

Maintenance and Cleaning of Natural Stone Tiles

Island Stone tiles are made with a variety of natural stone materials. With proper installation, followed with a quality sealer treatment and periodic cleaning, these tiles will give many years of satisfaction. Natural stone tiles are extremely durable and, with proper maintenance, are easy to care for. Best method for cleaning stone tiles:

EVERYDAY CLEANING:

- Immediately wipe up spills and messes. Use pH balanced cleaners (such as Fila Cleaner) and soap-less detergents for daily cleaning. Mild dishwashing liquid sometimes works quite well on pebble surfaces.
- It is important to rinse the tile and grout thoroughly to remove any remaining cleaner.
- If required, agitate grout joints with a soft bristled brush to loosen debris. Thoroughly rinse following cleaning.
- Acidic cleaners will etch/mark the surface of alkaline stones like marble, travertine, and sandstone.
- Acidic cleaners will eventually erode the grout in the joints making cleaning and maintenance more and more problematic.
- This is due to the tendency of acid cleaners to eat away at the smaller aggregates first, leaving the larger stain-attracting aggregates behind.
- Coloured grout pigment can be permanently damaged by using acidic cleaners. This is especially true if used often.

HEAVY DUTY CLEANING:

- First try to solve the heavy-duty cleaning needs with pH balanced cleaners. These can include scouring cleaners and poultices manufactured for this purpose. Be sure to use a soft bristled brush to agitate the cleaners in the grout joints. Test an inconspicuous area with any abrasive powder to evaluate if it will adversely affect the finish of the stone.
- A good practice is to allow the cleaner to rest upon the surface to gain the full potential of the cleaner.
- If these results are not acceptable, then proceed to using a more aggressive high-alkaline heavy duty or "deep clean" cleaner from a reputable manufacturer.
- Again, it is very important to rinse the tile and grout thoroughly to remove any remaining cleaner.
- If the results are not satisfactory using the PH balanced cleaners, it may be necessary to use an acidic solution to solve a particular problem. This should be done in consultation with a qualified natural stone specialist.

OTHER CLEANING INFORMATION FOR STONE:

- Most stones, once protected, require occasional scrubbing to remove surface build-up of dirt and grime. Using a neutral cleaner, mop or scrub on cleaner as directed, rinse if necessary. Towel drying after rinsing removes streaks. With pebble, it is important that all cleaning residue is removed from the grout surface to prevent grime build-up and minimise the chances of grout staining.
- On slate or flamed finished stones (textured surface), a good scrubbing is required more often, due to the texture of the product holding the dirt to the surface. A good penetrating sealer cuts down on the frequency of this task.
- With all stones, establish what sealer to use or has been used previously, and then work within the manufacturer's guidelines to set up a regular maintenance schedule.
- For stubborn stains on natural stone tiles, a product commonly referred to as "poultice" can be used. A poultice is used in a paste form and is applied to the surface, covering the entire area of the stain. The poultice works by drawing the stain out of the stone. It should be applied according the manufacturer's instructions and preferably in consultation with a natural stone specialist.