



ARCHITESSA

CARE & MAINTENANCE

Ceramic

Cement

Glass

Grout

Natural Stone

Porcelain

Specialty

Disclaimer: This document is a general reference guide for cleaning and maintaining ceramic tile. Always follow manufacturer recommendations for installing & maintaining products. If available, these are typically located in each box of tile and sometimes online.

[Recommended cleaners can be viewed & purchased here.](#)

Ceramic tile is a durable, practical and hygienic surface and can last a lifetime if cared for properly. With proper maintenance, tile and grout appearance are preserved, slip resistance can be maintained (where applicable), and hygienic benefits can be utilized. It is important to understand that not all ceramic tile is created equally. Technical and visual features such as porosity and surface finish plays a large role in scheduled maintenance and cleaning of ceramic tile. The following guide provides practical information on the care and maintenance of ceramic tile.

General Tips

- Regularly inspect tiles and have any damaged tiles professionally removed/replaced.
- Promptly wipe spills and clean with a damp cloth or sponge.
- Sweep and/or vacuum floors regularly to remove any dirt particles, dust or debris. Over time, buildup can be abrasive to the tile surface.
- Use good quality floor mats in high traffic bathrooms and areas that are susceptible to moisture (i.e. near entrance /exit ways).

Cleaning

- Use a damp mop or sponge with an all-purpose household cleaner that is not oil-based and has low VOC to clean glazed floor tiles on a regular basis.
- Wipe glazed wall tiles periodically using a dampened cloth or sponge and a non oil-based household cleaner.
- Do not combine ammonia and household bleaches and under any circumstances, do not use muriatic acid on any tiled surface.
- Thoroughly read & follow all manufacture warnings and instructions for all cleaning products before use and test all cleaning solutions and materials in a small inconspicuous area before full application.
- After using cleaning solutions, wipe down the entire area with a clean cloth or mop and clear water to remove any residue that may have been left behind.
- Do not use cleaning wax, oil based cleaners, ammonia, sealants or products containing acid or bleach as part of routine maintenance.
- Avoid abrasive cleaning products such as scouring pads or steel wool pads, as they can damage polished, shiny, or uneven surfaces
- Do not use vinegar to clean.

Grout

Routine grout cleaning can be done with an all-purpose household cleaner that is non-oil-based and has low VOC depending on the application. For periodic deep cleaning of grout, use a concentrated tile & grout cleaner. Always read and follow the instructions on the product label. Rinse the area with clear water and pat dry with a clean towel or sponge to remove any residue. As true for all tiled surfaces, do not use acidic solutions / cleaners as part of a regular maintenance routine.

- Do not use essential oils as it can penetrate the grout. These attract dust and airborne contaminants.
- Ensure the cleaning product selected is compatible with cleaning the grout joints.

Sealing

Most ceramic tile does not need to be sealed as the majority of ceramic tile on the market has a low water absorption rate. However, highly porous ceramics should be sealed with a penetrating sealer prior to installation to prevent grout from staining the tile during the grouting process. Some sealers act as a grout release, and will help facilitate the grout clean up process by preventing the formation of grout haze. If you are unsure if your tile should be sealed, check with your sales rep. Not all sealers are created equally, so make sure you have a penetrating sealer, and not a topical one. Architessa only carries top rated sealers.

Sealing the tile will also seal the grout and can prevent moisture absorption, staining & discolouration. If you choose to use a sealer, periodic re-sealing is required. Check with the sealer manufacturer to determine the sealer's lifespan, as it's based on application use and sealer type.

Tip: The primary purpose of a sealer is to provide greater stain resistance to porous tile – not to make it "stain-proof." A proper sealer should provide good to excellent stain resistance, keeping staining contaminants on or near the tile and grout surface where they can be easily removed with simple maintenance.

Crackle Finish

Crackle and special finishes have special installation, care, and maintenance. This type of finish is typically not compatible with dark colored grouts & must be sealed prior to installing. Sealing protects the crackle finish from moisture and grout that may penetrate the surface during the installation process.

Troubleshooting

Residual Coatings (Sealers/Waxes, etc.) - Use a tile sealer & adhesive remover to clear off a topical sealer or floor wax from a ceramic tile. Be sure to test a small area before full application and always follow the instructions on the product label. Working in small manageable areas, apply the sealer & adhesive remover as directed, allowing it to set without drying. Coating should begin to soften. If necessary, reapply the remover and lightly agitate the surface with a nylon scrub pad until the sealer softens and can be easily removed. Rinse the area with clear water and pat dry with a clean towel or sponge to remove any residue.

Grout Haze - After tile installation, grout residue can form a white haze like film on the surface of the tile. This can be buffed off the surface using a clean cloth once the grout has finished curing. If the residue is very stubborn or the tiles are unglazed a special grout haze remover solution may be used. Read and follow the instructions on the product label. The solution will break down the cement and allow the haze to be wiped away. Rinse the area with clear water and wipe dry with a clean towel or sponge to remove any residue. Do not use acidic solutions/cleaners as part of a regular maintenance routine. Many of the grout products on the market today are polymer modified, which means they have latex in them. Be sure to purchase a solution that is compatible with the type of grout you have used.

