

## Restoration and supply

### THE FINEST PRODUCTS FOR MAINTENANCE AND PRESERVATION OF NATURAL STONE

#### Daily Maintenance - DOs 'n' DON'Ts

Maintenance and preservation of natural stone is not much more difficult than any other material you're familiar with. The difference is mostly in the cleaning agents. Natural stones – especially calcite-based stones such as marble, travertine, limestone, sandstone etc – have a delicate chemical composition that may interact in “strange” (damaging) ways with the chemistry of cleaning solutions that were not specifically formulated for the task. Once you know WHAT to use, all you have to do is follow the basic DOs 'n' DON'Ts listed here:

#### GENERAL

Spills can be very different in nature from one another. Most of them, however, will turn out to be detrimental to stone if unattended. Orange juice, lemonade, wine, vinegar, liquors, tomato sauce, yoghurt, salad dressing, perfume, after shave, wrong cleaning products and so on, through a long list, most likely won't damage “granite” and “marble” surfaces, but will ETCH polished marble, travertine, limestone, onyx and alabaster. Therefore,

**DO** Pick up any spill as quickly as you can get to it. DON'T rub the spill, only blot it. The one cloth I have found good is the Sabco Microfibre – Heavey duty cloth. It is a very absorbent cloth made with a strong, innovative material with its fine fibres that grab, hold and lift dirt, dust and grease from surface areas. ( Which can be used on all types of Marble and Granite). Can be found in any leading hardware store, (Bunnings).

**DON'T** use any generic cleaning product on your natural stone, or nearby it (i.e: a liquid toilet bowl cleaner when the toilet is set on a marble floor), unless the label specifies that it's safe on natural marble (cultured marble is manmade, and it's basically a plastic material)

#### FLOORS

The means: A cleaning chore – any cleaning chore – is seldom a matter of a cleaning product only. Other factors are involved, such as a cleaning rag, a sheet of paper towel, a scrubbing pad, a squeegee, and so on. Without this additional means, the cleaner alone won't do much good! What's more, many a time the type and quality of the means is just as important as the

quality of the cleaning product. If one uses some sub-par means, the cleaning product will not work at its best. This fact is never been truer than in the case of a glossy floor. I often noticed households using what I define as pathetic mops, many a time not so clean, wither, teamed with tiny buckets on which to prepare the solution! A good-quality mop and the proper mopping bucket are key to obtaining the best results at mopping your highly polished stone or porcelain floor. In all my experience I reached the conclusion that sponge mops are not the best type of mop for highly polished floor. My very favourite are good sized, closed-loop cotton string mops. Ie: Oates-clean cotton looped mop and another is the Sabco Super Swish Micro Fibre mop which can be used we/dry. It's always best to buy at least a couple of mop-heads, so that, when one is dirty, all you have to do is throw it into the washing machine and use another one in the meantime. The mop bucket is very important too. Small buckets only hold little water (which, of course, will get dirty real quick), plus they don't have any provisional means to wring the mop properly. Professional-type mop buckets with a wringer that hold a good 16L of cleaning solution are highly recommended. Excellent mop handles and heads, as well as a terrific bucket with wringer, on wheels (by Oates – Dura clean 16L) are available from any leading hardware store. It is well worth investment if you have a lot of hard floors in you house!

### **The care:**

**NEWLY INSTALLED FLOORS.** The best thing to have done to a brand-new polished stone floor is detailing job by a professional stone refinisher. Detailing means deep-cleaning the floor virtually square inch by square inch, removing all possible grout residue or film and adhesive, taking care of possible small damages left behind by workers, or a possible few factory flaws, and open the pores of the stone by using some special cleaning agent, so that the stone can “breathe” and dry properly. Should you decide not to have your floor detailed.

