

Surface+

Maintenance of stone flooring for residential use

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Because stone is perceived as hard and permanent, it is often thought that it requires little care. But however hard, all stones will show surface wear and dullness in time. Adding a protective barrier in the form of a sealant can significantly improve appearance in the long term.

Solvent based sealer provides the maximum protection to all stones and is considerably more durable than other sealants, many of which are water based and will wear away over a relatively short period. It is designed to maintain the natural appearance of the stone without creating a heavily varnished shiny surface.

Only stones that are very hard and have a highly polished surface need not be sealed, e.g. polished granites, syenite, and some limestones. They are only very slightly porous and therefore less susceptible to staining, and sealant does not adhere well to a glossy surface.

As soon as the floor has been laid it is strongly recommended that a sealer is applied to the floor, preferably by experienced contractors, and full details for sealing can be supplied. This will ensure that ongoing regular maintenance is simple and effective.

Regular Maintenance

There are two options for cleaning a stone floor depending on the equipment available:

Using electrical equipment

The most effective method is to dry buff with an electric polishing machine:-

1. Remove any spills first so that they are not smeared across the floor by buffing e.g. for tea or coffee use a damp cloth, for oil or grease use white spirit and wipe off with a cloth.
2. Dry vacuum to remove all loose dust and dirt.
3. Dry buff using a green nylon pad on the base of the polisher. If more dust and dirt is loosened dry vacuum where necessary.

For an occasional thorough clean

1. First remove spills as above, then dry vacuum.
2. Scrub using a green pad on the base of the polishing machine and only half a cupful of liquid detergent, e.g. Liquid Flash, in warm water.
3. Rinse with plenty of clean water either with a well rung out cotton mop or with a wet vacuum.
4. When dry, buff with a dry green pad on the polisher to remove any smears.

Using a Mop

If a polishing machine is not available, floors can be satisfactorily cleaned by mopping. A traditional cotton mop is recommended rather than one made of fabric strips.

1. Remove any spills as described in number 1 previously.
2. Dry vacuum for the most effective removal of loose dust and dirt, or sweep.

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3. Add a very little liquid detergent (e.g. Liquid Flash) to a bucket of warm water then mop. Only about half a capful is necessary, too much will leave residues of detergent on the floor. Use a scrubbing brush on any stubborn marks, or if the stone has a textured surface scrub where any compacted dirt has lodged.
4. Rinse the mop well, and then rinse the floor with plenty of clean water, changing it if necessary. This will remove residues of dirt and detergent.
5. Allow to dry, and if any smears remain buff with a dry cloth if and where necessary.

For an Occasional Thorough Clean

1. Remove spills and dry vacuum.
2. Using the same proportions of warm water and detergent, scrub with a long handled scrubbing brush. This is more likely to be necessary on a textured floor than on a smooth surface when dirt may have built up in the irregular finish.
3. Rinse as above, leave to dry, and buff with a dry cloth if and where necessary.

General Recommendations

- Where foot traffic causes dulling of the stone, surface tone can be restored by wiping the cleaned dried area with a little sealer which should then be left to dry.
- Never use acid to clean a limestone or any polished stone, it will etch the surface.
- Never apply waxes, polymers or oils to unsealed stone as they may create stains and alter the appearance. They are not necessary on top of a sealed floor and will only create more need for maintenance.
- Adequate external and internal barrier mats in entrance areas are very important to reduce the amount of grit that can be carried onto a stone floor with the risk of scratching.
- To avoid scratching the surface never use abrasive cleaners, only liquids, and never use a knife blade or sharp instrument to dislodge dirt, scrub instead.

A stone floor will give long years of service if the right measures are implemented from the outset. If in any doubt contact Surface Plus.

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