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Granite & Marble Identification & Care

Granite is a resilient natural surface, popular for countertops and flooring and occurs in many different colors. Granite can best be identified by its crystal like or salt and peppered appearance.

Caution: Some cleaners which contain acid can be harmful to granite and most cleaning products will leave a residue, causing a dull film and leave oils trapped in the pores of the granite which emit odors, as the oils become rancid.

The proper care for Granite is to use a high quality cleaner which is not only safe for the granite, but will travel into the pores, lifting out oils trapped inside, without leaving a residue. Cleaning is the most important step with granite followed by applying a sealer.

Sealing Granite is applying a safe clear durable substance to fill in its pores, which helps to keep out liquids which may cause stains.

The only polishing of granite should be done by a professional as this serious work. A gloss conditioner may be applied to help bring out the inner beauty of granite, but be aware that some granite does not change its appearance with gloss conditioners.

Marble is a beautiful natural surface with character which ranges from subtle to bold. It is best identified by its veins and swirls. Marble typically has a more flowing look to it, almost as though you can see the layers of sediment building up over the years.

Travertine is a type of marble with very large open pockets. This is great for providing a rustic look. Most Travertine has had its pockets filled, which can be detected by looking for many solid uniform colored spots that look different than the rest of the stone.

Caution: Marble is largely made of calcium carbonate like that in an anti-acid. Acid will eat the calcium out of the marble causing a damaged spot called an etch. Items which contain acid include coffee, sodas, wine, vinegar, room fresheners, perfumes, glass cleaners and many cleaning products.

An etch can look like a dull spot, or the surface may have a slight uniform etch to it, where the entire surface has a dull or warn look.

The proper care of marble is using a high quality cleaner to keep it free form oils and debris that cause it to look dull, have an odor and may even stain it. Keeping acids away from marble is essential for maintaining an excellent appearance. Sealing marble is highly recommended; however it will not protect the marble from acids, but it will help protect it from stains.

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Stains & Spills

Blot the spill with a paper towel or soft absorbent cloth immediately. Do not “wipe” the area as it will spread the spill. Flush the area with plain water and very mild soap and rinse the area several times. Then dry the area thoroughly with a soft cloth. Repeat these steps, if needed. If the stain is still apparent, please follow the stain removal tips below.

Identifying the type of stain on the stone surface is essential, as it will assist with removal.

Oil-based stains will darken the stone and need to be dissolved to achieve successful removal.
Use a nitrocellulose lacquer thinner(available at most home improvement and hardware stores) to treat this type of stain.
Nitrocellulose lacquer thinner (NCL) may also be used to stains caused by ink and magic markers.

Paint related stains can generally be removed by scrapping the surface (carefully) with a razor blade, or with the use of NCL.

Metal related stains (iron, rust, copper, bronze) are difficult to remove and generally require the use of a poultice to draw out the discoloration. Deep seated rust stains are extremely difficult to remove and may cause a permanent stain. When in doubt, consult a professional.

Water spots and rings can generally be removed by lightly buffing the area with dry 0000 (very fine texture) steel wool.

Etch Marks may be treated with marble polishing power and using a damp cloth to buff the area.

Do’s and Don’ts

Do: Clean surfaces with very mild detergents or specialized stone soaps.

Do: Double check cleanser contents before use. Remember, no acid-based products.

Do: Thoroughly rinse and dry the surface after washing.

Do: Blot up Spills immediately.

Do: Promptly blot up common use items. e.g. Toothpaste, shampoo, hair dyes, polish remover.

Do: Re-seal your stone surface once per year.

Do: Use coasters and protective pads to prevent water rings and scratches.

Do: Consult a professional regarding any large projects or major stains or scratches.

Don’t: Use vinegar, lemon juice or other bathroom cleaners containing acid.

Don’t: Use bathroom cleansers with abrasive or “gritty” contents.

Don’t: Use cleaning pads with abrasive surfaces.

Don’t: Stand on the counter top to change overhead lights or clean the top of the mirror...