and address any problem immediately.

SEALING AND PROTECTING STONE

Stone is Porous

All stones are, more or less, absorbent. One may say that diamonds or gemstones are not absorbent. That's right, but a gemstone is not actually a stone. It is actually made of one crystal of one single mineral.

Other (less noble) stones are a composition of many crystals, either of the same mineral, or of different minerals bonded together. The "space" in between these molecules of minerals is mostly what determines the porosity of a stone. The porosity of stone varies greatly, and so does, of course, their absorbency. Some of them are extremely dense, therefore their porosity is minimal. What this translates into is the fact that the absorbency of such types of stone is so marginal that–by all practical intents and purposes–it can be considered irrelevant. Some other stones present a medium porosity, and others at the very end of the spectrum are extremely porous. Because of their inherent porosity, many stones can absorb liquids, if not sealed, and if such liquids are staining agents, a true stain will occur.

There are a variety of sealers and protective treatments available for stone. Some reduce porosity with no visible change to the look of the stone. Some enhance color. All of them inhibit staining. Anti-etch treatments are available for acid-sensitive stone countertops. Contact your stone restoration pro to learn more about which type of sealing and protective treatments will fit your needs.

Impregnating Sealer

All stone is porous, some more than others. For most stone–especially very porous stones like hone-finished limestone or certain granites–sealing is highly recommended. The application of an impregnating sealer to highly-polished marble and travertine, or polished high-density granites, may not be necessary–but when in doubt, consider this: it doesn't hurt to have it sealed. If it turns out that sealing the stone does, in fact, prevent some staining, you've saved yourself the cost of a stain removal service.

What does an impregnating sealer do?

Contrary to what your perception may be when you hear the word sealer, impregnating sealers are below-surface products that will not alter in any way, shape or form the original finish produced by the factory or offer protection from etching. They will only go inside the stone by being absorbed by it (assuming that the stone is porous enough to allow this to happen) and will clog its pores, thus reducing its natural absorbency rate. This will help prevent possible accidental spills of staining agents from being absorbed by the stone.

How many applications are needed?

For some stones that are more porous than others, one application of impregnator/sealer may not be enough. But how will you know?

When sealer can no longer be absorbed by the stone, the stone is adequately sealed. On granites that need sealing, at least two applications are recommended. Very porous granites, sandstone, quartzite, etc., may require three or more applications.

How long will it last?

There is no absolute rule of thumb when it comes to the durability of any sealer. Generally speaking, in an interior environment, most quality impregnating sealers will last 2-5 years or more. Environment and usage plays a big role. Stones exposed to intense heat or direct sunlight, as well as surfaces that are subject to a lot of use or abuse, will probably need to be re-sealed more often. Some "granites" are so porous that no sealer will do a satisfactory job sealing them 100% for an extended amount of time.

When is it time to reseal? The simple DIY sealer test.

To find out if your stone is perfectly sealed, pour some water on it and wait for approximately 20 minutes to half an hour, then wipe it dry and wait for a minute or two. If the surface of the stone did not darken, it means that the stone is still adequately sealed. Be sure to test various areas, especially those areas that get more use.

Sealing: DIY or Call in a PRO?

Is sealing a job for you, or should you hire a qualified professional to do it for you? Consider the following pros and cons. You save on labor costs by doing it yourself. However, consider the magnitude of the job and how comfortable you are with a DIY project. Has the countertop been thoroughly and completely cleaned? If not, you take the chance of sealing in dirt and debris. Also, keep in mind that sealer not completely removed from the surface of stone may cause problems, including a haze on the stone that may develop as the sealer dries completely. Once it is dried on the surface, sealer can be very difficult to remove. Individual sealers perform differently in various environments and on certain stones. Hiring a PRO to do the job may end up saving you in the end. Your PRO will know which is the best sealer for the job and will get the job done efficiently.