High Moisture Areas - Tiled surfaces in your bathroom may require a more thorough routine cleaning because of a build-up of soap scum, body oils or hard-water stains. Use a clean, damp cloth, or sponge with a neutral pH cleaner, allowing it to stand about five minutes before rinsing and drying. Specialty bathroom cleaners may also be used (always test first). Clean shower regularly in high moisture areas.

CEMENT TILE

CARE & MAINTENANCE

Disclaimer: This document is a general reference guide for cleaning and maintaining cement tile. Always follow manufacturer recommendations for installing & maintaining products. If available, these are typically located in each box of tile and sometimes online. The following guide provides general information and should be read in its entirety.

*****[Recommended cleaners can be viewed & purchased here](#)*****

Cement tile is unglazed naturally made material and can last a lifetime if installed and cared for properly. It is recommended to seal cement tile and reapply yearly (or sooner if needed). Whether sealed or not, cement will develop a patina, over time.

General Tips

- Always store extra tiles in case they are needed in the future. Store in a cool dry place & if boxed keep the boxes dry as well.
- Regularly inspect tiles and have any damaged tiles professionally removed/replaced if desired.
- Use walk-off mats to reduce dust and particulate assembly.
- Always test cleaners and sealers on a sample if possible.
- Prolonged sun exposure can fade colors, especially green and blue.
- Never grind or buff cement tiles with an abrasive pad or disc, as this will damage the surface & color.

Sealing - Sealing is a required step in protecting the beauty and ensuring the longevity of your cement tile. Sealers provide stain resistance (not stain proofing), which allows for extra time to clean up potentially damaging spills by sealing micropores, and acts as a pigment protector. If the manufacturer recommended sealer is Dry-Treat, apply a minimum of 2-3 coats or 4 or more coats if installed on a backsplash where hot oil may present.

- Test sealers prior to use, on a sample is preferred.
- Re-seal every year or sooner in high traffic areas
- Use the manufacturer's recommended sealer, which can be purchased with the tile. If this is not available, use a Stonetech product that is formulated for cement.
- Use care & be meticulous when sealing and always read every instruction before starting.
- Tiles must be completely dry before sealing. Never seal damp or wet cement tiles.

Cleaning

- Sweep up debris with a broom before cleaning. Vacuum cleaners should be avoided or used with great care as the rollers could damage the floor.
- Use a pH neutral cleaner with no grit and buff tiles with a soft white pad. Add a capful of liquid wax to the water for extra protection.
- Do not use acidic or alkaline cleaners such as ammonia, vinegar, or bleach as these can damage cement.

Troubleshooting

- If your cement tiles are scratched, 220 grit sandpaper can be used to buff out scratches. Always reseal after.

Brass Inlaid Cement - Cement tiles with brass inlays will age with a patina, and are prone to tarnish and require additional maintenance. Any tarnish that accumulates can be removed with wet sanding using 320 grit sandpaper. The wet sanding process can be repeated as many times as necessary to keep the brass looking shiny & new, however, tiles must be re-sealed after each round of sanding. Cement with brass inlays will age with vintage appeal

Disclaimer: This document is a general reference guide for cleaning and maintaining glass tile. Always follow manufacturer recommendations for installing & maintaining products. If available, these are typically located in each box of tile and sometimes online.

[Recommended cleaners can be viewed & purchased here.](#)

Glass tile is a beautiful yet practical and hygienic surface that can last a lifetime if properly cared for. With proper maintenance, glass tile and grout appearance are preserved, slip resistance can be maintained on mosaic shower floors, and hygienic benefits can be utilized. Despite being waterproof, it is important to understand that glass tile is not maintenance-free. There is a wide variety of glass tiles suitable for various applications, and it's important to be aware of features that may need special care or attention, such as glossy finishes. The following guide provides practical information on the care and maintenance of glass tile.

General Tips

- Regularly inspect tiles and have any damaged tiles professionally removed/replaced.
- Promptly wipe spills & splashes and clean with a damp cloth or sponge, then promptly dry with a soft cloth.
- Glass tile is not porous and use of sealers or topical products is not necessary.

Cleaning

- Routine Care & Maintenance - We recommend the use of glass cleaner or neutral soap and a soft lint-free cloth for drying immediately after. The use of a squeegee for large format glass tiles may be helpful to avoid water marks.
- Beach glass & glass with a matte finish may develop scuff marks that are difficult to remove. Although matte glass is still non-porous, it can be tougher to clean them. We recommend using denatured alcohol (use safety provisions as required) for hard-to-remove scuff marks and dirt.
- Avoid abrasive cleaning products such as scouring pads or steel wool pads, as they can damage polished, shiny, or uneven surfaces
- Do not combine ammonia and household bleaches and under any circumstances, do not use muriatic acid or vinegar on any tiled surface.
- Do not use cleaning wax, oil based cleaners, ammonia, sealants or products containing acid or bleach as part of routine maintenance.
- Thoroughly read & follow all manufacturer warnings and instructions for all cleaning products before use and test all cleaning solutions and materials in a small inconspicuous area before full application.

