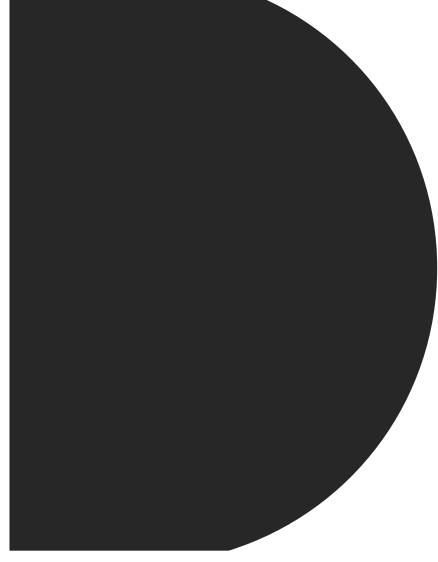


Natural Stone & Terrazzo Tile Maintenance & Cleaning Guide



Natural Stone & Terrazzo

Tile Maintenance & Cleaning Guide

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Natural Stone & Terrazzo

1.0 Choosing Natural Stone

Each piece of natural stone is uniquely formed and each piece of stone has its own characteristics, with variations in colour, veining, markings and occasional imperfections. As no two pieces are identical, and the stone you receive may differ slightly in appearance from the samples shown, as it is likely sourced from a different block. Unlike manmade products which are manufactured in a controlled environment. To fully appreciate the natural variations, we recommend viewing the current stock in person before making your selection.

Understanding your Stone for Proper Care and Maintenance

The first step in maintaining your natural stone is to understand its geological classification and composition. This knowledge is essential for selecting the appropriate cleaning products and determining the best care practices. Different stones have unique properties, and using the right products ensures

Geological Classification of Natural Stone

Natural stone is classified into three primary categories based on its formation process: Sedimentary, Metamorphic, and Igneous. Within each category, stones are further classified as either Calcareous or

Mineral Composition	Sedimentary	Metamorphic	Igneous	Specific Care
Calcareous stone is composed mainly of calcium carbonate, a chemical compound commonly found in natural stone	Limestone Travertine Onyx	Marble Serpentine		Avoid Acidic Cleaners Only use pH neutral cleaners specifically designed for natural stone.
Siliceous stone is primarily composed of silicates, such as quartz, feldspar, mica, and other mineral compounds.	Sandstone	Quartzite Slate Soapstone	Bluestone Basalt Granite	Acidic Cleaners used with Caution It is recommended that acidic cleaning solutions are avoided. While siliceous stones are more resilient than calcareous stones, all natural stone and terrazzo surfaces should be treated with care. Only stone-safe cleaning products should be used, and acidic cleaners should be handled with caution to help maintain the appearance and integrity of your stone. Always test cleaning products on a small inconspicuous area prior to use and discontinue use immediately if any changes to the surface is observed.

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2.0 Sealing Natural Stone

Pre-Sealing Moisture Sensitive Stone and Sealing after Installation

In certain environments where moisture exposure is high or where the stone is particularly porous, pre-sealing is recommended to protect the stone’s integrity and appearance. Pre-sealing helps prevent moisture absorption, stains, and potential damage caused by environmental factors.

In these situations, we recommend pre-sealing not only the face of the stone but also the sides. In some cases, all six sides of the stone may need to be pre-sealed to provide adequate protection against moisture and staining. Avoid stacking stones without airflow. Stack them to allow proper ventilation, and remove any excess pre-sealer within 5 to 10 minutes to prevent buildup.

Once the stone is clean and dry, final sealing can begin. There are different types of sealers for a variety of stone products. It is recommended that you also seek advice from the product manufacturer for the best sealer for your stone.

Natural stone does not always have to be sealed, so sealing is a personal choice. Some sealers are designed to alter the appearance of the stone, and sealing can help delay the absorption of liquids also.