Etch Protection Treatments

Specialty treatments are available now for acid-sensitive stone, which means you can have the most elegant marble in places that would otherwise not be recommended. The calcium in marble and certain other stone types undergoes a chemical reaction when coming into contact with acidic substances–lemon juice, vinegar, wine or mixed drinks, cleaners, and the like. The damage is referred to as etching and typically appears as a dull spot on the stone finish. Stone countertops, bar tops, restaurant tables, vanity tops, desks and similar surfaces that see a lot of use are especially subject to etching. Today, very effective high-tech treatments are available for even the most acid-sensitive stones that provide an invisible barrier to protect the surface of the stone while still allowing the stone to breathe. These treatments also have the added benefit of providing protection from stains. Ask your stone PRO for more information.

LET'S TALK ABOUT STAINS

An Important Rule of Thumb About Stains

A true stain is always darker than the surrounding material. If it appears as a lighter color, it is not a stain, but either a mark of corrosion (etching) made by an acid or a caustic mark (bleaching) made by a strong base (alkali). In other words, a lighter color "stain" is ***always*** surface damage and has no relation whatsoever with the absorbency rate of the damaged material–stone or otherwise. ***There is not a single exception to this rule.***

Let's start by saying that a stain is a discoloration. So far, so good. The fact is, however, that not all discolorations are stains. To illustrate the point, let's take, for example, a piece of common fabric. Fabric is typically absorbent. Therefore, if we spill some liquid onto it, the material will absorb it. If it is only water, it will leave a temporary "stain." Once the water evaporates, the fabric will go back to its original color. But, if coffee or cooking oil is spilled on the fabric, a stain will occur, because the fabric will absorb the staining agent and change its color in a permanent way–unless we do something to remove the agent from the fabric.

On the other hand, if bleach is spilled on that same fabric, a discoloration will occur, but it can hardly be defined as a stain, because it is actually permanent damage to the dye that originally gave the fabric its color.

As with the fabric example, when it comes to natural stone there are stains that are true stains and there are "stains" that are actually discolorations caused by something else. A stain is a discoloration of the stone produced by a staining agent that was actually

absorbed by the stone. Other "discolorations" have nothing to do with the porosity (absorbency) of the stone, rather they are a result of damage to the stone surface. All those "stains" that look like "water spots" or "water rings" are actually marks of corrosion (etches) created by some chemically active liquid (mostly–but not necessarily limited to–acids), which had a chance to come in contact with the stone. All calcite-based stones, such as marble, limestone, onyx, travertine, etc., are sensitive to acids. Therefore, they will etch readily (within a few seconds). Many slates will also etch, and so will a few "granites" (those that instead of being a 100% silicate rock are mixed with a certain percentage of calcite).

Etching and "Water Stains" or "Rings"

Sometimes, marks of corrosion (etch marks) that an acidic substance leaves behind may look like water stains or rings, but they are neither stains, nor were they generated by water. The surface damage is exclusively related to the chemical makeup of the stone, which has nothing to do with how porous or absorbent the stone is.

Polished marble, travertine, onyx, limestone, etc., are all calcite-based stones that chemically react with acidic substances. Once acid makes contact with the calcite in the stone, a mark of corrosion appears on the surface. The mark may look like a water stain or ring, but it is actually etch damage. Do not try to remove the "stain" by applying a poultice. This would be a useless exercise, since the blemish is not a stain.

So, how do you remove a chemical etch-mark, which, as previously mentioned, is not a stain but surface damage? You don't. In fact, an etch mark can be effectively compared to–and defined as–a shallow chemical scratch. A scratch is some-

thing missing, like a groove in the stone, and nobody can remove something that is already missing. It would be like trying to remove a hole from a doughnut! To resolve this problem, the material around the groove must be removed and made level with the deepest point of the scratch.