Grout

Routine grout cleaning can be done with an all-purpose household cleaner that is non-oil-based and has low VOC depending on the application. For periodic deep cleaning of grout, use a concentrated tile & grout cleaner that is also safe for glass tile surfaces. Always read and follow the instructions on the product label. Rinse the area with clear water and pat dry with a clean towel or sponge to remove any residue. As true for all tiled surfaces, do not use acidic solutions / cleaners as part of a regular maintenance routine.

- Do not use essential oils as it can penetrate the grout. These attract dust and airborne contaminants.
- Ensure the cleaning product selected is compatible with cleaning the grout joints.

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DISCLAIMER: This document should only be used as a general reference. Consider it supplementary, not to be used as a replacement for actual manufacturer / installer instructions or guidelines. When purchasing tile, please ensure you seek out specific installation information based on the exact material purchased or specified, as the manufacturer instructions may include concessions like using special setting materials or technique of unknown association.

GENERAL PRE-GROUTING TIPS

- Grout (& thinset) expires. Always check the date before using the setting materials. Do not expect the material to perform up to its claims when expired.
- Grout Caulk - Caulk is required for all tiles and should be applied anywhere a change in plane or material occurs, and when the TCNA (Tile Council of North America) manual specifies, a soft joint must be present. Grout has matching caulk in both unsanded and sanded options, so this is easy to purchase or specify.
- Spacers—Not all tile setters will use spacers, but they are available to help guide the spacing between your tiles or mosaics.
- Grout Timing - The best time of day to grout is the morning or early afternoon. Avoid grouting at the end of the day when you may be tired.
- Never leave excess grout (or thinset) to dry where it does not belong. Dried setting materials are stubborn and will require special cleaners to remove.
- Follow the TCNA manual & be careful of what you read online. There is lots of free bad advice.

HOW DO I KEEP MY GROUT LOOKING NICE?

- After spending time, money, and energy on a tile project, it is important to protect grout from being ruined from stains or dirt. Grout needs to be cleaned regularly because it is a naturally porous material. As we tile areas used regularly, like bathrooms and kitchens, grout is exposed to moisture and dirt every day that can cause discoloration and, eventually, mold growth.
- As grout ages, it can develop micropores from wear & tear over time, where dirt can hide and build up in pockets. Cleaning grout properly is vital for maintaining the design of your tiles and preventing the tiles and the surface beneath from becoming damaged.
 - Walk-off Mats
 - For floor tiles, invest in bathmats and walk-off mats. When you step out of a bath or shower, a bathmat can absorb excess water, preventing it from reaching the tiles.
 - Placing walk-off mats at every entrance to your home or building will absorb moisture and allow people to clean their shoes. This keeps the area by the door clean, reducing dirt and grime being tread across your tiles.

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CLEANING GROUT

Routine cleaning & vacuuming are the best way to maintain your tile & grout. Routine grout cleaning can be done with an all-purpose household cleaner that is non-oil-based and has low VOC depending on the application. For periodic deep cleaning of grout, use a concentrated tile & grout cleaner. Always read and follow the instructions on the product label. Rinse the area with clear water and pat dry with a clean towel or sponge to remove any residue. As true for all tiled surfaces, do not use acidic solutions / cleaners as part of a regular maintenance routine.

- Do not use essential oils as they can penetrate the grout. These attract dust and airborne contaminants.
- Ensure cleaning product selected is compatible with cleaning the grout joints.

HOW DO I CLEAN GROUT?

Routine & frequent cleaning is recommended to keep grout stains to a minimum and prevent a buildup of dirt that could prove difficult to remove if left unaddressed. Daily cleaning may be necessary for commercial applications, and weekly may be more appropriate for a residence. However, as we all have busy lives, cleaning grout as often as we would like might not be practical. Cleaning grout is straightforward; whether you need to restore heavily stained grout or simply want to keep on top of things, a few basic household products and a bit of hard work can make your beautifully tiled bathroom or kitchen look like new.

Brushes - You will need a brush with stiff nylon (no metal) bristles to get the best results. This will help reach dirt trapped in any small holes in your grouting. There are specifically designed grout brushes available that are made from nylon, but a firm toothbrush can be used, too (just do not brush your teeth with it afterward). Scrubbing with the right kind of brush can make a marked improvement in your grouting, even when just used with water. Even if this does not remove the entire stain, it will take away the top layer of grime. This is the best way to prepare the surface for more powerful cleaning products. Rubbermaid makes a great spinning nylon brush, that helps save your wrists for grout cleaning that requires extra muscle.