Products Available

When it comes to natural stone sealing, selecting the right product is essential to protect your stone surfaces from stains, moisture, and wear. Here’s an overview of the different types of sealing products

Type of Sealing Product	Purpose	Best For	How it Works
Penetrating Sealer (Invisible Sealers)	Penetrate the surface of the stone to create an invisible barrier that protects against moisture, oil, and stains without altering the appearance of the stone.	Granite Marble Limestone Travertine (Porous stones)	Sealer forms a chemical bond with the stone, which prevents liquids from being absorbed. They don’t change the texture or sheen of the stone.
Topical Sealer (Surface Sealers)	Sealer creates a protective layer on the stone’s surface, providing a shiny finish or matte appearance depending on the product. They are primarily used for stones that are more susceptible to surface staining.	Marble Limestone	Topical sealers form a film on the stone’s surface, which acts as a barrier. They are available in gloss, satin, or matte finishes.
Enhancing Sealer	Sealers darken or “enhance” the natural colour of the stone, bringing out the richness of the veining and texture while also providing protection.	Slate Travertine Limestone Granite	These sealers soak into the stone and deepen the natural colours. They often leave a slight sheen, but some are designed to maintain a matte finish.
Water-Based Sealer	These are eco-friendly sealers that protect natural stone surfaces while being safe for the environment.	Indoor stone surfaces or when low odor is a priority	Water-based sealers protect the stone while emitting fewer fumes, making them safer for indoor use. They offer long-lasting protection without altering the stone’s appearance too much.
Oil-Based Sealer	Oil-based sealers provide strong protection, especially against stains and moisture. They are more durable in areas exposed to high traffic or harsh conditions.	Granite Slate Sandstone (Dense stones)	Topical sealers form a film on the stone’s surface, which acts as a barrier. They are available in gloss, satin, or matte finishes.

Important Note

It is important to note that sealers do not make natural stone completely stain-proof. Instead, they slow the absorption of liquids into the stone. So even when natural stone has a penetrating sealer, staining can still occur.

Many household products contain strong pigments, dyes, oils or acids that can still work their way into the stone’s pores if left sitting. Some items, such as hair dye, will stain the stone on contact as they are designed to colour on contact and are aggressive in nature.

A sealer is not a last resort, it is only a temporary barrier designed to give you more time to clean up spills, and will not stop stains from forming if spills are not wiped away immediately.

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3.0 Stone Properties and General Recommendations

Stone Type	Stone Properties	Porosity Level	General Recommendations	Initial Clean
Basalt	Basalt is a volcanic rock used for countertops, flooring, and exterior paving. Some types are more porous than others, and they need to be sealed well to prevent staining and damage.	Low	Pre-sealing the face is not recommended. As the sealer can pool in the microscopic pores and leave a white crystalline excess	Heavy duty cleaning solution / Ph neutral cleaner
Granite	Dense, crystalline rock made primarily of quartz, feldspar, and mica.	Low	Highly resistant to stains, acids, and moisture, making it an excellent choice for kitchen counters, bathroom vanities, and high-traffic areas	Heavy duty cleaning solution / Ph neutral cleaner
Limestone	Composed mostly of calcium carbonate, limestone is a sedimentary stone that is somewhat more porous than marble. It can absorb liquids and stains if not properly sealed, especially in kitchens and bathrooms.	Med-High	Pre-sealing is recommended. It is highly sensitive to acids and special care must be taken when cleaning.	Ph neutral cleaning solutions only
Marble	A metamorphic rock primarily made of calcite, marble is often used for elegant surfaces like countertops, flooring, and decorative elements.	Medium	While it is less porous than limestone, it is still prone to etching from acidic substances and requires regular sealing to maintain its look.	Ph neutral cleaning solutions only
Sandstone	Sedimentary stone made of sand-sized grains of mineral, rock, or organic materials. It is porous and can absorb water and oils easily, which makes sealing essential in environments like bathrooms or patios.	High	Sealing is highly recommended as unsealed tiles can stain and build up with mould easily	Heavy duty cleaning solution / Ph neutral cleaner
Slate	Metamorphic rock that is composed of clay minerals and quartz. This gives it the layered characteristic. It is known for its durability.	Mod-Low	Resists moisture well and is often used for roofing, flooring and countertops. However, benefit from a protective sealer in high moisture areas.	Heavy duty cleaning solution / Ph neutral cleaner
Terracotta	Composed of a particularly porous clay with a high iron content giving their reddish/brown colour. The tiles are fired at a relatively low temp and the surface remains porous unless it is glazed	High	Unglazed tiles are extremely porous and may benefit from pre-sealing to give added repellence and to assist when grouting	Heavy duty cleaning solution / Ph neutral cleaner
Terrazzo	Composite material, poured in place or precast. It usually consists of chips of marble, quartz, granite and glass.	Med-High	Sealing is highly recommended as it is regarded as a soft stone	Ph neutral cleaning solutions only
Travertine	Type of limestone formed by mineral springs. Its porous nature makes it susceptible to staining, but with proper sealing, it can perform well in both indoor and outdoor spaces.	Med-High	Stone has some natural stain resistance, however sealing is still recommended	Ph neutral cleaning solutions only