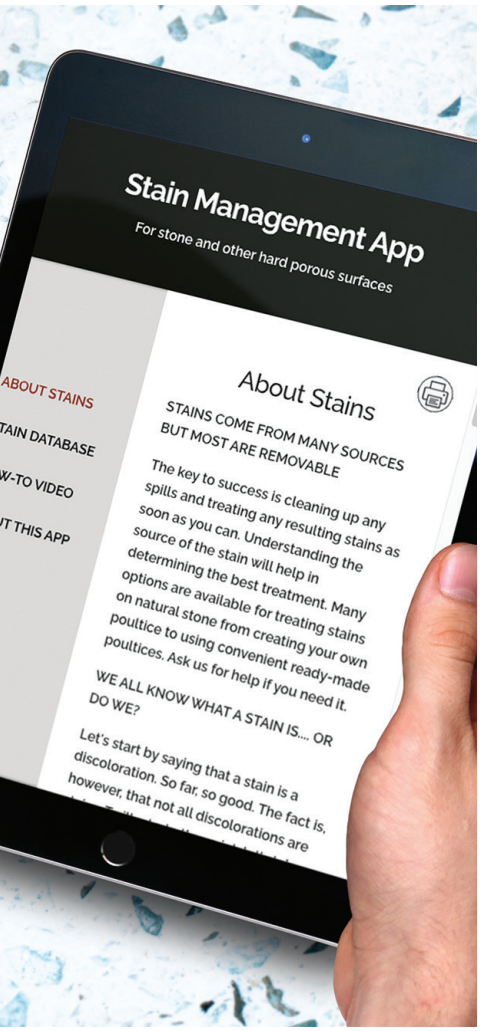
Is this a task for the non-professional? The answer is maybe. If your stone is polished marble, travertine or onyx, then there's hope. If your stone is marble or travertine that has a honed or soft matte finish, hone-finished slate (like a chalkboard), or mixed "granite," you probably should hire a professional stone restoration contractor. If your stone has a cleft-finish, for example, slate with a rippled surface texture, then nobody can actually do anything about the etch damage, other than attempting to mask it by applying a good-quality stone color enhancer.

While marble and other calcite-based stones are vulnerable to acids, granite is much more resistant. In fact, the only acid that will etch polished granite is hydrofluoric acid, commonly found in rust removers.

If the etch is light (the depth is undetectable by the naked eye and it looks and feels smooth), then a polishing compound for marble will work quite well–without requiring the experience of a professional. In this case, no specific tools are needed other than a piece of terry cloth.

Combination "Stains"

You may have a combination of a stain with etching. For example, if some red wine is spilled on an absorbent polished limestone, then the acidity of the wine (acetic acid) will etch (corrode) the surface on contact, while the dark color of the wine will stain the stone by being absorbed by it. In such a case, the stain can be removed by applying a poultice made with hydrogen peroxide (learn more on page 13), and then etch damage can be repaired by refinishing the surface.



Video How-to

For an interactive stain app featuring a how-to video and detailed, step-by-step instructions to treat virtually every kind of stain you may encounter, visit the **Caring For It** section at beyondstonesolutions.com.

HOW TO REMOVE A STAIN

The Poulticing Method

What's a poultice? It is the combination of a very absorbent medium (it must be more absorbent than the stone) mixed with a chemical. Since the chemical will be interacting with the stain, selecting the appropriate chemical for the type of stain to be removed is important. The concept is to re-absorb the stain out of the stone. The chemical will attack the stain inside the stone, and the absorbent agent will pull both the chemical and the stain out together. The absorbent agent can be the same all the time, regardless of the nature of the stain to be removed, but the chemical will be different, depending on the nature of the staining agent.

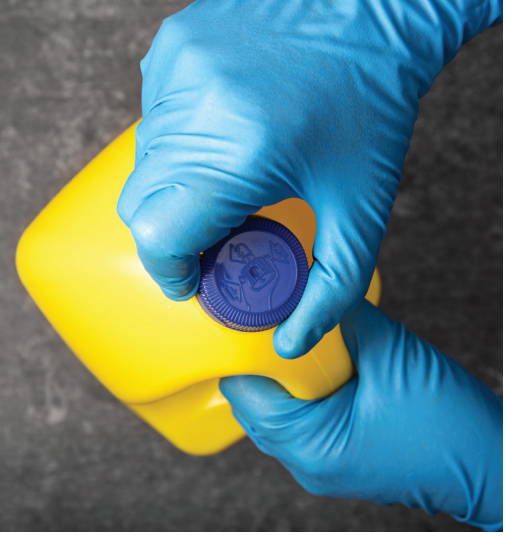
The absorbent part of a poultice could be (in order of preference): talcum powder (baby powder) or a paper towel, and for larger projects, diatomaceous earth (the white stuff inside your swimming pool filter), or household flour.

As we said before, the chemical must be selected in accordance with the nature of the staining agent.

