



sareenstone

# STONE & TILE CARE GUIDE

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Tile and stone are great choices for floors, walls, countertops, facades and many other applications. They provide years of functionality, and in order to retain its beauty, some simple but important maintenance is necessary.

We believe that natural stone is a beautiful material that deserves to be treated with the utmost care. That's why we recommend and provide products of the highest quality which have been formulated by scientists who understand how to care for stone and tile surfaces of every kind.

This Stone and Tile Care Guide is intended to provide basic information in the care and maintenance of stone and tiles. If you have specific questions regarding these matters, we encourage you to contact Sareen Stone on 02 9666 9222 or Laticrete Technical Services on 1800 331 012.

## FOCUS ON PREVENTION

The best way to prevent stains on stone is to treat it with a STONETECH protective sealer. Sealers repel spills on the surface, slowing down the absorption of the liquid into the stone, and gives you time to wipe them away before they have a chance to penetrate the stone.

Some sealers can enhance (darken) stone, while others retain the stone's natural look and colour. Different stone types require different grades of sealer based on what the tile or stone material is made of, what it will be used for and what you want the stone to look like.

Cement-based tile grout may be porous, and therefore may be easily stained. Protecting cement-based grout with a high quality sealer is recommended to protect against stains caused by water or oil-based materials.

## CLEANING NATURAL STONE

Once your stone is sealed, cleaning up is easy. But what should you use for everyday cleaning? You wouldn't use a harsh ordinary household cleaner to wash your new car, would you? Natural stone

demands the same kind of attention it needs cleaning products which are specifically made for its unique mineral composition.

General cleaners, not specifically formulated for stone or tile are never recommended. These types of cleaners can break down a sealer, thereby removing its' protective properties, making the stone, tile or grout susceptible to staining.

Worse yet, many cleaning products, including those that contain abrasives, lemon, vinegar, bleach or ammonia can etch away the polish, degrade the sealer, discolour the surface, or even scratch your stone.

For everyday cleaning or care, we would recommend using STONETECH Stone & Tile Cleaner or STONETECH Revitalizer Cleaner & Protector, which has a gentle formula that removes dirt, while reinforcing the original protective seal and are scientifically formulated for use on natural stone.

## ETCH MARKS

While everyday messes are not the end of the world, many common household items have the power to degrade the surface of your stone. Etching is the result of a chemical reaction that occurs when acid comes in contact with a reactive surface. Etch marks on stone surfaces resemble water spots or a worn polish.

Seemingly innocent everyday spills like orange juice, coffee, vinegar, wine, tomato products, mustard, soft drinks, and some commonly used cleaners are highly acidic and will etch, dull, discolour, or even scratch most marble, limestone, travertine, and cement-based grout. The majority of ceramic and porcelain tiles, and acid-resistant stones such as granite, slate and sandstone will typically not etch.

Sealing allows you some time to wipe up a spill, but it cannot stop the chemical reaction that may leave an etch mark. Remember to always use coasters and place mats on acid-sensitive stone.

## WHAT TO DO WHEN A SPILL OCCURS

No matter how careful you are spills are going to happen. A quick response and the right solutions can keep spills from damaging your stone or degrading the sealer.

### **Food and Drink Spills**

Quickly scoop up the food and wipe up the liquid spill with a clean, dry cloth. Spray the area with a neutral stone cleaner such as STONETECH Revitalizer Cleaner & Protector and wipe with a clean cloth. Repeat if necessary.

### **Mud**

Let the mud stain dry completely. Remove dried mud with a soft plastic or nylon brush. Spray affected area with STONETECH Stone & Tile Cleaner. Wipe dry with a clean cloth. If the stain remains, contact a professional cleaner.

### **Oily Stains**

If you identify the stain as being oil based (often from foods like salad dressings, cooking oils, butter, cosmetics, etc) you may be able to remove the stain using a poultice. A poultice will wick up the stain from deep within the stone. We recommend using STONETECH Oil® Stain Remover.

### **Others**

Pets and kids can present you with some of the worst stone care challenges such as urine, blood and vomit. Needless to say these should be cleaned up as quickly as possible to minimise damage caused by acids. Dispose of the waste properly, spray your stone with STONETECH Revitalizer Cleaner & Protector and wipe with a clean, dry cloth.

## MAINTENANCE

Take these simple precautions and care to keep your natural stone looking its best.

### **Kitchen and Bathroom Counters**

Some household foods, beverages, cosmetics and other items can degrade tile grout and damage stone. Common toiletries like toothpaste, mouthwash and perfume contain acids and other

ingredients that can degrade sealers or damage your stone's surface.

Use a neutral, pH-balanced cleaner, specially formulated for stone, such as STONETECH® Daily Stone & Tile Benchtop Cleaner, on a regular basis to remove residues from cooking oils and everyday food spills, as well as hairspray or other cosmetics.

### **Scratch Removal**

Scratches in natural stone surfaces can occur but are not permanent as with other flooring materials. Surface scratches can often be removed with honing powers or fine sandpaper. If you are uncertain, contact a professional.

### **Interior Floors**

Clean your interior floors frequently using a clean, non-treated, dry dust mop, as abrasive particles of sand and dirt can damage natural stone and tile surfaces. Mats outside your entrances will help to minimise the potential damage from these particles. Also, be careful when using a vacuum cleaner as the metal or plastic attachments or wheels may scratch the surface.

Damp mop the stone floor with a diluted solution of a neutral cleaner designed for stone, such as STONETECH Stone & Tile Cleaner. Avoid walking on the floor until completely dry, as wet stone floors tend to be slippery.

### **Exterior Surfaces**

Should be swept and then washed with water or pH neutral cleaner designed for stone.

### **Bath and other Wet Areas**

Frequent use of a neutral stone cleaner, such as STONETECH Stone & Tile Cleaner, will minimise soap scum and hard water deposits. In the bath, or other wet areas, using a squeegee after each use can help to minimise these common residues.

## DO'S AND DONT'S

- DO use STONETECH Sealers to protect your stone, tile and cement based grouts
- DO clean up spills immediately to minimise damage to your stone and tile
- DO use trivets or mats under hot dishes and cookware
- DO use placemats under china, ceramics, silver and other objects that can scratch the surface of your stone
- DO place a small rug or a mat at entry ways to trap dirt and sand from normal foot traffic
- DO dust countertops, island benches, vanities and floors frequently
- DO use coaster under glasses, especially if they contain alcohol or citrus juices
- DO clean stone, tile and grout surfaces regularly with STONETECH Revitalizer Cleaner & Protector
- DON'T wait to clean up spills on stone. Clean them up as quickly as possible
- DON'T use dish soap, vinegar, bleach, ammonia, or general purpose cleaners, bathroom cleaners or tub and tile cleaners
- DON'T use abrasive cleaners such as dry cleansers or soft cleansers
- DON'T use alkaline cleaners not specifically formulated for stone

*Please note, these instructions are for reference purposes only and provided in good faith and to the best of our knowledge and experience at the time of writing. Please follow label directions on back of actual product and consult a professional cleaning and sealing specialist if required.*