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4.0 Immediate Post Installation Cleaning

Immediate post-installation cleaning of natural stone is crucial for preserving the integrity and beauty of the stone. By carefully removing grout, mortar, and any residue, you ensure that the stone’s surface is clean and free from any materials that could stain or damage it. Additionally, proper care and cleaning will set the stage for maintaining your stone’s appearance for years to come.

Step-By-Step Procedure

- 1. Allow the Stone to Settle**
Wait for Adhesives/Grout to Dry: Before you begin the cleaning process, ensure that any adhesive, mortar, or grout used during installation has dried sufficiently. This typically takes 24–48 hours depending on the type of mortar and grout used.
- 2. Remove Loose Debris and Dust**
Dusting: Use a soft, dry microfiber cloth or a vacuum cleaner with a brush attachment to remove any loose dust, dirt, or debris left behind after installation.
Dry Cleaning: Be sure to do this step gently to avoid scratching the stone surface.
- 3. Clean Excess Grout or Mortar**
Grout Residue Removal:
If grout has left a thin film on the stone surface, use a damp sponge or cloth to wipe the surface, removing excess grout. Avoid soaking the stone with water.
Do not scrub hard as this may scratch or damage the stone, especially softer stones like limestone or marble.

For Stubborn Grout:
If grout haze persists, a pH-neutral cleaner specifically designed for stone or a stone-safe grout haze remover can be used. Always test the product in an inconspicuous area first to ensure it won't damage the stone.
- 4. Clean Excess Mortar or Thinset**
If any mortar or thinset remains on the surface, it must be carefully removed.

First, try wiping the surface with a damp sponge. If this doesn't work, use a plastic scraper (never metal) to gently lift off the dried mortar. Be cautious not to scratch the stone.

Mild acid-based cleaner (such as a diluted phosphoric acid solution) can sometimes help remove stubborn mortar residues. However, test it on a small area before full application. Use this as a last resort, as acids can sometimes alter the finish of the stone.
- 5. Rinse and Dry the Surface**
Rinse the Surface: Once grout and mortar residues are removed, rinse the entire stone surface with clean, lukewarm water. This helps remove any remaining cleaning solution and prevents it from leaving streaks or residue.

Important Reminders

- Avoid Harsh Chemicals**
Always avoid using harsh, acidic cleaners (like vinegar or bleach) as they can damage the stone surface, especially on more delicate stones like marble, limestone, or travertine.
- Use pH-Neutral Cleaners**
For cleaning natural stone, always use pH neutral cleaners that are specifically designed for stone care. These are gentle and won't harm the stone's surface.
- Gentle Cleaning Tools**
Always use soft cleaning tools like microfiber cloths, sponges, or soft-bristled brushes. Avoid abrasive sponges or brushes that can scratch the stone.
- Test New Products**
Before applying any cleaning or sealing products, always do a spot test on a small, hidden area of the stone to ensure it doesn't alter the color, finish, or texture of the stone.