**DON'T** damp-mop your floor immediately after installation and grouting. While you wouldn't cause any real damage, the fine powder most likely left on the floor will be trapped in the water and may leave ugly and hard-to-remove streaks all over its surface. For the first week or so, just vacuum and dust mop (NON treated dust mop!) your floor as often as you can. You will know it's ready to be washed when your hands remains clean (no whitish powder) after rubbing it on the floor. After that, or in the case of a

### **NEWLY RESTORED (REFINISHED) FLOOR.**

**DO** damp-mop your floor regularly. Don't use just water: it won't cut through soil and will leave streaks. We recommend using a solution of water and “**MB-1**”, **Marble, Granite and More Floor Cleaner**, in the proportion indicated in the bottle's back-label. **DON'T** rinse. The formulation of **MB-1** includes specially selected inorganic salts that are meant to be left on the surface of the stone and act as moisturizers, as well as optical brighteners. When used in the right proportion and with the right means, MB-1 will leave your floor totally streak-free and it will actually enhance the shine of your floor. Also excellent to use on ceramic, porcelain and terracotta floors. Should you decide not to use MB-1,

**DON'T** damp-mop your floor using a solution of water and stone soap. Like any other soap, stone soap **WILL** leave a hard –to-remove deposit on the surface of the stone. Stone soaps have very limited applications and, most importantly, quite different than cleaning a highly polished stone floor, no matter what the label on the bottle says (salesmanship has nothing to do with proper stone care!). Even so-called “rinse-free” stone soaps are a

marketing scam. In fact, by reading the back label on their bottle, one will learn that every so often (when you can't stand to look at your streaky and smeary floor any longer, that is!) you should be using a heavy duty stripper/degreaser (made by the same company, of course) to remove all the "precious" scum that has been accumulating on your otherwise beautiful floor by not rinsing it after damp-mopping it. Always use a pH neutral floor **detergent**, opposed to a soap.

**DON'T** damp-mop your floor using a solution of water with a commercially available cleaner, unless its label specifically indicates that its use is safe on **natural** marble (**cultured** marble is not marble: it's manmade plastic material). Worse yet,

**DON'T** damp-mop your floor using a solution of water and vinegar. That would be literally devastating to the finish of marble, travertine, limestone, etc! Vinegar is not a real cleaning agent to begin with, and it's highly acidic (Acetic Acid). Use vinegar in your salad bowl, or for any other cooking purposes it was meant for. If your floor is in a foyer, or any other room with direct access to the outside,

**DO** use proper floor mats. The leather or rubber of your shoes won't damage your floor" dirt **WILL**. Don't look for "pretty" mats, look for good ones! (heavy duty outside the door and finer inside)

**DO** clean your floor mats often. When they get saturated with dirt and sand they won't work anymore.

### **The preservation.**

Customers ask me what should they do to **PRESERVE** the factory finish (or the finish of a newly restored floor), No matter how elaborate the answer could be, at the end it only spells: **W-O-R-K**. No work = no shine. There is no exception to such basic equation! If one's willing to work in order to protect the "showroom finish" of his or her car by regularly waxing it, the same principle should apply to a polished stone floor (actually, even more so. After all, you don't walk on your car!). "**MB-7**" **Marble, Granite and More Polish Preserver** is an excellent performer. Don't expect miracles, though for starters, the product should be applied soon after installation, or restoration as possible. It is meant to preserve the polish of the stone surface, not to make it! If you think to apply it when the floor is beginning to show damages (wear and tear patterns), **MB-7** will do a terrific job at preserving ... the damages! What's more, by the same principle that a good-quality car wax will not preserve the original "showroom finish" of your car forever so will **MB-7** with your polished stone floor. Absolute protection is impossible, but if used regularly as directed, **MB-7** will make your floor age gracefully and it will never represent a real eyesore. **MB-7** must be applied with either a professional, or a small residential floor buffer.

## **KITCHEN COUNTER TOPS**

I want to assume that your kitchen counter-top is made either out of "granite" or hone "marble" finished. (If you have polished marble or polished travertine, then there's not much that can be done to maintain their highly glossy finish, other than .. never use your countertop!). That said, there's one thing and one thing only to keep into consideration. **If a**

**cleaning chemical was not specifically formulated to clean soil off while NOT interacting with the chemical makeup of the stone, it's not safe to be used, period.**

This firm rule applies to all stone surfaces, floors, walls etc, included, of course, but, for some mysterious reason, when it comes to countertops, there seems to be a particular widespread trend by which most stone dealers and fabricators recommend the wrong cleaning solutions to their customers. "Use a glass cleaner" or "use water with a little dish soap" or "use solvents diluted in water" (can interact in the stone surface and strip the sealer over a period of time) are the most popular recommendations. They are wrong recommendations. So called glass cleaners or solvents, may turn out to be too harsh to both the stone and the sealer (if one needed to be applies to it), while water and dish soap will leave an unsanitary film that will build up and become problematic to remove.(Try to wash your hands with dish soap and then rinse them under running water: observe how long and how much water it'll take to rinse properly. To get the same result you'd have to rinse your countertop with a garden hose!) in conclusion, generic household cleaners off the shelves of the supermarket are out, and specialty cleaners specifically formulated to deal with the delicate chemistry of stone are, very definitely, in order.