Steam Cleaning - If you have a steam cleaner or can purchase one, this is a brilliant way of cleaning grout as it is powerful and non-corrosive. Regular use will help lift dirt from small pockets. It is also the most environmentally friendly way to clean, as you do not need chemicals.

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Cleaners and Sprays - You might naturally go to bleach or vinegar when it comes to cleaning. However, both are corrosive, so while they might whiten stains, they can also do more damage than good on grout. You want to start cleaning with the mildest cleaners in your cupboard. Some specialist grout cleaning products are available specifically to remove dirt from grout without damaging the surface. It is also recommended to use a suitable product in areas such as showers or bathrooms to help prevent mold and mildew from taking hold or to remove black spots when they occur. Always read and follow the instructions on the product label.

DIY - If you prefer the DIY route, you can make your own solution with ingredients you have in the house already. First, try one part water with two parts baking soda or bicarbonate of soda mixed into a paste. Spread this on your grout and leave it on the surface for at least 10 minutes. This gives it time to sink into the dirt and makes removing it easier. Then scrub with your brush until you are satisfied, rinse or mop down with water, and towel dry. If your stain is a bit more stubborn, try a solution of baking soda and hydrogen peroxide. This is an excellent mix as baking soda is only mildly abrasive and causes less damage than caustic materials, and hydrogen peroxide is a natural alternative to bleach that will still brighten the grout. Leave for 20 minutes for more effective whitening.

GROUT CLEANING RULES

- Do not use essential oils to clean grout. They can stain and may attract more dust & debris after use.
- Do not use a metal brush to clean the grout as it can scrape or damage the surface of grout & tile.
- Do not use acid to clean.
- Do not use vinegar (acid)
- Do not use bleach (corrosive)
- Do not use scented plug-ins close to any area with grout or porous stones. These can discolor grout & any porous stones, especially colored oils & compounds.

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HOW OFTEN SHOULD I CLEAN GROUT?

Floor tiles need to be cleaned regularly, preferably weekly. Remove debris and dust like pet hairs or dropped food, giving you a smooth surface to clean. After cooking, spray and wipe kitchen tiles clean, as there will be food stains and condensation on them.

Wet Areas: Using a squeegee after the shower or bath removes excess water and is one of the best habits for general tile cleaning & maintenance. When possible, cleaning directly after a bath or shower will help remove soap scum, and bacteria, which is the culprit of most grout problems. In addition, a weekly clean of any tiled area will help prevent dirt buildup from staining or damaging your grout. Remove any excess debris and dust before spraying and wiping bathroom tiles.

DO I HAVE TO SEAL MY GROUT?

Grout that has been sealed still must be cleaned. Sealing may help protect from stains a little longer than unsealed grout, but it is not a replacement for cleaning & maintenance tasks, nor does it allow you to clean less frequently. You will still need a regular cleaning schedule to stop stains from setting in your grout or mold from developing.

Epoxy – Epoxy grout does not need to be sealed; however, it is not self-cleaning. Even though stain-proof, do not skip maintenance just based off your grout having high performance properties.

Sealing Frequency - Sealers are not permanent and must be reapplied, sometimes yearly or more, depending on the intensity of foot traffic. If you are already sealing your tile or stone, the grout will be sealed alongside it. The resealing process is easy but must be done meticulously to not let any sealer accumulate or pool. Architessa recommends a penetrating, not topical, sealer.

CHANGING THE COLOR OF EXISTING GROUT

If you are unhappy with your grout color, you may be able to paint over the grout. Grout colorant kits are available on the market in a curated selection of colors that can be painted on your grout joints. This is not an easy or fun task and may not be something a professional will take on. If patience is your virtue, pause and consider if your efforts would improve the space. Sometimes inherently bad design can't be improved.

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TROUBLESHOOTING

Grout that needs repair should be looked at by an experienced professional. If your grout is cracked or crumbling in areas, it may be able to be restored with grout caulk or professional regrouting if required, but it may also be a deeper issue. Missing or cracked grout could mean a larger issue is the cause, and fixing symptoms will only be temporary. Grout should not have major failures, and many factors could contribute to a failure, such as improper soft joints, omission of caulk during a change in plane or material transition, poor thinset coverage, or structural problems. Grout caulk can help fill minor gaps in the grout, but a job needing to be regrouted entirely is a labor-intensive undertaking and not a favorable job for contractors with busy schedules, nor a good long-term solution if there are other issues.

Grout Mold

Grout which has surface mold, or worse, is one of the most frequently misunderstood topics due to a lack of straightforward information. Showers and baths are playgrounds for bacteria, which come from soap, shampoo, and people. When used, these areas become covered with organic matter, which will cause mold if not cleaned properly or timely. Surface mold is one of the most common problems in showers, but typically the easiest to address through scheduled cleaning & maintenance - including the tip earlier on using a squeegee.

