



C.G. CUSTOM TILE & MARBLE
INCORPORATED

13571 DESMOND ST.
PACOIMA, CA 91331

PHONE: 1-818-890-5100
FAX: 1-818-890-9933

STONE AND MARBLE MAINTENANCE

Introduction:

Polished Marble looks beautiful, but an intriguing paradox. On one hand, marble is hard, durable and lasts for years. On the other hand, the polished surface can be marred by chemicals, stains and abrasion.

What can ruin your marble floor?

Scratches:

Sand and grit carried from outside by shoes can easily scratch and abrade the marble surface like a sandpaper. Unprotected furniture legs may leave scratches too. Dragging heavy objects or sharp items on the floor can cause very deep scratches or gouges that may be permanent.

Stains:

Marble is porous and can easily be discolored by spills from food, sitting pots, metal furniture legs, oil, ink, water damage, etc.

Acid:

Spills from drinking liquids or food containing acid will etch (dull mark) marble surfaces. For example: Lemon juice, orange juice, carbonated beverages, cranberry juice, apple juice, wine, tomato, etc. The dull mark may have a coin size or spread over several tiles.

Another source for etch marks are cleaning products containing acid. For example: Tile cleaners, vinegar, Ajax, soft scrub, etc.

Alkaline:

In addition to chemicals containing acid, chemicals that contain high alkaline or bleach can damage marble floors to lose its shine and elegance.

Moisture:

Local water may contain chlorine, salts, magnesium, potassium and other minerals. When water is used continuously to clean the marble floor it may ruin certain types of marble by causing pitting, spalling and yellowing. This is why it is important to protect the floor with a premium sealer.

Improper Maintenance Procedures:

Continuous use of water as the sole cleaning agent (without chemicals), or using dirty mops, or not changing the cleaning solution frequently enough, can cause the marble to look dingy, streaky and unattractive.

Improper Maintenance Program:

Not having a steady use of dust mop and damp mop may cause a decrease of the shine. In addition, a yearly maintenance may be required to renew the shine especially when the floor is exposed to a medium or heavy traffic.

Maintenance tips

Protect the floor with a premium penetrating sealer to reduce etch marks and prevent stains and moisture from filtering into the marble. To apply the sealer properly, call a professional stone care company. Traffic areas should be resealed on a yearly basis.

Install walk off mat by the main door to prevent sand and grit from spreading on the floor causing scratches and dullness. A good quality mat will capture dirt before someone walks on the floor. When it is placed outside your door it will signal people that they need to wipe their feet before entering the house.

Protect all furniture legs that come in contact with the marble with special felt pads or plastic (can be purchased in home centers).

Proper protection will reduce the damage from scratches.

Place all plants on a special base to prevent deep stains and scratches.

Use only neutral cleaners or stone soap liquid specifically formulated for natural stone that will not harm the surface.

Dust mop or vacuum the floor at least 1-2 times per week to eliminate sand and grit to reduce possibilities of scratches. Do not use oil-treated dust mops on marble surfaces. Do not get the dust mop wet; if the floor is wet; be sure to dry it before dust mopping.

Run the dust mop in one direction, do not move it back and forth.

Always store the dust mop keeping its head off the ground. Wash it in cold water with laundry detergent and machine dry.

Damp mop the floor regularly 1-2 times per week to remove dirt and soil. Mix solutions as per manufacturers directions. Always use clean cold or warm water. Do not use hot water since it will cause the floor to streak. It is important to rinse and wring the mop as often as possible. If you don't rinse the mop enough you will only be pushing dirt.

Blot spills with paper towel. Don't wipe because it will spread the spill. Flush the area around the floor and then when the floor dries, it will streak or appear dingy. If your marble tends to streak every time that you mop the floor, then dry the marble with a clean terry cloth towel or buff with a residential buffing machine.

Questions and Answers

Q: why is it so important to protect natural stone?