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5.0 Dealing with Typical Stains

Group	Stain Type	Effect on Stone	Recommendation
Oil Based	Grease, plumbers' putty, tar, cooking oil, milk and cosmetics	An oil based stain will darken the stone and normally must be chemically dissolved so source of the stain can be flushed or rinsed away.	Clean gently with a soft, liquid cleaner such as household detergent, mineral spirits, or acetone
Organic	Coffee, tea, wine, juice, leaves, bark, bird droppings	May cause a pinkish-brown stain and may disappear after the source of the stain has been removed.	Immediately blot the stain with a soft cloth. Do not rub, as this may spread the stain. Poultice Method: Use a paste of hydrogen peroxide (3%) mixed with baking soda or diatomaceous earth. Apply this poultice to the stain, cover it with plastic wrap, and leave it overnight. After removing the poultice, clean the stone with a mild soap and water solution. Rinse and dry the surface.
Food Stains	Can be acidic (like tomato & vinegar) or contain oils (like mustard)	Stain type will vary depending on the type of food which has come into contact with the stone.	As with organic stains, food stains should be wiped up immediately to avoid permanent damage. Clean the area with a pH-neutral cleaner or a mixture of warm water and dish soap.
Metal	Iron, rust, copper, bronze	Rust stains are orange to brown in colour and follow the shape of the object. 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	Algae, mildew, lichens, moss, fungi	May cause a greenish-brown stain and may disappear after the source of the stain has been removed.	Clean with diluted cleaning solution. Use a cup of any of the following: ammonia, bleach or hydrogen peroxide diluted with 4 litres of water.
Soap Scum	Soap residue	Film or stain on surface, particularly in bathrooms and kitchens	Using a non-abrasive cloth, use a stone safe cleaner to remove the soap scum
Ink	Magic marker, pen, ink	Stain on surface of stone	Apply rubbing alcohol (isopropyl alcohol) to a soft cloth and gently blot the stain. Be cautious with this method, as it may affect the stone's finish.
Paint	Latex and Acrylic paint	Normally these paints will not cause staining on the stone	Small amounts can be removed with a lacquer thinner or scraped off with a razor blade. Heavy painter coverage should be removed with a commercial "heavy liquid" paint stripper. These strippers normally contain caustic soda or lye. Do not use acids of flame tools to strip paint from stone. Caution – paint strippers can etch the surface of the stone and repolishing may be necessary. Only use wood or plastic scrapers for removing sludge and curdled paint.
	Oil based paint	May cause an oil based stain on the stone	After removing the paint, refer to section on oil-based stains
Efflorescence	Caused by the deposition of mineral salts carried by water from below the surface of the stone	A white powder that may appear on the surface of the stone	New installation – dust mop or vacuum the powder. Repeat as necessary as the stone dries out. Do not use water to remove the powder as it will only temporary disappear. If the problem persists, contact your installer to help identify and remove the cause of the moisture.
Water Spots & Rings	Surface accumulation of hard water	May appear as a darkened area on the stone	The issue may resolve itself over time when allowed to completely dry. If it doesn't, buff with dry 0000 steel wool.
Etch Marks	Caused by acids left on the surface of the stone	Area may appear dull and not as smooth compared to the rest of the stone	Some products will etch the finish but not leave a stain. Others will both etch and stain. Contact a professional stone restorer for refinishing or repolishing etched areas.

Please note that further professional advice should be sought before taking any action based on the information provided. Bettertiles accepts no responsibility for the performance of cleaning products, nor for any damages arising from their use, as quality control and application fall outside our direct control.

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6.0 Best Practice for Stain Removal

Prompt Action:

Always clean up spills as soon as they happen to prevent stains from setting into the stone.

Test First:

Always test any cleaning solution or poultice on a small, inconspicuous area before applying it to the entire stain.

Re-Sealing:

After stain removal, particularly with porous stones, re-seal the stone to protect it from future staining and moisture penetration.

Consult a Professional:

For stubborn stains or valuable natural stone, it may be best to consult a stone care professional to avoid damaging the surface. By using the correct cleaning techniques for specific types of stains, you can maintain your natural stone surfaces' beauty and longevity.

7.0 Etching on Stone

Terrazzo, Marble, Travertine, Limestone, and Onyx are all natural stones that contain a significant amount of calcium carbonate. While these materials are prized for their beauty and elegance, they are also more prone to etching due to their chemical composition.

Can Etching Be Repaired?

Unlike stains, which can often be removed or reduced with specialised cleaners or poultices, etching cannot be removed with regular cleaning. Since etching involves a physical alteration of the stone's surface, repair typically involves:

Polishing the Surface:

A professional stone restoration expert can buff and polish the surface to remove or lessen the appearance of the etch. This process may involve using diamond abrasives or specialized stone polishing compounds to restore the stone's smooth finish.