In cases where you have an established cleaning routine, and mold persists, it may be a deeper issue. There are many ways a wet area can fail, ranging from improper waterproofing, clogged weep holes, improper drain slope or thin-set coverage, etc. This could mean that the culprit of stubborn mold may be a deeper assembly issue and, indeed, not surface mold at all - it may be coming from under the tile, which means it will not disappear with any cleaning muscle. Showers can fail almost immediately or take 20+ years to fail. In these cases, a full replacement may be the only way to shut down stubborn or persistent mold.

White Grout Residue

If you have white residue that can be easily removed, you are dealing with dried products (soaps, cleaning products, shampoo, oils) that have settled into the grout. The shavings will either be soapy when water is introduced or oily if it is conditioner, lotion, or hair treatment. If shavings can be scraped, it may be an accumulation of soaps, cleaning products, or hard water build-up. If the white residue is powdery, it is efflorescence.

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Efflorescence

If you have a powdery white residue, which reappears, you may have efflorescence. Efflorescence is a white powder that may appear on a stone's surface caused by water carrying mineral salts under the installation to the surface, which has evaporated. When the water evaporates, it leaves a powdery salt residue. Typically, efflorescence is a minor inconvenience that can be remedied without replacing the tile or grout. If the installation is new, dust mop or vacuum the powder. Repeat as necessary as the stone dries out. If the installation is not fresh, follow regular cleaning procedures and use a Stonetech cleaner.

When the efflorescence cannot be treated, a more significant problem underneath the tile may be present (moisture in the substrate, etc.). Read more about efflorescence from the [Ceramic Tile Education Foundation](#)

Grout Haze

After tile installation, grout residue can form a haze-like film on the surface of the tile, often white in color. This can be buffed off the surface using a clean cloth once the grout has finished curing. If the residue is very stubborn or the tiles are unglazed, a special grout haze remover solution may be used. Read and follow the instructions on the product label. The solution will break down the cement and allow the haze to be wiped away. Rinse the area with clear water and wipe dry with a clean towel or sponge to remove any residue.

- Do not use acidic solutions/cleaners as part of a regular maintenance routine.
- Many grout products on the market today are polymer modified, meaning they have latex in them. Be sure to purchase a solution that is compatible with the type of grout you have used.
- A grout release product may be applied to the tile surface before grouting to help make the post grout clean-up process easier. Always check with the product manufacturer before doing this. Some sealers provide this benefit.

Disclaimer: This document is a general reference guide for cleaning and maintaining Natural Stone tile. Stone generally requires more care & maintenance than non-porous surfaces, like porcelain, but is still easy to maintain. Always follow manufacturer recommendations for installing & maintaining products. If available, these are typically located in each box of tile and sometimes online. The following guide provides general information on the care and maintenance of natural stone tile. Please read the entire document so important details are not missed.

[Recommended cleaners can be viewed & purchased here.](#)

Natural Stone is one of the oldest forms of building materials and can last a lifetime if installed and cared for properly. Natural stone can be sealed, but even when it's not, a patina will develop gradually over time based on traffic and natural conditions. Some stones can be professionally restored if necessary, but this is not common. It is important to understand that not all natural stones are created equally, which means if you are troubleshooting a maintenance issue, you need to know what type of stone you are working with as well as the finish. Desired patina and surface texture plays a large role in scheduled maintenance and cleaning.

Sealing

Sealing is an essential step in protecting the beauty and ensuring the longevity of your stone, which preserves and in some cases enhances the appearance. Sealers provide stain resistance (not stain proofing), which allows for extra time to clean up potentially damaging spills by sealing micropores, and can help prevent etching.

- Test sealers prior to use, on a sample is preferred.
- We recommend sealing natural stone products with a penetrating sealer, not a topical one.
- Stone products should be sealed prior and after installation only when the grout is fully cured.
- Sealing prior to grouting prevents grout pigments from staining the surface, and will assist in the final installation cleaning.
- Sealing after installation (grout must be cured) will also seal the grout.
- Re-sealing should be done as needed depending on accumulated wear. A good indicator that it is time to re-seal is when water no longer beads on the surface of the stone, or you notice the stone darkening when wet. This could mean 6 months or maybe even 3 years - so be wary of blanket statements made on how often to re-seal. The resealing frequency will depend on traffic, use and regular cleaning cycle. Stone, like any other natural product, will age and patina, adding to its beauty and character.
- Never apply sealer over a stain.