Important note: The following stain removal instructions are for natural stone, NOT Quartz Surface, which is a man-made material. Do not poultice Quartz with any solvent as it may cause a solvent burn (damage to the resin that the top is made with – looks like etching). If there is a solvent burn on Quartz, refinishing will be needed.

There Are Five Major Classifications of Stains:

1. Organic stains (i.e. coffee, tea, coloring agents of dark sodas and other drinks, gravy, mustard, etc.).



2. Inorganic stains (i.e. ink, color dyes, dirt–water spilling over from flower or plant pots, etc.)

3. Oily stains (i.e. any type of vegetable oil, certain mineral oils–motor oil, butter, margarine, melted animal fat, etc.)

4. Biological stains (i.e. mildew, mold, etc.)

5. Metal stains (i.e. rust, copper, etc.)

Choose the Right Chemical

The chemical of choice for both organic and inorganic stains is hydrogen peroxide, but not the kind you might buy in a drugstore, which is too weak at 3.5 volume. Use 30/40 volume hydrogen peroxide, the clear type. It is available at your local beauty salon or you can order it online.

Sometimes, in the case of ink stains, denatured alcohol (or rubbing alcohol) may turn out to be more effective.

For oily stains, our favorite is acetone, which is available at any hardware or paint store. Do not use nail polish remover, because it may contain other chemicals or no acetone whatsoever.

For biological stains, use regular household bleach or a mildew stain remover designated safe for stone.

For metal/rust stains, our favorite is **MAR GEL**, a product used and recommended by restoration contractors.

Preparing Your Poultice

Wear rubber gloves at all times while handling chemicals! You will need a chemical and an absorbent medium.

1. Using a metal spatula or spoon, mix the chemical and the absorbent medium in a glass or stainless steel bowl. The

idea is to form a paste that is just a tad thinner than peanut butter, but not runny. Add more water if your mixture is too thick or more absorbent medium if it is too runny. If you are attempting to remove a metal (rust) stain with MAR GEL, be sure to follow the directions on the product.

2. Apply the poultice onto the stain, going past the edge of the stain on all sides by approximately 1/2 inch and keeping it as thick as possible (at least 1/4 inch).

3. Cover the poultice with plastic wrap, tape it down using painter's masking tape, and poke a few holes in the plastic.

4. Leave the whole thing alone for at least 24 hours, then remove the plastic wrap.

5. Allow the poultice to dry thoroughly. It may take from a couple of hours to a couple of days or better, depending on the chemical. Do NOT peek! This is the phase during which the chemical that was forced into the stone, together (hopefully) with the staining agent, is being re-absorbed by the absorbing agent. You do NOT want to interrupt this process.

6. Once the poultice is completely dry, scrape it off the surface of the stone with a plastic scraper or the flat edge of a straight razor blade. Clean the area with a little squirt of neutral cleaner, then wipe it dry with a clean rag or a sheet of paper towel.

7. If the stain is gone, your mission is over! If some of it is still there, repeat the whole procedure (especially in the case of oily stains, that can take up to 4 or 5 attempts). There are several reasons why a stain will not lighten at all after poulticing. You may have made a mistake while evaluating the nature of the stain and consequently used the wrong chemical). The stain may be too old and permanently set. It is also possible that the spot is not actually a stain but some other type of discoloration.

7 POTENTIAL STONE PROBLEMS
AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM

Marble, granite, limestone and other decorative stones are durable materials that will last a lifetime. However, if stone is not installed correctly or properly cared for, problems may result that will shorten its life. The following are the most common problems that may occur:

1. Loss of Shine

The loss of the high polish on certain marble and granite can be attributed to wear. This is especially true of marble, since it is much softer than granite.

2. Etching

The dull, whitish spot created when liquids containing acids are spilled on marble is called etching. Marble and limestone etch very easily. Granite is very acid-resistant and will rarely etch. To prevent etching, avoid using cleaners and chemicals that contain acids. Light etching can be removed with a little effort and a good marble polishing compound. Deep etching or large areas will require the services of a restoration professional.

