

## Tile and Stone Care and Maintenance

As is the case with virtually all floor and wall coverings and bench tops, tiles and stone require a certain level of ongoing care and maintenance.

### Care of Polished Porcelain Tiles:

- Polished porcelain tile protective wax film must be thoroughly removed & cleaned after tile installation. Unless the tile has been pre-sealed by the manufacturer Italia Ceramics recommend that once cleaned a sealant be applied to the tile surface and re-applied periodically depending on the wear and tear of the material. Italia Ceramics highly recommended that care and maintenance work be performed by a seasoned professional. Sealing your polished porcelain flooring makes it less porous, more stain resistant, and protects the porcelains original beauty.
- Polished porcelain tiles require a certain level of ongoing care and maintenance.
- **Important Note: An inherent characteristic called “Optical Hazing” can occur with polished porcelain tiles. Please refer to our [Optical Hazing](#) PDF for more information.**

## Natural Stone Care and Maintenance

Stone’s beauty, elegance and pure uniqueness will last a lifetime as well, if it is cared for properly.

Proper care and maintenance is crucial to the life span of your stone surface. But keeping your stone maintained is not as difficult as you might think. Regular sweeping or vacuuming and periodic thorough cleaning will keep your floors looking their best. It is important to note that sealing of natural stone is highly recommended, and that it be performed by a seasoned professional. Sealing your natural stone flooring makes it less porous, more stain resistant, and protects the stone’s original beauty.

## Inherent Characteristics of Tile & Stone

Crazing and shade variations, texture, composition, glazing, variations in colour, grain structure, occasional pitting and veining and other features are an inherent characteristic of

all ceramic/porcelain and/or fired clay products and/or composite products and/or glass products and/or natural stone products.

Goods are often prepared in different batches and batches can vary between them. Italia Ceramics recommend that all natural stone are thoroughly cleaned after installation & once cleaned a sealant be applied to the tile surface and re-applied periodically depending on the wear and tear of the material.

## Natural Stone

### Natural Stone Preventative Maintenance – Cleaning Methods

Natural stone requires a certain level of ongoing care and maintenance.

- **Sweeping:** The old fashioned broom is still a valuable part of everyday maintenance of any floor surface – stone included. It is very important to remove soils from flooring surfaces before they get ground into the floor. Soils are abrasive. The more often soils are removed the longer the floor will retain the original appearance. Use a broom with a bristle that matches your surface. A soft broom or brush is recommended for smooth surfaces. A medium-soft bristle is ideal for textured surfaces.
- **Vacuuming:** A good vacuum cleaner works better on textured surfaces than a broom and is very efficient. Use a vacuum on any horizontal surface when large areas are involved as it is faster than sweeping in most cases.
- **Damp Mopping:** A damp mop is capable of picking up microscopic abrasive soils and potential staining agents. Damp mopping is recommended for most smooth surfaces on a regular basis. Best done after sweeping or vacuum.
- **Washing:** It is necessary to wash a floor regularly. The job conditions will dictate frequency. The most frequent problems encountered with stone floors are related to the floor simply not getting effectively washed often enough.
- **Rinsing:** Rinsing is one of the most critical steps in regular floor maintenance. Dirty mop water residue is common and a cause for much complaint. A two bucket rinse method is highly effective in keeping floors from graying out due to soil residues.

### Natural Stone Preventative Maintenance – Cleaning Chemicals

- **Soaps:** Natural soaps are low-tech, inexpensive and user friendly. They are also capable of providing a sealing and/or dressing function for stone floors. Vegetable based soaps are best. Specialty soaps formulated for use on stone are highly recommended and desirable on most natural stone floors and other stone surfaces.
- **Detergents:** These are synthetic surface-active agents (surfactants) that are very good at picking up soils and emulsifying grease and oil. They make water “wetter” and

more effective for cleaning purposes. The detergent used for stone cleaning should be carefully evaluated for compatibility with the stone. Detergents are typically used with water and may determine the pH of the cleaning solution. Detergents tend to leave the stone very "raw" or absorbent and residues will make water penetration into the stone more effective.