General Tips

- Regularly inspect tiles and have any damaged tiles professionally removed/replaced if desired.
- Promptly wipe spills and clean with a damp cloth or sponge. Spills not cleaned up promptly may penetrate natural stone.
- Sweep and/or vacuum floors regularly to remove any dirt particles, dust or debris. Over time, buildup can be abrasive to the surface.
- Use felt or rubber protective pads under furniture to prevent scratching stone surfaces.
- Place good quality floor mats in high traffic locations and areas that are susceptible to moisture (ie. near entrance /exit ways). This is especially important for polished stones to decrease chances of slipping.
- Never use products that contain acids on marble, limestone, travertine, or onyx surfaces, including vinegar and lime juice, bleach, and ammonia.
- Never use abrasive cleaners, scouring pads/creams, or essential oils.
- Avoid "over the counter" stone care sprays that contain phosphoric and glycolic acids, as these may etch some polished stone surfaces.
- Only use products formulated for natural stone surfaces.
- Pressure washing is not recommended as part of routine maintenance. Consult a stone restoration company if you decide to pressure wash your stone.

Countertops

After sweeping away debris, clean stone surfaces with a few drops of neutral cleaner, stone soap, or a mild liquid dishwashing detergent and warm water.

1. Use a clean soft cloth for best results.
2. Too much cleaner or soap may leave a film and cause streaks.
3. Rinse the surface thoroughly after washing with the soap solution and dry with a soft cloth.

Floors

Dust mop interior floors frequently using a clean, non-treated dry dust mop. Sand, dirt, and grit do the most damage to natural stone surfaces due to their abrasiveness. Mats or area rugs inside and outside an entrance will help to minimize the sand, dirt, and grit that will scratch the stone floor. Be sure that the underside of the mat or rug is a non-slip surface. Normally, it will take a person about eight steps on a floor surface to remove sand or dirt from the bottom of their shoes. Normal maintenance involves periodic washing with clean, potable water and neutral (pH 7) cleaners. Soapless cleaners are preferred because they minimize streaks and film. Mild, phosphate-free, biodegradable liquid dishwashing soaps or powders or stone soaps are acceptable if rinsing is thorough.

1. Wet the stone surface with clean water.
2. Using the cleaning solution (following manufacturer's directions), wash in small, overlapping sweeps. Work from the bottom up if it is a vertical surface.
3. Rinse thoroughly with clean, potable water to remove all traces of soap or cleaner solution.
4. Change the water in the rinse pail frequently.
5. Dry with soft cloth and allow to thoroughly air dry.

Baths, Showers, and Wet Areas

Soap scum can be minimized by using a squeegee after each use. To remove soap scum, use a non-acidic soap scum remover or a solution of ammonia and water (about 1/2 cup ammonia to a gallon of water). Frequent or overuse of an ammonia solution may eventually dull the surface of the stone.

Outdoor Pool and Patio Areas

In outdoor pool, patio, or hot tub areas, flush with clear water and use a mild bleach solution to remove algae or moss.

Exterior

Large expanses of stone generally found on exterior applications may make it impractical to perform normal maintenance on a frequent basis. Large installations, however, should be given periodic overall cleaning as necessary to remove accumulated pollutants. Easily accessible stone surfaces such as steps, walkways, fountains, etc., should be kept free of debris and soiling by periodically sweeping and washing with water. Normal maintenance should include periodic inspection of stone surfaces for structural defects, movement, deterioration, or staining.

Troubleshooting

Oil-Based Stains (grease, tar, cooking oil, cosmetics) —Will darken the stone and normally must be chemically dissolved so the stain's source can be rinsed away. Clean gently with a soft liquid cleanser, household detergent, ammonia, mineral spirits, or acetone.

Organic Stains (coffee, tea, fruit, tobacco, paper, food, urine, leaves, bark, bird droppings)— May cause a pinkish-brown stain and may disappear after the source of the stain has been removed. Outdoors, with the sources removed, normal sun and rain action will generally bleach out the stains. Indoors, clean with 12% hydrogen peroxide and a few drops of ammonia.

Inorganic Metal Stains (iron, rust, copper, bronze) — Iron or rust stains are orange to brown in color and leave the shape of the staining object, such as nails, bolts, screws, cans, flowerpots, or metal furniture. Copper and bronze stains appear as green or muddy brown and result from the action of moisture on nearby or embedded bronze, copper, or brass items. Metal stains must be removed with a poultice. Deep-seated, rusty stains are extremely difficult to remove and the stone may be permanently stained.

Biological Stains (algae, mildew, lichens, moss, fungi) — Clean with a dilute (1/2 cup in a gallon of water) ammonia, bleach, or hydrogen peroxide. **WARNING: DO NOT MIX BLEACH AND AMMONIA - THIS COMBINATION CREATES A TOXIC GAS.**

Ink Stains (magic marker, pen, ink)—Clean light colored stones with bleach or hydrogen peroxide. Use lacquer thinner or acetone for dark-colored stones.

Paint Stains—Small amounts can be removed with lacquer thinner or scraped off carefully with a razor blade. Heavy paint coverage should be removed with a commercial liquid paint stripper. **DO NOT USE ACIDS OR FLAME TOOLS TO STRIP PAINT FROM STONE.**

Water Spots and Rings (surface accumulation of hard water) — Buff with dry 0000 steel wool.

