

## **Marble, Limestone, & Travertine Care & Maintenance Guide**

*\*Marble, limestone, & travertine are maintained in the same way.*

Marble is an igneous stone that occurs naturally through the metamorphosis of limestone. It contains many different compounds, but consists mainly of calcium carbonate which gives marble its generally light and creamy hue. Colour variations in white marble are caused by impurities from other substances. In the stone trade, marble is defined by any crystalline calcitic rock capable of being used as a building material and taking on a shine.

Today, marble is used primarily in bathroom vanities, fireplace surroundings, hearths, and tile stone. The trend of using marble for kitchen countertops is slowly increasing. Marble's elegance and beauty gives any home an appealing quality. It provides a pure, graceful look.

In terms of the care and maintenance of marble, the conditions that arise in a kitchen will undoubtedly leave marble stone damaged with stains, spots, etching (eaten/corroded/dull), and scratches. It will not stay pristine and will take on a natural patina fairly quickly. A honed or matte finish on marble is more resilient to etching and scratches. Honed marble is somewhat more user-friendly, and absorbs protective penetrating sealers more effectively with its porous openings. Polished marble is also slightly more resistant to staining.

Marble must be re-sealed more often than granite. Sealant will prevent most stains, but it won't prevent etching. Penetrating sealant ensures that spills remain on the top of the stone, radically reducing the rate of absorption into the countertop, giving you a small frame of time within which you can clean the spills without staining. The best warning that the marble must be re-sealed immediately is when water or other liquid fails to bead up on the surface, or if the stone darkens when water is splashed on the surface.

Acid from substances such as red wine, marinara, sauces, dressings, vinegar, acidic fruits, and personal care products, can tarnish the look of the marble if left to sitting on the countertop. They will either seep into the pores, or react with the calcium in the stone. However, if the marble has been properly sealed, it will not stain instantly. If spills are wiped up as soon as they happen, and rinsed with warm water, most stains can be avoided.

When deciding whether to seal your marble surfaces, please consider this information from the Marble Institute of America:

“Should natural stone counters be sealed? In many cases it makes sense to seal marble and granite countertops with a quality sealer. The product should have a life expectancy of ten to fifteen years and be of an oliophobic (resistant to water and oil based stains) nature. Once properly sealed, the stone will be more resistant against everyday dirt and spills.

In today's natural stone industry, many species of granite receive a resin treatment at the factory where the blocks of granite are cut into slabs and then polished. The treatment is used to fill microfissures, indentations and other minor characteristics that are found in many natural stones. The reason for the resin treatment is to address what most consumers consider as imperfections, but in reality are "birth marks". The consuming public gravitates to perfection,

defined as no "birth marks," and so the marble and granite industry tries to fulfill the desire. Both resined as well as unresined slabs will outlast most of our lifetimes. Granite should, and in most cases will, be the last countertop surface a person will buy, providing a strong return on investment. The bottom line: Sealing resin treated countertops may increase the resistance of the already resistant nature of stone (adopted 11/8/06).

Please click on the link below for more information on sealing from MIA: <http://www.marble-institute.com/designprofessionals/sealing.cfm>

Marble countertops require a bit more care and diligence to avoid most of the above issues. Some things to consider when maintaining your marble:

- 1) Never allow wet dishes, glasses, or water to stand on a marble countertop for any length of time.
- 2) Clean countertops with non-acidic, pH-balanced (neutral) solutions, so as not to etch the surface.
- 3) Use coasters with rubber or cork bottoms under all drinks.
- 4) Use placemats under items that may scratch the marble surface.
- 5) Use cutting boards for all chopping activities.

Marble has been used for countertops, floors, and many other surfaces in Europe for hundreds of years. Many of these installations have a beautiful patina look. Some users prefer the daily wear and tear to show up on their marble countertops, as the marble grows better with age and takes on an amazing quality when it is worn out by time and use. Some argue that the patina look is worth it in the end.

Marble is softer than granite, and while marble stains more easily than granite, it is a pristine working surface. It requires more vigilance than granite, but when properly cared for, marble will last a lifetime. If you are willing to spend a little more time caring for the surface of this stone, it can bring to your home a glint of the elegance and splendor that was once reserved only for nobility in their mansions and palaces.

The good news is that if your marble surface has stains, etching, scratches, or cracks, and you're not happy with it, it can be fixed and brought back to the original pristine finish it had when it was first installed. At AB Granito Restorations Ltd., we have the workmanship, techniques, and tools needed to restore your marble surfaces to their original graceful look. Simply call us for a re-seal service and maintenance program, and we'll repair any damages and help you prevent further damages.