**DO** clean regularly your kitchen counter top with "**MB-5**" **Marble, Granite and More Spray Cleaner**, full strength, especially in proximity of the cooking and eating areas. Diluted in a proportion of 1:1 with water for less demanding situations (vanity tops, area of the countertop far from the cooking and eating one, etc).

**DON'T** let any spill sit too long on the surface of your counter top. Clean spills up (by blotting only) as soon as you can. I recommend to use Sabco Microfibre Heavy Duty cloth. Its super absorbent.

**VERY IMPORTANT NOTICE:** If because of some dried-on food or other matter particles your countertop needs some scrubbing,

**DON'T** use any green scouring pad. The presence of silicon carbide grits in them **WILL** scratch even the toughest "granite" ! You can safely use those sponges lined with a silvery net, or other plastic scouring pads. **REMEMBER**, it's very important to spray the cleaner and let it sit for a while to moisten and soften the soil, before scrubbing. **LET THE CHEMICAL DO THE WORK!** It'll make your job much easier and effective!

## **VANITY TOPS**

**DO** clean it regularly by using "**MB-5**" **Marble, Granite and More Spray Cleaner**. Considering the typical light-duty cleaning necessary on a vanity top, **MB-5** can be diluted in a proportion of 1:1 with tap water and still perform flawlessly (you can buy an extra spray-bottle at any hardware store). As far as the mirror over vanity top is concerned, **DON'T** take chances with a regular glass cleaner: possible over-spray could spill on the marble surface and may damage it. Therefore,

**DO** clean your mirror with the same solution of water and **MB-5**, even if you over-spray it, nothing bad is going to happen to your marble.

**DON'T** use any powder cleanser, or – worse yet – any cream course cleanser.

**DON'T** do your nails on your marble vanity top, or your perm nearby it.

**DON'T** put any wet bottle onto it (perfume, after-shave, etc). Keep your cosmetic and fragrances in one of those pretty trays, and make sure that the legs of the tray have felt tips.

## **SHOWER RECESS**

**DON'T** use any cleanser, either in a powdery or creamy form, such as “Jiff”.

**DON'T** use any generic soap film remover on your polished stone shower stall.

**DON'T** use any magic self-cleaner, or any hard disinfectant not formulated for natural stone.

**DO** clean your shower recess daily. The easiest way is to use one of those windshield-cleaning tools (the one with a scrubbing net on one side and a squeegee blade on the other side). (Sabco Microfibre – heavy duty cloth, is also excellent for drying shower screens). After everybody has taken a shower, spray the walls and floor of the recess with a diluted solution of water and **MB-5**, scrub swiftly, then squeegee. When eventually you will notice an accumulation of soap film (especially on the lower part of the walls and on the floor pan) that looks and feel like wax, use “**MB-3**” **Soap Film Remover**. To clean it off, **MB-3** was specifically formulated to be effective at doing the job of cleaning soap scum and hard mineral deposits, while not interacting with the chemistry of natural stone.

If, over time, some mildew will appear on the grout lines of your shower enclosure,

**DO** clean the mildew stain with “**MB-9**” **Mildew Stain Remover**. This product, too has been formulated to be safe on natural stone, while very effective at removing mildew and other biological stains.

## **CONCLUSION**

As a final consideration from a stone lover like myself, I would like to submit to your attention that it took Mother Nature up to a few hundreds of thousand of years to make that stone that you now proudly own and embellishes your surroundings. Think about it, each and every piece of stone you own has no match in the entire world! You must appreciate and respect that, Along with it unmatched beauty, however, you have also to accept its physical limitations. Don't consider and treat your stone like just another commodity. You have to feel responsible for its proper maintenance and care, because you did not just buy your stone. You actually adopted it.

**MANKIND SHOULD MASTER MOTHER  
NATURE BY UNDERSTANDING, NOT BY  
FORCE !**

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