Fire and Smoke Damage — Older stones and smoke- or fire-stained fireplaces may require a thorough cleaning to restore their original appearance. Commercially available smoke removal products may save time and effort.

Etch Marks — Calcium-based stones etch more easily. Etch marks are caused by acids (typically from milk, fruit juices, wine, etc.) left on the surface of the stone, some will etch the finish but not leave a stain; others will both etch and stain. Once the stain has been removed, wet the surface with clear water and sprinkle with marble polishing powder. Rub the powder into the stone with a damp cloth or by using a buffing pad with a low speed power drill or polisher. Continue buffing until the etch mark disappears and the marble surface shines. Honing may be required for deep etching. This process may require the services of a stone restoration professional.

White Residue — Test the surface by attempting to scrape it off. Use a nylon pan scraper or a razor blade to carefully scrape the residue. If it can be easily removed, then you are dealing with dried products (soaps, cleaning products, shampoo, oils) on the stone. The shavings will either be soapy when water is introduced or oily if it is conditioner, lotions, or hair treatments. If shavings can be scraped it may be an accumulation of soaps, cleaning products, or hard water build up. If the white residue is powdery, it's likely efflorescence.

Product Buildup — This is a common problem that occurs when stone is not regularly cleaned or not cleaned properly. Stonetech soapstone remover is recommended for cleaning.

Hard Water Buildup — Hard water deposits can be scraped away, but only with significantly more difficulty. Stonetech soapstone remover is recommended for cleaning.

Efflorescence — A white powder that may appear on the surface of the stone that is caused by water carrying mineral salts from below the surface of the stone to the surface which has evaporated. When the water evaporates, it leaves the powdery salt residue. Typically efflorescence is a minor inconvenience that can be remedied without having to replace the stone. If the installation is new, dust mop or vacuum the powder. Repeat as necessary as the stone dries out. If the installation is not fresh, follow regular cleaning procedures and use a Stonetech specialty product if available (check the list of approved stones first as calcium based stones can etch if you use the wrong chemicals). If the problem persists, periodic professional cleaning may be required. When the efflorescence is unable to be treated, a bigger problem underneath the stone may be present (moisture in the substrate). A professional stone restoration company will need to be consulted in this case to determine viability of restoration or replacement.

Disclaimer: This document is a general reference guide for cleaning and maintaining porcelain tile. Always follow manufacturer recommendations for installing & maintaining products. If available, these are typically located in each box of tile and sometimes online.

[Recommended cleaners can be viewed & purchased here.](#)

Porcelain tile is a durable, practical and hygienic surface that can last a lifetime if properly cared for. With proper maintenance, tile and grout appearance are preserved, slip resistance can be maintained, and hygienic benefits can be utilized. Despite being nearly waterproof, it is important to understand that porcelain is not maintenance-free. There is a wide variety of porcelain suitable for various applications, and it's important to be aware of features that may need special care or attention, such as polished finishes or unglazed surfaces. The following guide provides practical information on the care and maintenance of porcelain tile.

General Tips

- Regularly inspect tiles and have any damaged tiles professionally removed/replaced.
- Promptly wipe spills and clean with a damp cloth or sponge.
- Sweep and/or vacuum floors regularly to remove any dirt particles, dust or debris. Over time, buildup can be abrasive to the tile surface.
- Use felt or rubber protective pads under furniture to prevent scratching tile surfaces.
- Place good quality floor mats in high traffic locations and areas that are susceptible to moisture (ie. near entrance/exit ways).

Cleaning

- Use a damp mop or sponge with an all-purpose household cleaner that is not oil-based and has low VOC to clean glazed floor tiles on a regular basis.
- Wipe glazed wall tiles periodically using a dampened cloth or sponge and a non oil-based household cleaner.
- Use a mild, soapless detergent with neutral pH for cleaning unglazed tiles.
- Do not combine ammonia and household bleaches and under any circumstances, do not use muriatic acid on any tiled surface.
- Thoroughly read & follow all manufacture warnings and instructions for all cleaning products before use and test all cleaning solutions and materials in a small inconspicuous area before full application.
- After using cleaning solutions, wipe down the entire area with a clean cloth or mop and clear water to remove any residue that may have been left behind.
- Do not use cleaning wax, oil based cleaners, ammonia, sealants or products containing acid or bleach as part of routine maintenance.
- Avoid abrasive cleaning products such as scouring pads or steel wool pads, as they can damage polished, shiny, or uneven surfaces
- Do not use vinegar to clean.

Grout

Routine grout cleaning can be done with an all-purpose household cleaner that is non-oil-based and has low VOC depending on the application. For periodic deep cleaning of grout, use a concentrated tile & grout cleaner. Always read and follow the instructions on the product label. Rinse the area with clear water and pat dry with a clean towel or sponge to remove any residue. As true for all tiled surfaces, do not use acidic solutions / cleaners as part of a regular maintenance routine.