Honing:

If the etching is extensive, the stone may need to be honed (re-surfaced) to restore its uniform appearance. This can be a more labor-intensive process.

Avoid DIY Etch Removal:

While some people try to remove etching with abrasive cleaners or tools, this often worsens the issue. Always seek professional help for serious etching.

8.0 General Cleaning Schedule

In general, natural stone can be mopped regularly using a pH neutral biodegradable cleaner, stone soap, or a diluted mild liquid dishwashing detergent and warm water. Similar to any item cleaned in your home, an excessive concentration of cleaner or soap may leave a film and cause streaks. For best results, use a clean microfibre mop on floors and ensure that you rinse the surface thoroughly after washing.

If need be, the stone can be cleaned periodically (every 9-12 months) depending on traffic and wear with a more heavy duty cleaner which is suitable for use on the stone being cleaned.

1. Daily maintenance should include sweeping or dust mopping of the floor to eliminate dust and grit that act like abrasives on your hard surface floor. No sprays are required on your dust mop.
2. Weekly maintenance for normal traffic areas should be done using pH neutral cleaners only (pH in the 7 – 8 range).
3. High traffic areas may require more regular cleaning using a pH neutral cleaner.
4. If your floor has a high polish finish, then buffing the floor regularly will maintain its high polish. Utilising a cleaner/conditioner on your polished floor will aid in maintaining its luster.
5. Heavy duty cleaning should only be done using alkaline cleaners with a pH maximum of 12.
6. All cleaners require time to work prior to any agitation and removal. The "dwell time" will be longer for heavy duty cleaners. A good cleaning solution will have a recommended dwell time on their instructions.
7. All cleaning, both routine and heavy duty benefits from some degree of agitation prior to removal.
8. Extraction of the cleaner residue is by far the best way to maximise cleaner performance. This is best done using a wet & dry vacuum. For routine daily cleaning, extraction may be done periodically, but on a consistent routine basis. All heavy duty cleaning should incorporate extraction.

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9.0 Routine Maintenance Schedule

The following schedule provides a listing of items that will require both preventative and regular maintenance and the recommended frequency. Where tiles have been installed in commercial or public areas, this maintenance regime should be carefully adhered to.

Activity	Daily	Weekly	Quarterly	Biannually	Annually	Comments
General Cleaning	✓					Daily cleaning to remove dirt, dust and typical residues.
Deep Cleaning		✓				Weekly cleaning to remove any built up grime, oils or remaining cleaning residue.
Professional Cleaning				✓		Only pH-neutral, non-acidic stone-safe cleaners are to be used under all circumstances.
Application of penetrating sealer				✓		Stone surfaces should be sealed on a routine basis to assist with protection from spills
Expansion joints to tiled areas				✓		Check for movement or changes
Perimeter joints to tiled areas				✓		Check for movement or changes
Slip test to tile surface in public areas					✓	Recommend that an on-site slip test is carried out every 12 months
Visual inspection of grout			✓			Inspect grout for signs of damage
Visual inspection for efflorescence		✓				Quick visual inspection of areas where tiles are exposed to vertical edge for leaching
Visual inspection of the tile surface			✓			Inspect the surface of the tile for damage

Daily Cleaning

Daily cleaning is mainly focused on removing light dust, dirt and everyday residues that accumulated during normal use. Typically involving wiping the surface with warm water and a pH-neutral stone cleaner using a soft cloth. Daily cleaning helps keep the surface hygienic and prevents dirt from building up.

Recommended cleaning steps:

1. Remove loose dust or dirt using a soft cloth, microfibre cloth or dust mop.
2. Clean the surface with warm water and a pH-neutral stone cleaner
3. Wipe over the surface with a clean cloth or mop ensuring that all cleaner residues have been cleaned away.
4. Dry the surface with a clean cloth or soft mop to prevent streaks or water marks.

Helpful tips:

1. Clean spills as soon as possible to minimise the risk of staining.
2. Use coasters, trays, placemats or protective pads to avoid placing objects directly on the stone surface
3. Always take care when moving large or heavy items to avoid scratching

Deep Cleaning

In addition to daily cleaning, natural stone surfaces may require thorough cleaning on a weekly basis. Weekly deep cleaning is a more thorough process designed to remove any build up of grime, oils or cleaning product residue that may not have been fully removed during the daily clean.