- **Acids:** These are used for removing grout haze, removing mineral deposits and for rust removal. Acidic products attack lime and cement. Use caution with acids and acidic pH products as they attack the polish on marbles and limestone. Phosphoric acid, citric acid and sulfamoc acid is preferred to muriatic, sulphuric and hydrochloric acids in almost all situations due to safety and control issues.
- **Abrasives:** Abrasives are sometimes useful as a cleaning agent but should be limited to non-polished surfaces. Abrasives may be combined with detergents or soaps for scouring a surface and removing thin layers from the surface. There are many different types of materials used as abrasives – soft abrasives may be composed of nut shells or feldspars, hard abrasives can be silica quartz, carbide or even diamond.
- **Bleaches:** Bleaches are typically oxidizing agents (generate oxygen) and are useful in stain removal. Enzyme types are available which are non-hazardous.

## Composite Stone

### Taking Care of Your Composite Stone

Composite Stone surfaces blend modern sophistication and timeless luxury with unbeatable strength and durability. The ever-lasting finish of composite stone requires only simple and routine care to maintain its looks. To clean composite stone, we recommend using warm water and a mild detergent or quality spray and wipe type cleaner in order to enjoy enduring beauty and unmatched performance for years to come.

### Composite Stone Needs Minimal Maintenance

Virtually maintenance-free, Composite Stone's hard, non-porous surfaces require no sealing to renew the luster and are simple to clean. In most cases, soap and water or a mild detergent is enough to keep your Composite Stone countertop looking like new. If necessary, use a non-abrasive soft soap along with a non-scratch or delicate scrub pad. Afterwards, thoroughly rinse with clean water to remove residue. Composite Stone's non porous nature allows it to withstand short term exposure to tea, soda, wine, vinegar, lemon juice and strongly coloured spices, however leaving spills for long periods of time may cause the spill to impregnate the stones surface causing it to stain.

### Stubborn Stains or Dried Spills on Composite Stone

If needed, apply a non-abrasive household cleaners (a non-abrasive cleaner will not dull the surface shine) and rinse to remove residue. To remove adhered material such as food, gum, nail polish or even dried paint, first scrape away excess material with a plastic putty knife and then use a damp cloth to remove any marks or residual dirt. For extra-stubborn stains, a no-scratch Scotch-Brite® pad is recommended along with the non-abrasive cleaner recommended by your local Composite Stone® distributor.

## **Heat Tolerance of Composite Stone**

Composite Stone is more heat resistant than other stone surfaces including most granite, marble and limestone; and is not affected by temperatures lower than 100°C (212°F). However, like all stone material, Composite Stone can be damaged by sudden and rapid temperature changes. Therefore, we suggest that hot pots and pans never be directly placed on the surface. We also recommend a hot pad or trivet be placed on the surface under cooking units such as electric frying pans, crock pots, or roaster ovens.

## **Composite Stone is Scratch Resistant**

Composite Stone is a highly scratch resistant surface; however avoid abuse of the surface by refraining from using sharp objects such as sharp knives or screw drivers directly onto the surface.

## **Cleaning Agents to Avoid with Composite Stone**

It is important to be aware that like any other surface, Composite Stone can be permanently damaged if exposed to strong chemicals and solvents that can damage its physical properties. Never clean your Composite Stone surface with products that contain Trichlorethane or Methylene chloride, such as paint removers or strippers. Avoid the use of highly aggressive cleaning agents such as oven/grill cleaners and dishwasher polishing agents that have high alkaline/pH levels (pH 8.5 or higher). Products containing oils or powders may leave a residue and should be rinsed off thoroughly. Should your surface accidentally be exposed to any of these damaging products, rinse immediately with clean water to neutralize the effect