3. Stains

Some stone surfaces can become stained easily if they are not properly sealed. Many foods, drinks, ink, oil and rust can cause stains. Most stains on stone can be removed. For some more difficult stains, professional techniques by a stone restoration provider may be the only hope. Permanent stains can occur. For more information, see the Stain Management section in this guide.

4. Water Rings/Spots

Water rings and spots are very common on marble and other natural stone surfaces. They are either areas that have become etched or are created from hard water minerals such as calcium and magnesium that are left behind when water evaporates. To remove either type of these spots, use a marble polishing compound. Moderate to severe etching or larger damaged areas will require professional honing by a stone restoration contractor.

5. Cracks and Chips

Cracks in stone can be caused by settling, poor installation, inadequate underlying support or excessive vibration. Chips can result when a heavy object falls on a vulnerable corner. Repairs can be done by your professional stone restoration contractor by filling with a color-matched polyester or epoxy.

6. White Stun Marks

Stun marks appear as white marks on the surface of the stone and are common in certain types of marble. These stuns are the result of tiny explosions inside the crystal of the stone. Pin-point pressures placed on the marble cause these marks. Blunt pointed instruments are common reasons for stun marks. Stun marks can be difficult to remove. Professional grinding and/or honing can reduce the number of stuns, but some travel through the entire thickness of the stone.

7. Breaks

Breaks in stone countertops can occur due to structural stress, extreme impact, or significant weight being applied to unsupported sections. Common causes include shifting or settling of cabinetry, improper installation with insufficient seams or supports, and sudden heavy loads or blunt force impacts. Depending on the severity of the break, repairs may involve professional epoxy or polyester resin bonding, reinforcement with steel rods or brackets, or even replacing the damaged section.

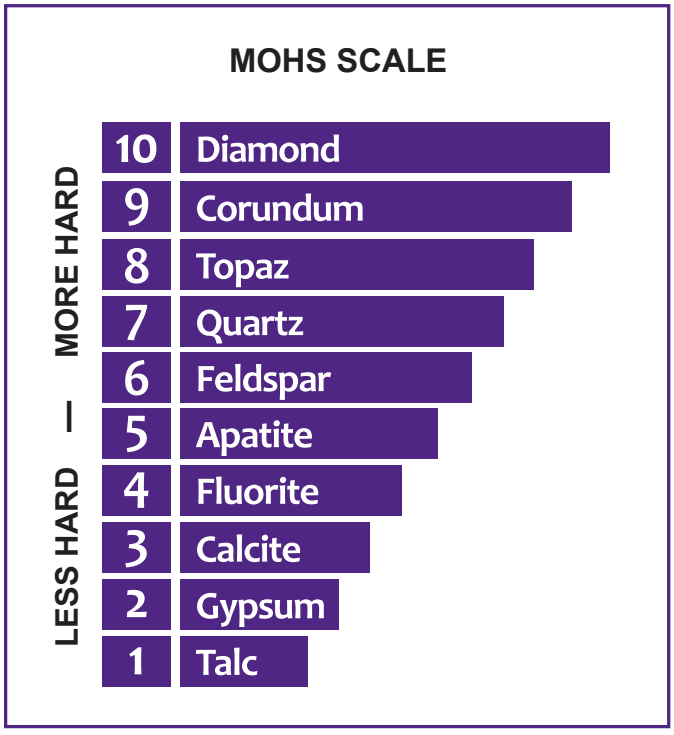
Practicality with enduring beauty...

Even severe damage—like the fractured tabletop shown above—can be expertly repaired by a qualified stone restoration contractor. That's one of the unique advantages of natural stone. Unlike most other surfaces, it can be restored to a like-new condition even if it becomes dull or damaged, providing a lifetime of beauty and service.

ABOUT STONE

Natural stone is a timeless and versatile material that has been used in construction and design for centuries. Renowned for its durability, unique textures, and rich colors, natural stone adds both aesthetic value and functionality to any space. Each type of stone, from the robust granite to the elegant marble, brings its own set of characteristics, making it suitable for a variety of applications, whether in flooring, countertops, or architectural features. The natural beauty of stone lies in its variation, as no two pieces are exactly alike, offering a one-of-a-kind look that can elevate the design of both residential and commercial spaces.