During a weekly clean, allow the cleaner to dwell briefly on the surface, and clean more thoroughly around any joints, crevices or high use areas.

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Professional Cleaning

All natural stone tiles must be maintained under a strict cleaning and sealing regime to ensure long-term performance. This includes a mandatory maintenance cycle of no longer than six (6) months between each professional clean and penetrating sealer reapplication. Only pH-neutral, non-acidic stone-safe cleaners are to be used under all circumstances. Acidic, abrasive or high-alkaline cleaning agents are strictly prohibited, as they will cause irreversible surface etching, discolouration, and degradation.

Due to the inherent characteristics and natural porosity of stone, these products have intended-use limitations and are not designed to withstand harsh chemical exposure, aggressive cleaning methods, or neglect of regular sealing. To preserve surface integrity and appearance, a high-quality product should be chosen for all cleaning and maintenance procedures, including approved penetrating sealers and daily/weekly cleaning agents.

Strict adherence to this maintenance protocol is essential to ensure the durability, aesthetic longevity, and performance of the natural stone installation.

Application of Penetrating Sealer

All natural stone surfaces must be sealed using a high-quality penetrating sealer prior to use and maintained at intervals not exceeding six (6) months. The initial application of sealer is critical and must be carried out strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, ensuring full surface saturation and adequate dwell time. Inadequate or improper sealing will result in accelerated staining, moisture absorption, discolouration, and premature deterioration of the stone.

Ensure that a high-quality product is chosen which is specifically formulated for natural stone protection and is compatible with the pH-neutral cleaning regime. The use of inferior, non-specialised, topical, or film-forming sealers must be avoided, as they can trap moisture, cause surface hazing, or fail under normal service conditions.

Natural stone is a porous, mineral-based material with defined strength limitations. It is not resistant to aggressive chemicals, acidic cleaners, harsh solvents, or abrasive cleaning pads. Proper sealing and resealing, combined with gentle, non-acidic maintenance products, is essential to safeguard the stone from staining, etching, chemical attack, and structural weakening. Failure to comply with these sealing requirements will significantly reduce the performance, longevity, and appearance of the installation.

Expansion Joints & Perimeter Joints to Tiled Areas

Throughout the tiling system, generally where walls meet floors or internal corners or at 4.5m centres externally within the floor. There will be a soft silicon joint. This joint is installed to allow the building to move without cracking the tiles. This silicon joint must be inspected half yearly for any tear or opening within the silicon.

Where the silicon has been identified as torn, lifting, or damaged in any way. This silicon (just the damaged section) must be removed and replaced immediately.

If the damaged silicon is left open and the tiling system exposed this could allow moisture below the surface of the tile. By allowing moisture below the tiled surface damage to the tiling system will occur, this could include:

- Efflorescence
 - The grout to appear dark and light
 - Mould to appear on the surface of the grout if in poorly ventilated and minimal sunlight areas
 - Where large volumes of water are trapped below the tiling system this can void the waterproofing warranty
-

Slip Test Tile Surfaces

Where the supplied tiles have been provided with a slip test report. Tiles over a period of time the tile surface will wear and as such the surface glaze which has the anti-slip properties will be removed. This will take a number of years to occur (estimated 10 – 15 years) and there are surface treatments that can be applied post installation that can aid to the anti-slip, but this should be explored closer to that time.

Recommendations:

The body corporate or building managers, should commission an independent slip testing (NATA certified) to conduct a slip test and certificate every 12 months.