- Do not use essential oils as it can penetrate the grout. These attract dust and airborne contaminants.
- Ensure the cleaning product selected is compatible with cleaning the grout joints.

Sealing

Unglazed porcelain or quarry tiles may be sealed with a penetrating sealer based on manufacturer recommendations. The majority of porcelain is glazed, and glazed porcelain tile does not need to be sealed. However you may decide to seal the grout joints (non-epoxy only). Sealing the grout can prevent moisture absorption, staining & discolouration. Epoxy based grouts do not need to be sealed. If you choose to seal the grout, periodic re-sealing is required. Check with the sealer manufacturer to determine the sealer's lifespan, as it's based on application use and sealer type.

Troubleshooting

Residual Coatings (Sealers/Waxes, etc.) - Use a tile sealer & adhesive remover to clear off a topical sealer or floor wax from a ceramic tile. Be sure to test a small area before full application and always follow the instructions on the product label. Working in small manageable areas, apply the sealer & adhesive remover as directed, allowing it to set without drying. Coating should begin to soften. If necessary, reapply the remover and lightly agitate the surface with a nylon scrub pad until the sealer softens and can be easily removed. Rinse the area with clear water and pat dry with a clean towel or sponge to remove any residue.

Grout Haze - After tile installation, grout residue can form a white haze like film on the surface of the tile. This can be buffed off the surface using a clean cloth once the grout has finished curing. If the residue is very stubborn or the tiles are unglazed a special grout haze remover solution may be used. Read and follow the instructions on the product label. The solution will break down the cement and allow the haze to be wiped away. Rinse the area with clear water and wipe dry with a clean towel or sponge to remove any residue. Do not use acidic solutions/cleaners as part of a regular maintenance routine. Many of the grout products on the market today are polymer modified, which means they have latex in them. Be sure to purchase a solution that is compatible with the type of grout you have used.

High Moisture Areas - Tiled surfaces in your bathroom may require a more thorough routine cleaning because of a build-up of soap scum, body oils or hard-water stains. Use a clean, damp cloth, or sponge with a neutral pH cleaner, allowing it to stand about five minutes before rinsing and drying. Specialty bathroom cleaners may also be used (always test first). Clean shower regularly in high moisture areas.

Disclaimer: This document is a general reference guide for cleaning and maintaining specialty tile. Always follow manufacturer recommendations for installing & maintaining products. If available, these are typically located in each box of tile and sometimes online. The following guide provides general information and should be read in its entirety.

[Recommended cleaners can be viewed & purchased here.](#)

Specialty tile constitutes a range of innovative products that constantly grows each year. With proper maintenance, tile and grout appearance are preserved, slip resistance can be maintained (when applicable), and hygienic benefits can be utilized. When properly cared for, especially tile can have a long lifespan, but it is important to understand the maintenance that applies to your material. There is a wide variety of special and custom products suitable for various applications, and it's important to be aware of features that may need special care or attention, such as metal accents or hand painted finishes. The following guide provides practical information on the care and maintenance of specialty tile.

Terracotta / Lauren Liess Terra Collection

- Terracotta tile naturally develops patina as it ages.
- Regularly inspect tiles and have any damaged tiles professionally removed/replaced.
- Promptly wipe spills & splashes and clean with a damp cloth or sponge, then promptly dry with a soft cloth.
- Do not expose tile to excessive moisture or soaking as this can damage the glaze and result in product failure.
- Tiles are sealed out of the kiln, so it's not necessary to reseal them prior to grouting. Grout can be sealed after if desired.
- Mild soap is the manufacturer suggested cleaning agent.
- Never use abrasive products or brushes.
- Never scrub with rough materials that may scratch the surface.
- Do not use painter's tape or adhesive tape on hand painted products.

Wood Cladding / Baywood Collection

Staining/Painting

- The Baywood Collection will absorb stain and paint.
- If a more polished look is desired, products can be sanded and stained a few times.
- Any stains or paints must be meticulously applied in thin layers in order to keep the wood grain visible.

Cleaning

- Warm soapy water is recommended to clean the tiles.
- Wood cleaning products can also be used to clean.
- Avoid using chemical based cleaners.
- Grout is not recommended. Each tile has a 1mm gap to allow for expansion.

Metal

- Metal tiles are made a handful of different ways. For this reason, there is not a one size fits all approach to apply universally to all metal tile. It is pertinent to find out the best way to clean your specific tile from the manufacturer.
- Most metal tiles can be cleaned with warm water and dishwashing detergent.
- Stainless Steel cleaner can be used for stainless steel and can be dried with a lint-free cloth.
- Hard water deposits or stains can be removed with a paste of baking soda and water. Apply to the entire surface with a cloth (not a brush) and rinse off using warm water, then dry with a lint-free cloth.
- Never use abrasive brushes or sponges on metal products as they will scratch the surface.