Different stones possess unique properties that influence their care and maintenance requirements. For instance, some stones are acid-sensitive and will react negatively when exposed to acidic spills, potentially leading to etching or discoloration. Additionally, certain stones are softer and more delicate, making them more prone to scratching and wear compared to harder stones. The Mohs Scale of Mineral Hardness is a widely used tool to assess a stone's hardness, providing a reference point to determine its durability and resistance to scratching.



In 1812 the Mohs scale of mineral hardness was devised by the German mineralogist Frederich Mohs (1773-1839), who selected the ten minerals because they were common or readily available. The scale is not a linear scale, but somewhat arbitrary. An item with a higher Mohs value can scratch an item with a lower Mohs value. A lower-rated item cannot scratch a higher-rated one.

When sediment and grit are harder than the surface, they will scratch and harm the stone.

Marble

Marble is a metamorphic rock known for its elegant, smooth surface and distinctive veining patterns. Formed from limestone subjected to heat and pressure, marble is prized for its beauty and is widely used in sculpture, architecture, and interior design. Commonly found in shades of white, gray, and beige, marble can also feature a range of other colors depending on mineral impurities. While it offers a luxurious appearance, marble is softer and more porous than other stones like granite, requiring maintenance to preserve its polished finish and prevent staining.

Marble, as well as other calcite-based stones will etch when acid comes in contact with them. Special care will need to be taken if marble or other stones containing calcium carbonate are installed in kitchens or other places where the spilling of acidic liquids is highly likely. However, new topical treatments are available that provide an etch-resistant protective barrier allowing even the most delicate marble to be used worry-free in kitchens and bars. Marbles and other calcite-based stones are relatively soft stones, typically around 3-5 on the Mohs Scale, so care should be taken to avoid scratching.

Granite

Granite is a durable and dense igneous rock primarily composed of quartz, feldspar, and mica. Its resistance to acids, heat, and scratches makes it an excellent choice for kitchen countertops, where both functionality and aesthetics are key. Known for its speckled appearance and wide range of colors, granite is highly valued in both residential and commercial settings. With a hardness of around 7 on the Mohs scale, granite is exceptionally resistant to scratches, ensuring its longevity and maintaining its pristine look over time. The natural beauty and elegance of granite not only add prestige but also provide a practical, long-lasting solution for countertops.

Limestone

Limestone is a sedimentary rock composed mainly of calcium carbonate, often formed from the remains of marine organisms like coral and shells. It typically has a soft, earthy texture and can range in color from white and gray to tan and even blue. Limestone is widely used in construction for building materials, flooring, and decorative elements due to its natural beauty and ease of shaping. However, it is more porous and less dense than stones like granite and marble, making it more susceptible to weathering and requiring careful maintenance when used in outdoor or high-traffic areas. Limestone typically ranks around 3 to 4 on the Mohs Scale.

Onyx

Onyx is a calcite-based stone. It is characteristically translucent and is known for its rich, layered bands of color that can range from soft pastels to deep, vibrant hues. Due to its delicate nature and distinct aesthetic, onyx is typically used in decorative applications, such as countertops, furniture tops, wall panels, and statement pieces like vases and lighting fixtures. While visually captivating, onyx is softer and more brittle than other natural stones requiring careful handling and maintenance to prevent scratches and damage.

Onyx typically ranks around 6.5 to 7 on the Mohs Scale. This makes it relatively durable, though still softer than many other natural stones like granite or quartz. Its hardness is sufficient for decorative and low-traffic applications, but it requires careful handling to avoid scratching or damage.

Quartzite

Quartzite is a natural stone. Sandstone that is subjected to heat and pressure forms quartzite. Quartzite's appearance can be veined like marble, have more solid coloring, look like crushed crystals, or a combination of these features. On the Mohs Scale, quartzite is usually around a 7 or 8.

Quartzite is very durable, but subject to staining or etching like most natural stones. Since quartzite is porous, sealing it can help inhibit staining, but regular impregnating sealers cannot prevent etching. There are new treatments available for quartzite countertop etch protection. Maintenance requirements include frequent cleaning with a stone-safe, pH-neutral cleaner and periodic professional restoration services, which may include honing, polishing, cleaning, and re-sealing.