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10.0 Regular Visual Inspections

Item	Inspection Purpose	General Frequency
Grout	Grout is an important part of the tiling system as it supports the tile from vibration and movement. Regular inspections of the grout on both walls and flooring are essential to identify any cracks or areas of missing grout. If the tile has been subjected to heavy loads, point impacts, or blunt force, the resulting vibrations can loosen or crack the grout. Where there is cracked, loose or missing grout, the grout in this area should be removed and replaced.	Quarterly
Drummy or Loose Tiles	It is not uncommon for building managers and maintenance staff to lightly tap floor tiles with a hammer, screwdriver, or similar tools to check for a hollow sound. However, please note that tapping tiles in this way will VOID your warranty. Under no circumstances should tiles be tapped with metal objects, as this can cause the tiles to become 'drummy' or loose. The correct method for checking for drummy or loose tiles is to attach 3 or 4 keys to a key ring and secure them to a lanyard. Gently drag the keys across the surface of the tiles while listening for any hollow sounds or changes in tone.	Quarterly
Efflorescence	Efflorescence forms when water, carrying dissolved salts, moves to the surface of masonry or tiled areas. As the water evaporates, the salts remain on the surface. The degree of efflorescence can be influenced by external moisture sources such as rain and snow, as well as internal factors like condensation, groundwater seepage, and activities that generate moisture. Any visible efflorescence should be removed using a pressure cleaner, scrubbing, or an approved cleaning solution. Efflorescence is sensitive to acids, and mineral deposits such as lime and salts typically dissolve when exposed to acidic solutions. For effective removal, a strong yet safe acidic cleaner is often ideal for dissolving and eliminating efflorescence in most cases. Special care must be taken with natural stone and other surfaces that may react negatively to acidic products. Always seek professional advice before using acidic cleaners on these materials.	Monthly

It is recommended that high traffic areas are checked on a more frequent basis to ensure that any repeats or rectification work can be done prior to more significant issues occurring.

11.0 Common Household Products that can Damage Natural Stone

Many common household products contain acids, harsh chemicals or abrasives that can damage natural stone surfaces. These products should not be used on natural stone:

- Examples Include:
- Vinegar
 - Lemon or citrus cleaners
 - Bleach
 - Ammonia-based cleaners
 - Bathroom grout or tile cleaners not specifically designed for natural stone
 - Abrasive powders or cream cleaners
 - Scouring pads or steel wool

In addition, caution should be taken with these common household items when placing or using them near natural stone, please note that these are some examples and it is not an exhaustive list of common items which can stain natural stone:

- Examples Include:
- Red wine
 - Coffee and tea
 - Cooking oils and grease
 - Citrus fruit and juices
 - Tomato based sauces
 - Vinegar food dressing
 - Makeup products (foundation, powders and pigments)
 - Hair dye or beard dye
 - Ink and permanent markers
 - Coloured liquers

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12.0 Do & Don't Guide for Natural Stone Care

The following schedule provides a listing of items that will require both preventative and regular maintenance and the recommended frequency. Where tiles have been installed in commercial or public areas, this maintenance regime should be carefully adhered to.

Do	Don't
✓ Clean surfaces regularly with a soft cloth using warm water and a pH-neutral stone cleaner such as PCA Stone Soap	✗ Use vinegar, lemon or any type of acidic cleaner
✓ Wipe up spills as soon as possible	✗ Allow spills such as wine, coffee, juice or dyes to sit on the surface
✓ Use soft cloths, microfibre cloths or dust mops for cleaning	✗ Use abrasive pads, scouring pads or steel wool
✓ Use coasters, placemats and trays on stone benchtops and tables	✗ Place hot cookware or sharp objects directly on the surface
✓ Pick up any heavy objects if they need to be moved	✗ Drag heavy objects across the stone surfaces
✓ Ensure that stone is re-sealed every 6 months	✗ Assume that sealed stone is stain-proof

13.0 When to Seek Professional Advice

You should seek professional advice if any staining, etching, or surface damage occurs. It may be possible for a professional to restore the stone through professional cleaning, polishing or refinishing.

Homeowners should consider seeking advice from a qualified stone care professional if:

- A stain cannot be removed using standard cleaning methods
- the stone surface becomes dull or etched
- Deep scratches or damage occurs
- Resealing is required and the stone is also due for a professional clean

14.0 Disclaimer

Natural stone is a natural product and may contain inherent variations in colour, veining, texture and pattern. These characteristics form part of the natural beauty of the material and are not considered defects.

Terrazzo products may also contain natural stone aggregates, cementitious binders and other raw materials which can result in variations in colour, aggregate distribution, pinholes, shading and surface appearance between batches and individual pieces. These variations are inherent characteristics of terrazzo products and are not considered defects.