A: To preserve the longevity of a natural stone installation it is very important to protect it with a proper sealer. All natural stone are porous (granite less than 1/2% water). As long as we have an absorption factor, stone will stain and deteriorate over time since the regular tap water used in maintenance contains salts, minerals and chlorine which are all detrimental to natural stone. In addition more and more “decorative” marbles are being selected and used for their beauty and not their strength. These marbles are generally very prone to foot abrasion and staining.

Q: What is the purpose of impregnating/penetrating sealer?

A: Impregnator or penetrating sealers are designed to penetrate below the surface of the stone and either deposit solid particles in the pores of the stone, or coat the individual minerals below the surface. Penetrating sealers work by restricting water, oil and dirt from entering the stone or tile.

Properly applied, a good impregnator sealer will not affect the texture or the appearance of the stone. For all polished and smooth surface, an impregnator is recommended since sealers, which are surface coats, will not bond and will be easy abraded.

Q: What does sealing or impregnating stone really mean?

A: In the stone industry, sealing and impregnating are often confused. The main objective of an impregnator is to protect the inside of natural stone from staining. Impregnators help prevent fluids from penetrating into the stone surface, but they do nothing to protect the top surface of the stone. They do not prevent traffic patterns, and they will not prevent etching from acid spills on marble. An impregnator will keep the acid out of the stone but not off the top surface.

Q: Does an impregnator sealer provide stain proof to the stone?

A: No. Most penetrating sealers are designed to be either water or oil resistant, not water or oil proof if a liquid is left on the stone long enough, it will eventually penetrate and stain. Penetrating sealers are designed to give you time to clean up the spill before staining occurs. Nor are they designed to prevent acid etching that happens from lemon, vinegar, tomato and other acidic foods and drinks. Any acid will etch the surface of most marble and limestone, whether sealed or unsealed.

Q: Does an impregnator sealer prevent oil penetration?

A: Most sealers will prevent water and oil penetration, but it is very difficult to stop hot cooking oil from penetrating into the stone, because it can melt the resin in the stone.

Q: How does impregnating sealer works?

A: Impregnators are a mixture of silicon, resins, and usually a mineral spirit, which is a solvent. That is why they have a strong odor. The mineral spirit is added to the mixture because it acts as a carrier for the silicones and resins. The mineral spirit rides the resin and silicone into the stone as a liquid form. The mineral spirit evaporates out of the stone and leaves the silicone resin. The silicone and resin then begin to cure into a solid form, thus forming a fluid repellent membrane in the pores of the stone. This all happens within five to ten minutes. However, complete curing time is usually 12 hours due to moisture content in natural stone.

Q: Is it enough to maintain the stone just by applying impregnator?

A: No. Impregnators and sealers are preventive measures that provide extra protection to the stone. Natural stone still needs to be maintained with proper stone care products after it has been sealed. Sealers will last longer and work better when the stone is properly cared for.

Q: How often should an impregnating sealer be reapplied?

A: Impregnating sealers will not last forever. Over time, the sealer loses its strength and bonding to the stone and eventually evaporates away. In these terms, a stone sealer can be compared to car wax on an automobile, which eventually evaporated off the paint. The sealers lose their ability to protect, as they get older. Some sealers are better than others are, and some will last longer. However in high traffic areas (shower, kitchen or dining room floor), the sealer will not last more than a year.

Q: Why does the impregnating sealer quickly wear in a high traffic area?

A: In a high traffic floor area, the impregnator wears as the stone surface wears down. The reason is because impregnators only penetrate approximately 1/6 inch (1.6 mm) or less. Since stone vary in their porosity, the sealer will penetrate more in some stones than in others. Additionally, some sealers require one coat and others require two or three.

Q: How do I know if an impregnating sealer was applied sufficiently?

A: A good way to measure the strength of an impregnating sealer is to apply moisture to the surface and to see if the color underneath the water darkened within five minutes. If the stone darkens, these means that moisture has penetrated, and a fresh coat should be applied. It is important to remember that if the moisture does not bead up on the surface, it does not necessarily mean that the impregnator/sealer is not working. Beading usually occurs with a new application of sealers. As the sealer ages, the beading action id reduced.