Sandstone

Sandstone is a porous, durable sedimentary rock composed of cemented sand-sized grains, predominantly quartz. It is categorized by the most popular bonding agents such as silica, calcium, clay, and iron oxide. Sandstone is commonly used for flooring, counter tops, and vertical surfaces in both interior and exterior environments.

It is known for its warm, earthy tones, which can range from pale beige and gold to rich reds and browns, often with subtle striations and patterns that add natural beauty to any setting. Sandstone's porous texture makes it an excellent material for outdoor applications such as patios, walkways, and garden walls, where it blends seamlessly with natural surroundings. While it is sturdy and weather-resistant, sandstone may require sealing to protect it from moisture and wear, ensuring its lasting appeal in both indoor and outdoor spaces.

Sandstone typically ranks around 6 to 7 on the Mohs Scale. This range can vary depending on the specific composition of the sandstone, particularly the proportion of quartz, which is a primary component and has a Mohs Scale hardness of 7. The presence of other minerals can slightly lower the overall hardness, but generally, sandstone is considered to have moderate hardness.

Slate

Slate is a fine-grained, metamorphic rock known for its layered structure and distinctive texture. It ranks around 4 on the Mohs Scale. Typically ranging in color from gray and black to green, red, and purple, slate is valued for its durability and natural beauty. Its unique ability to be split into thin, flat sheets makes it an ideal material for roofing, flooring, and wall cladding. Slate is also resistant to moisture, temperature fluctuations, and wear, making it suitable for both indoor and outdoor applications. Its rich, earthy tones and natural cleft surface add a rustic yet refined look to any space, making it a popular choice in both traditional and modern designs.

Soapstone

Soapstone is a soft, smooth, and non-porous natural stone known for its rich, deep colors, typically ranging from light gray to dark charcoal, with subtle veining patterns. Composed primarily of talc, which is a 1 on the Mohs Scale, soapstone has a unique, almost soapy feel, which gives it its name. This stone is prized for its durability and resistance to heat, stains, and acids, making it an excellent choice for kitchen countertops, sinks, and fireplaces. Unlike other natural stones, soapstone develops a beautiful patina over time,

darkening and gaining character with age and use, which enhances its rustic charm and appeal.

Travertine

Travertine is a type of limestone, but differs from other forms in that it is formed in hot springs called karst. The water movement in these karst erodes the travertine, creating holes in the stone.

It is characterized by its porous surface and unique, earthy colors, ranging from ivory and beige to warm browns and rusts. The stone often displays a fibrous or concentric texture, giving it a distinct, natural appearance that adds warmth and elegance to both indoor and outdoor spaces. Travertine is commonly used in flooring, wall cladding, and countertops, as well as in outdoor landscaping for patios and pool surrounds. While it is durable, its porous nature requires sealing to protect against stains and moisture, making regular maintenance important to preserve its beauty.

Dolomite

Dolomite is a versatile and durable natural stone characterized by its stunning range of colors, from soft whites and grays to light beige, often featuring delicate veining and subtle patterns that add visual interest. Composed primarily of the mineral dolomite, it ranks between 3.5 and 4 on the Mohs Scale, giving it a moderate level of hardness and making it slightly more resistant to scratches than marble. Dolomite's dense, fine-grained structure provides a smooth, consistent texture that is both pleasing to the touch and highly functional. Its resistance to heat and moderate porosity make it a suitable choice for a variety of applications, including kitchen countertops, bathroom vanities, and flooring.

With a solid reputation for excellence and commitment to outstanding service, Beyond Stone Solutions has become Arizona's go-to experts in stone and tile care.

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When it comes to natural stone and tile care—whether inside your home or outdoors—not all service providers deliver the same level of craftsmanship, protection, and long-term value. Property owners should never settle for anything less than personalized service, a strong reputation for excellence, proper insurance, and affiliations with respected industry organizations. Anything less is a gamble with your home, your investment, and the lasting beauty of your surfaces.

As Consumer Reports warns, one of the most common mistakes homeowners make is "being seduced by price alone." A low quote may seem appealing, but it often comes at the expense of quality workmanship, appropriate materials, and lasting results.