While natural stone and terrazzo are durable building materials, they are also porous surfaces and may be susceptible to staining, etching, scratching or other surface changes if it is not properly maintained or if inappropriate cleaning products are used.

The information provided in this guide is intended as general care and maintenance guidance for owners or maintenance contractors. Actual maintenance requirements may vary depending on the type of stone or terrazzo, finish, location and level of use.

The builder, supplier and installer accept no responsibility for damage resulting from improper cleaning methods, the use of unsuitable products, lack of maintenance, or normal wear and tear occurring after handover. Owners are responsible for the ongoing care and maintenance of natural stone and terrazzo surfaces in accordance with the recommendations outlined in this guide.

If uncertainty exists regarding appropriate cleaning, sealing or maintenance procedures, professional advice from a qualified stone care specialist should be sought.

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15.0 Essential Guideline and Care Tips

Avoid Acidic Substances	Clean up spills immediately to prevent acid from coming into contact with the stone. Use coasters, trivets, or placemats under drinks and food, particularly acidic ones. Vinegar and lemon juice are highly acidic and can cause etching. Never use vinegar or lemon juice to clean natural stone. Instead, use a pH-neutral cleaner or warm soapy water.
Use pH-Neutral Cleaners	Avoid using harsh chemicals or acidic cleaners on natural stone. Use pH-neutral stone cleaners specifically formulated for natural stone surfaces. These are designed to clean without damaging or dulling the stone.
Regular Cleaning	Wipe down stone surfaces regularly using a soft cloth or a microfiber duster to remove dust and dirt. Clean surfaces with a mild, pH-neutral cleaner and a soft cloth or sponge.
Seal the Stone	Apply a sealer to the stone to create a protective barrier. However, keep in mind that penetrating sealers do not prevent etching. Sealers should be reapplied periodically, depending on the stone's porosity and the level of use.
Protect the Stone from Heat	Use trivets, hot pads, or coasters under hot objects to protect the stone from thermal damage. Do not place hot pots directly on stone countertops.
Avoid Abrasive Materials	Use soft cloths, microfiber towels, or soft sponges for cleaning. If necessary, use a soft-bristled brush to clean grout lines or other textured areas.
Immediate Spill Cleanup	Blot (don't rub) spills with a soft cloth. For oils, use a paper towel or cloth to blot up excess liquid, and then clean the area with a mild, pH-neutral cleaner.
Prevent Scratching	Use cutting boards and trivets to protect stone surfaces from knives, utensils, and other sharp objects. Be mindful when placing heavy or abrasive items on stone surfaces.
Prevent Heavy Impacts	Avoid dropping heavy objects on the stone. If your stone surface is particularly prone to damage (e.g. marble or travertine), consider adding protective mats or rugs to areas of high traffic.
Regularly Inspect for Damage	Periodically check for any surface damage or imperfections. If you notice cracks, chips, or deep stains, consider calling a stone restoration professional to evaluate and address the issue.
Be Mindful of Cleaning Equipment	When using a vacuum, choose a soft brush attachment to prevent scratches. If mopping, use a damp mop instead of a soaking wet one to avoid excess moisture on the stone.
Polishing	Polish your stone surfaces occasionally using a stone-safe polish if you want to restore shine. Be careful not to overdo it, as frequent polishing can diminish the surface's texture.
Protect from UV Damage	Some stones, particularly marble and onyx, can fade or discolor when exposed to UV rays for prolonged periods.
Professional Cleaning & Sealing	All natural stone tiles must follow a strict maintenance schedule, with professional cleaning and penetrating sealer reapplication performed at intervals no longer than six (6) months. The stone must be sealed prior to use and maintained according to the sealer manufacturer's instructions to ensure full protection and surface longevity.

Disclaimer

This 'Natural Stone & Terrazzo care and maintenance guide' is based on various sources and was believed to be accurate at the time of publication. The information provided is advisory, offered in good faith and without prejudice, but does not claim to be an exhaustive treatment of the subject. Professional advice should be sought before taking any action based on the information provided. Bettertiles accepts no responsibility for the performance of cleaning products or for any consequential damages resulting from their use, as the quality control and application are outside of Bettertiles' control.



