

Keep your marble, terrazzo and travertine looking right

keep this one in the kitchen drawer

What these floors and counters hate, what to do every day, and how to tell when the sealer has stopped working.

WHAT THESE STONES HATE



Acid

Lemon, vinegar, wine, tomato, and most bathroom and tile cleaners. Acid opens the surface and leaves a dull ring. That mark is an etch, not a stain, so scrubbing does not lift it.



Dragged furniture

The grit caught under a chair leg is what cuts the finish, not the leg. Lift instead of sliding, and put felt pads on anything that sits on stone.



Standing water

Puddles at the sink, the base of a planter, a shower floor that never dries. The water leaves, the minerals stay, and the spot reads dark or chalky.

FIVE HABITS

EVERY DAY

- Catch spills while they are wet.**
Blot straight down with a cloth. Wiping across spreads the acid over more surface.
- Dry dust mop before anything else.**
Sand and grit tracked in from outside do most of the scratching on a floor.
- Coasters, trivets, cutting boards.**
Under glasses, bottles, hot pans and anything acidic on a counter or a table top.

EVERY WEEK

- Clean with a pH neutral stone cleaner.**
Damp mop or damp cloth, then dry the surface. Skip vinegar, bleach and general purpose sprays.
- Walk the room and look.**
New dull spots, open or missing grout, a loose piece. Small problems stay small when they are caught early.

THE WATER DROP TEST

Put a few drops of water on a clean, dry spot. Wait 10 to 15 minutes, then wipe it off.



Still beading

The sealer is doing its job. Test again in a few months.

Stone went dark

The surface is absorbing. It is time to reseat that area.

You will see one of these two.

Test the spots that work hardest: in front of the sink, around the cooktop, the shower floor. A sealer slows absorption. It does not stop acid, so sealed marble still etches.

POLISH OR HONE

Polishing

Brings the same surface up to a reflective finish. It is what most kitchen marble and most lobby floors were installed with. The fit when the wear is light and the shine is what is missing.

Honing

Grinds the surface flat and even to a matte or satin finish. It takes out etch marks, light scratches and old wear, and it carries new marks better. The fit for busy floors and for bathrooms.

Both start the same way. The damage sits in the surface, so the surface has to come off first. A shine sprayed over damage wears back off.

CALL WHEN YOU SEE



Etch rings you can feel

A fingernail catches the edge, or there is a cluster of them around the sink or the cooktop.



Dull traffic lanes

The path people walk reads flatter or darker than the stone on either side of it.



Cracked or missing grout

Showers, thresholds and shower pans first. Water gets under the tile through an open joint.