You wouldn't trust the cheapest contractor with your home's foundation—your stone and tile surfaces deserve that same level of respect and consideration. The old saying is true: "Some of the most expensive work you'll ever pay for is cheap work." Poor-quality service can lead to costly repairs, replacements, or even safety hazards in the future.

Real value isn't about the lowest price—it's about investing in expert care, durable solutions, and peace of mind. Choose a provider who prioritizes long-term protection, understands the materials, and delivers results that preserve the beauty and integrity of your stone and tile for years to come.

At Beyond Stone Solutions, we are honored to be a family owned and operated business since 1976. We take a personal interest in every single job and treat our customers like family.

What does this mean for you?

This means you can expect detailed attention to your job and 100% customer satisfaction. It means no shortcuts, continuous training and education for our employees, professionalism and consistently delivering outstanding customer service by using only the best, state of the art equipment and premium quality products. It is this unyielding commitment to excellence that sets us above and beyond our competition.

It is our mission is to Polish, Protect and Impress every time!

Our commitment to quality and excellence beyond expectations is what has been driving us since 1976. There are many reasons why we at Beyond Stone Solutions are the preferred floor and surface care experts in the Phoenix area and throughout Arizona.

> *Not all stone and tile restoration providers are created equal. Never settle for less than personalized service, professional industry affiliations, proper insurance, and proven methods. Anything less is a gamble. Low prices may tempt, but real value lies in skilled care and lasting results.*

WHAT IS STONE RESTORATION?

Generally speaking, restoration of stone is the restoring of worn stone to the state in which it was installed. It may also entail the altering of the stone's original factory finish to match a desired finish of the installation's owner or management. In some cases an owner may desire a polished surface to be honed or vice versa.

Restoration is a process that can only be done by a professional stone restoration company. Your typical handyman will not have the proper tools or training to restore natural stone. Do not compare bids on cost alone. You must have confidence that the restoration contractor understands the stone and has the proper equipment and experience to meet reasonable expectations.

What is Involved?

Restoration of marble, granite, limestone, travertine or other natural stone involves the removal of scratches and/or other damage from the surface of the stone. The optimal method is mechanical abrasion using artificial diamond infused pads made specifically for this purpose. Diamond grinding or honing gives better clarity and reflectivity than other methods, such as the use of sanding screens, honing powders or crystallization. A stone countertop that has been restored with diamonds will also retain its look longer than it will with the use of these other methods.

Natural stone reflects light and therefore does not need a topical coating or wax to achieve this desired finish. It only needs a series of diamond grits used in the proper order by a craftsman who is experienced in their use. This is followed by a careful polishing technique that can only be mastered through experience. A restoration professional will

also take care to protect the surrounding surfaces from damage. The diamond grinding technique involves using water and this could be damaging to wood cabinetry if proper masking and protecting is not done. taken to protect these surfaces, walls, baseboards, appliances, etc.

Honing–Honing will remove minor scratches and wear from everyday foot traffic. This process is also done by machine with diamond abrasive pads and water that creates no dust.

Polishing–Gives marble or natural stone the sheen you want, enhances the veining in marble and protects the marble or stone from everyday traffic and spills. The same compounds that are used in the fabricating process are utilized.

Alter a Finish–A stone's finish can be changed. For example, a honed finish can be changed to a polished finish and vice versa. Special brushes and techniques allow for additional decorative finishes.

Cleaning–Removes dirt, stains, bacteria and also removes waxes and polymers that have become embedded. (Cleaning alone will not remove dullness from etch marks and scratches.)

Sealing and Protecting–To protect the surface from stains and etching. May also provide additional surface benefits.

Color Enhancing–The use of penetrating sealers / impregnators formulated to enhance or enrich the color of your stone.

Crack, Chip, and Break Repair–Cracks and chips in stone can be filled. Even serious breaks can often be repaired in the hands of an expert restoration contractor.

Fill Pits and Blemishes–Both limestone and travertine imperfections are filled at the factory. Unsightly blemishes that occur when factory fill fails or new ones develop can be filled.

Seam Polishing–Very visible seams in countertops can be filled and mechanically polished to appear less noticeable.

Questions? Need Services or Support?

Reach out to us: Call or text: (602) 830-5861
For care products: shop.beyondstonesolutions.com

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